

# Tools for Providing Feedback in Reading

A Reading Assessment Handbook for All Teachers in Grades 3–12



Learning to read is an individual journey....

**SERVE**<sup>TM</sup>  
*Improving Learning through  
Research & Development*

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**Produced by**

**SERVE**  
*Improving Learning through  
Research & Development*

The Regional Educational Laboratory serving the southeastern United States  
Associated with the School of Education, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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**SERVE would like to thank the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
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## Note to Reader:

**The version presented here is the first edition of this handbook. Included in this handbook are tools for classroom teachers to use for assessing student performance in the classroom. We welcome readers to send us a sample of how the assessments were used in classrooms and/or professional development sessions so that we may modify the assessments and include the revised tools in the next edition to make it a more practical and useful resource for all teachers.**



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## Conclusion

The conclusion summarizes major ideas and gives some practical advice about implementing assessment practices. Once again, the Classroom Assessment Cycle is used as a model for implementing these ideas.

## Additional Information

This section contains five additional supplements that a teacher may find useful for future references.

### Cueing Systems

The teacher may wish to read this section for background information on how readers use these systems to synthesize the reading process.

These cueing systems, usually used by teachers in grades K–2, consist of:

1. Graphophonics
2. Syntax
3. Semantics

### Shifts in Reading Self-Assessment

This self-assessment helps the teacher to determine his or her own beliefs and practices in reading assessment. In addition, the self-assessment provides insights into where the teacher may be on a continuum of ideas that support the assessment of reading.

### Setting Goals

This activity asks the teacher to reflect upon goals he or she wants to establish for building expertise. It can be used in conjunction with a teacher portfolio, evaluation plan, or professional growth record.

### Glossary

A glossary that defines many of the reading terms mentioned in the handbook is included. In addition, the glossary contains other reading terms that are not specifically mentioned in the handbook but are common to those familiar with the language of reading instruction and assessment. These additional terms may be helpful to those teachers who are delving into the language of reading for the first time. Please note that the words in the glossary with an asterisk are those found in the various activities in the handbook. Those words without an asterisk are the additional terms about reading instruction and assessment. These terms are pulled from SERVE's *Competent Assessment of Reading Toolkit* and the *Improving Classroom Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Developers (Toolkit98)*.

### References

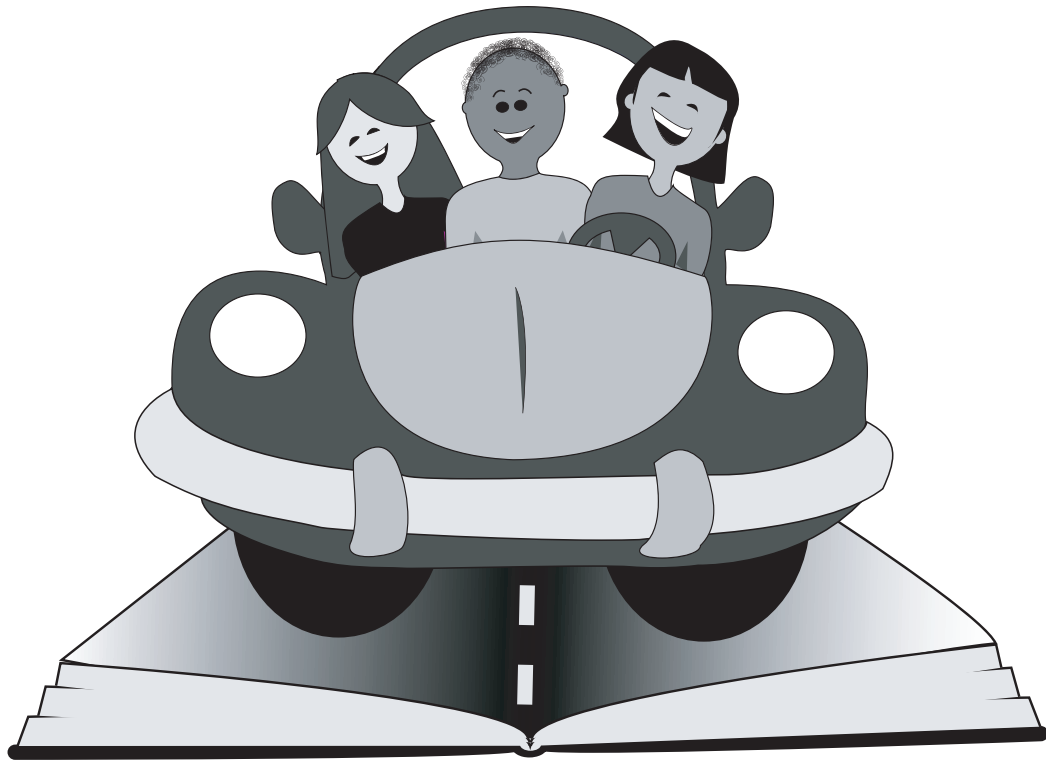
These references provide additional resources for teachers.







# Introduction



# Why Focus on Reading Assessment?

Teachers are busy people with more work to do than can be done in the time they have available. With so much on their plates, why should teachers, across disciplines, think about reading assessment? Isn't that the responsibility of the reading teacher? In reality, it is the responsibility of all teachers because every content area involves some form of reading.

It is obvious that many students in grades 3–12 are not effective readers. For example, they may score poorly on tests such as the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress), TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study), or state tests that ask students to apply what they have learned. On tests such as those listed above, and in many of the assignments students are requested to complete every day, students are expected to read texts, documents, and passages that deal with a variety of subject matter and are written in a variety of styles and formats. Unfortunately, many students do poorly in content courses, not because of a lack of motivation or other factors, but because they do not possess the necessary reading skills to understand the text presented to them. Therefore, in order to assist students in becoming effective readers, thereby improving class grades and test scores, all teachers must teach and assess reading.

Teaching and assessing reading can seem a daunting task, especially when one considers that most teachers are not trained in assessment. In addition, reading is a field laden with unique language, volumes of research, and "factions that are seemingly divided about what they believe to be important" (SERVE, 2000, p. 2). Finally, when one adds the potentially confusing and contradictory messages about appropriate assessment methods, teachers may view the assessment of reading in their classrooms as problematic.

However, many teachers who teach subjects other than reading, language arts, or English do not realize that, while they may not be trained in reading instruction and assessment, they are themselves effective readers in their own content areas. For instance, science teachers are more effective readers of science texts than English teachers are. Simply by reflecting on the strategies they use themselves while reading and consciously and explicitly teaching them to their students, science teachers can be very effective instructors of reading.

This handbook encourages teachers of all subject areas to use their insights into themselves as readers to strengthen their understanding of how their students read. Our focus is not upon evaluating or labeling students but how to use formative assessment. Formative assessment is a continuous monitoring of student learning with the purpose of providing feedback to the learner as to progress and achievement. Formative assessment supports and informs the teacher in making the next instructional decisions and helps students understand what they need to work on to improve.

"Think for a moment about your own reading and writing. As you read a novel you may find yourself literally transported into the scene. You find yourself liking some characters and despising others. . . . As you read a memo from a state education agency official you may find yourself getting annoyed—wondering if the author has any sense of the complexity of the directive issued. . . . If you compose a memo in response, it matters whether the memo is going to the official who sent the directive or to colleagues who needed the information. . . . Both audience and purpose matter when you write. . . . The point is that whenever adults read and write they think."

From Richard Allington & Patricia Cunningham, *Schools that work: Where all children read and write* ( page 42). Published by Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA. Copyright © 1996 by Pearson Education. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

While the reading assessment tools in this handbook, depending upon the way they are used, can be formative assessments, they are diverse and can also be used for other instructional purposes. Some can be used with individual students; others are geared for small or large groups. Teachers may find they do not need to assess every student individually. Students who are making progress in their reading often only need some individual feedback to continue to improve. Thus, the teacher can focus his/her attention on those students who are struggling with their reading. These tools are designed to help the teacher pinpoint those struggling students and understand what a specific problem may be.

The purpose of this handbook, *Tools for Providing Feedback in Reading: A Reading Assessment Handbook for All Teachers in Grades 3–12*, is to assist teachers in assessing their students in reading, regardless of the grade level or subject they teach. It is intended as a starting point on the journey to helping students become effective readers, regardless of the material they are reading. SERVE, one of the Regional Educational Laboratories, has adapted this handbook from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to complement SERVE's Competent Assessment of Reading (CAR) program. This handbook is aimed at improving the quality of the learner-teacher interactions found in the everyday assessment of reading in the classroom. It provides practical advice and reproducible tools for assessing reading in grades 3–12.

## Understanding the Reading Classroom Assessment Cycle

Understanding what effective readers do as they read and using assessment tools to collect evidence are only two aspects of the cycle of assessing reading. Also essential in the assessment of reading are the decisions a teacher makes based on that information and the modifications in instruction that help the student improve.

Reading is a complex, active transaction between text and reader, in which the reader uses not only the language of the text but also prior knowledge, personal associations, and cultural understanding to make meaning and construct interpretations.

Reading alone does not define an effective reader. . . . It is coupled with what the reader does with the reading that determines the level of effectiveness.

So what is involved in effective reading? Following is a summary from *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (1985) outlining what skilled reading involves:

"Skilled reading is constructive. Becoming a skilled reader requires learning to reason about written materials using knowledge from everyday life and from disciplined fields of study."

"Skilled reading is fluent. Becoming a skilled reader depends upon mastering basic processes to the point where they are automatic, so that attention is freed from the analysis of meaning."

"Skilled reading is strategic. Becoming a skilled reader requires learning to control one's reading in relation to one's purpose, the nature of the material, and whether one is comprehending."

"Skilled reading is motivated. Becoming a skilled reader requires learning to sustain attention and learning that written material can be interesting and informative."

"Skilled reading is a lifelong pursuit. Becoming a skilled reader is a matter of continuous practice, development, and refinement."



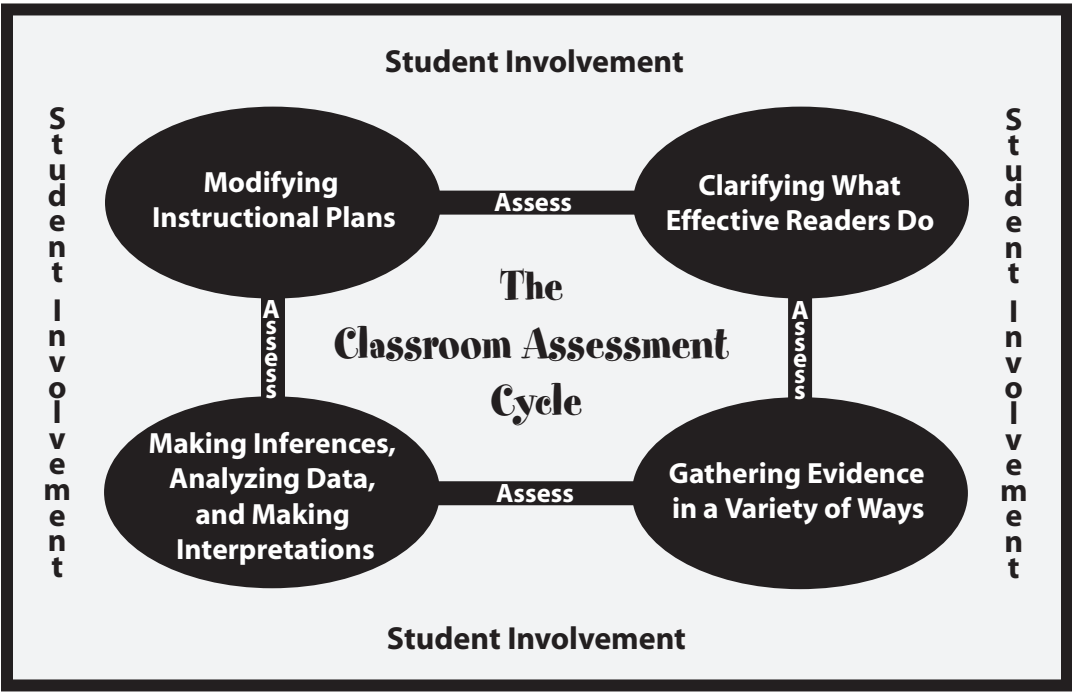
Like reading, classroom assessment is also a very involved process for the teacher. The process should include student involvement as much as possible. Following is an explanation of classroom assessment:

*Broadly defined, classroom assessment is an ongoing process through which teachers and students interact to promote greater learning. The assessment process involves using a range of strategies to make decisions regarding instruction and gathering information about student performance or behavior in order to diagnose students' problems, monitor their progress, and give feedback for improvement. The classroom assessment process also involves using multiple methods of obtaining student information through a variety of assessment strategies such as written tests, interviews, observations, and performance tasks (McMunn, 2000).*

Formative assessment of reading, like all classroom assessment, is an ongoing, recursive cycle that includes the following:

- 👤 Learning targets are defined clearly, and students understand them.
- 👤 Evidence of student learning is gathered in multiple and diverse ways over time.
- 👤 Inferences and interpretations are made based on the evidence.
- 👤 Instructional plans are made based on those inferences and interpretations.

The chart below illustrates key assessment stages outlined in a cycle that teachers may find useful. This classroom assessment cycle outlines a framework for teachers to use when working with assessment in the classroom beginning with the first stage for any content area, clarifying what effective learners do, and in this case, clarifying targets for effective readers.



**Note:** Teachers should consciously involve the students in as many components of the cycle as possible so they understand what they are being assessed on, how they will show evidence of the learning, what the evidence tells them, and what they need to do to improve.

## Clarifying What Effective Readers Do

Many teachers have not had opportunities to talk together about what effective readers do. They lack extensive formal training in reading, and they may not understand how the components of reading come together in a complex way. To complete an assessment cycle, teachers first must be clear about what effective readers do. (Refer to the targets for assessing reading in the following section for a comprehensive explanation.) Effective readers demonstrate oral fluency, comprehend the meaning of what they have read, use appropriate reading strategies, demonstrate higher order thinking about what they are reading, and are motivated to read.

## Gathering Evidence in a Variety of Ways

Teachers should gather evidence about student performance or progress on the established reading targets in a variety of ways. For example, state test results, individual reading conferences, written retell, and literature circle dialogues (see glossary for definitions) are all types of evidence, and each of these sources measures different targets in different ways. Multiple assessment methods give a more complete and accurate view of each student and where that student is in achieving stated targets. It may be helpful to think about assessment methods as falling into the following categories:

1. Paper and pencil tests or assignments
2. Oral questioning individually or in a group
3. Observation
4. Performances
5. Products or projects

## Making Inferences, Analyzing Data, and Making Interpretations

Once data have been collected, teachers then use evidence gathered to draw conclusions and make decisions about student learning. The quality of the conclusions is based on the quality of the evidence. Good conclusions cannot be made unless there is an understanding of the learning targets and there is enough evidence to make good decisions. This is the stage where the teacher determines what the student is struggling with and then thinks about the best way to help this student. This is a crucial stage for improving student learning; if the assessment process stops here and students merely get labeled, the learning stops.

## Modifying Instructional Plans

Finally, to improve student performance, the assessment cycle must be completed by implementing changes in instruction for the reader based on the conclusions from the evidence. Often teachers may have the evidence to identify weaknesses in students but never follow through by providing the instructional support the student needs to improve. (Refer to the Five Targets of Assessment Matrix for a comprehensive explanation of how to modify instructional plans.)

## Linking Assessment and Reading

This handbook includes a series of assessments tools based on this four-stage classroom assessment cycle. These tools are designed to assess diverse aspects of a student's oral fluency, comprehension, strategies, higher order thinking, and motivation (as defined below). Thus, the tools can help the teacher and the student become more informed and aware of the student's overall reading effectiveness. The tools are not sequential, and they are designed so that the teacher can choose the ones she or he feels are most appropriate and most useful (which may depend upon the information being sought).



## Five Targets for Helping Teachers Assess Readers' Strengths and Weaknesses

Effective readers do not just read the lines literally for comprehension; they engage in higher order thinking as they read between the lines and beyond the lines. They make sophisticated inferences, such as making connections that are not readily apparent; they analyze and use criteria to evaluate what they have read. They maintain the author's meaning (an important aspect of comprehension), but they also have insight and reflective ideas about what they have read. They can go beyond retelling of what they read to an analysis or an interpretation. These five assessment targets differentiate between comprehension and higher order thinking for practical

reasons. Although we could make a reasonable argument that *true* comprehension includes higher order thinking, we separated them as assessment targets to help teachers clarify and focus more specifically on what a student is doing as he reads.

## Motivation:

Effective readers are motivated and enjoy reading; they read with perseverance and interest. They enjoy choosing their own reading materials, and they often choose to spend their time on reading. Effective readers can tell you what they like to read and why.

## Conclusion

In summary, in assessing these different reading targets explained above, the quality of the assessment depends in part upon the completion of the assessment cycle, which includes:

- ④ The clarity and understanding of the reading targets for the teacher and the students.
- ④ The diversity and quality of the evidence the teacher gathers (for example, if a student is observed during reading, then the information should be collected and recorded in a precise and accurate manner).
- ④ The insight and understanding of the information collected and what the evidence tells the teacher and the learner.
- ④ The follow through (the way the teacher modifies instruction based on good assessment information to help the student become an effective reader).





# Five Targets of Assessment Matrix

## (For Some Indicators and Suggested Modifications)

The following matrix gives some general indicators (what you might find) that suggest a student may have some reading problems with these given targets. This matrix also provides some strategies (what you might do) for helping a student improve his or her reading skills relating to each of the five targets for assessing effective readers. Remember that these targets work together simultaneously, not separately, in an effective reader.

Targets	Indicator(s) of difficulties	Modified Instructional Plans
<b>Oral Fluency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reads at a slower pace</li> <li>Pauses or stops often</li> <li>Does not attend to punctuation</li> <li>Sounds unnatural</li> <li>Reads word for word</li> <li>Reads with little or no expression</li> <li>Seems to take more effort to read</li> <li>Stumbles over multi-syllabic words</li> <li>Only attends to the beginning of words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read aloud to students to model effective reading.</li> <li>Allow students to choose (and practice) text and then read to an audience.</li> <li>Have students tape record themselves and then listen to their reading.</li> <li>Use mini-lesson directed toward improving fluency (cloze activity) and over learning word parts.</li> <li>Repetition is important; allow students to reread and rerecord the same text, with feedback and guidance.</li> <li>Access or build rich and complete background knowledge prior to and during reading.</li> <li>Allow students to practice partner reading.</li> <li>Read drama aloud so students can practice intonation and finding the voices of different characters.</li> <li>Give students access to a lot of easy-to-read text.</li> <li>Allow students to practice choral reading.</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives weak retell: plot, characters, etc.</li> <li>Selects insignificant details to talk or write about</li> <li>May not respond to humor in a story</li> <li>Strives for flawless oral reading performance</li> <li>Orally reads too quickly</li> <li>Omits entire phrases without recognizing or self-correcting</li> <li>Over uses or misuses graphophonic clues: For example <i>though</i> and <i>through</i></li> <li>Substitutes non-words with many of the same letters as actual words</li> <li>Disrupts meaning by substituting pronouns</li> <li>Confuses words that look similar</li> <li>Has trouble with contractions</li> <li>Misreads words that do not maintain the author's meaning without self-correcting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access or build rich and complete background knowledge prior to reading.</li> <li>Allow students to talk about the text they are reading.</li> <li>Use lots of retell—like dramatization or a written retell—for follow-up activity.</li> <li>Ask students to use what they know about what they have read.</li> <li>Ask questions, verbally and in writing, that go beyond factual recall.</li> <li>Pre-teach important vocabulary words.</li> <li>Develop analogies, metaphors, and real-world examples.</li> <li>Read small portions of text and have students discuss text immediately.</li> <li>Model comprehension strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May use only a tedious “sound out” strategy when running into difficulty</li> <li>Has trouble predicting/confirming</li> <li>Seems unable to adjust reading in other genres</li> <li>Is unable to use a name strategy</li> <li>Has trouble with dialogue carriers</li> <li>Is unaware that words and phrases mean different things in different contexts</li> <li>Effectively reads material related to own background but not new concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach students to think about strategies before, during, and after reading.</li> <li>Involve students in generating a comprehensive list of before, during, and after reading strategies.</li> <li>Post these reading strategies in your room and refer to them often.</li> <li>Ask students to tell you the strategies they used and when they used them.</li> <li>Ask students to assess themselves in their use of reading strategies and then set goals for themselves.</li> <li>Model strategies for your students (Think Aloud).</li> </ul>

Targets	Indicator(s) of difficulties	Modified Instructional Plans
<b>Strategies (continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks help outside themselves when comes to difficulty</li> <li>Over uses one or two strategies regardless of difficulty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before assigning text, consider with the class the purpose for reading, the type of text to be read, and adjustments they may need to make.</li> <li>Determine what strategies your students are weak in and give mini-lessons on those strategies.</li> <li>Allow lots of choice. Students are more interested in text they choose and may be more willing to engage in strategies that will help them make meaning.</li> <li>Model before, during, and after reading strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Higher Order Thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has trouble discussing motivation, values, basis for decisions, and relationships with other characters</li> <li>May have trouble with point of view</li> <li>Has trouble inferring—time, place, plot</li> <li>May not realize that in their experiences with a variety of texts they have developed schema and they need to connect to it</li> <li>Reads to gain minimal information (correct answer)</li> <li>Unaware that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authors have specific intentions and as readers they are capable of determining them</li> <li>Readers have the right to disagree with or question the author's opinion but should have reasons for disagreeing</li> <li>Authors, including scientists and other authorities, have points of view that are often implicitly rather than explicitly embedded in text</li> <li>Because something appears in print does not mean it is true</li> </ul> </li> <li>No evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predicting</li> <li>Questioning</li> <li>Clarifying</li> <li>Summarizing</li> <li>Connecting</li> <li>Evaluating</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead discussions that focus on concepts, implications, and ideas—not just factual recall.</li> <li>Ask students to make predictions and draw inferences about the text.</li> <li>Ask students to compare and contrast.</li> <li>Encourage students to make personal connections.</li> <li>Be sure that students think about implications.</li> <li>Ask students to examine the assumptions of characters or the author and examine their own personal assumptions about what they are reading.</li> <li>Teach students to evaluate information, characters, the author's style, etc.</li> <li>Ask students to analyze situations and characters.</li> <li>Stress reading as problem solving. Ask students to reflect upon and analyze what they found confusing and what they did to make meaning.</li> <li>Model higher order thinking for the students by sharing your thoughts and ideas in a think aloud.</li> <li>Establish transformational oral relationships to facilitate learning (Skolnick, 2000).</li> </ul>
<b>Motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reluctant to choose own reading materials</li> <li>Dislikes long books</li> <li>Extrinsic reader</li> <li>Likes to read for correct answers</li> <li>Rarely reads during free time</li> <li>Reads only one kind of material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give students lots of choice in what they read.</li> <li>Allow students to talk informally about what they have read.</li> <li>Allow students to socialize, discuss, work together on projects related to their reading, etc.</li> <li>Allow students to bring in and share text they have read and enjoyed.</li> <li>Build a risk-free environment.</li> <li>Model your own motivation for reading and model reading yourself.</li> <li>Provide lots and lots of materials with different reading levels, different genres, and different content areas.</li> <li>Administer an interest inventory and gather appropriate reading materials.</li> </ul>



The following three matrices illustrate possible uses (or examples) of several of the assessment tools in this handbook.

Example 1			
Targets for Assessment	What Students Are Doing	Assessment Tool Used	Subsequent Instructional Modification
<b>Higher Order Thinking:</b> The student will be able to use higher order thinking skills to make good inferences.	Put students into small discussion groups to discuss content area text they have read.	Use the Discussion Matrix on pages 27–28 to gather evidence on each student's input in making good inferences.  Teacher listens to every group and uses the assessment tool to take notes on each student.	Using the evidence the teacher will make decisions about what the students need. For example:  Ⓐ Whole group follow-up: ask every group to choose its best inference and explain the evidence that supports it and why it is a good inference. This will provide a model for the whole group showing what good inferences are and how you make them.  Ⓑ Small group follow-up: pull the students who need further instruction into a small group for explicit instruction. Even older students may need some very basic instruction/activities on inferences, such as "You infer what time of day it is if the following are going on: students are listening to announcements, the teacher is writing the homework assignment on the board, and the buses are coming into the parking lot."

Example 2			
Targets for Assessment	What Students Are Doing	Assessment Tool Used	Subsequent Instructional Modification
<b>Higher Order Thinking:</b> Student will be able to analyze information in resource materials such as newspapers, journals, and Internet articles.	Students read an article and answer specific questions that focus on the analysis of information in the text.  This could be done individually in writing or in small group discussions.	Sample questions such as those on page 21–23	The teacher may find specific problems, for example some students are unable to detect bias or accuracy in information. She would then provide further instruction on how to recognize those particular problems by reading articles aloud and modeling her thinking about why the information was not accurate or sharing the clues she uses to pinpoint bias in an article.

Example 3			
Targets for Assessment	What Students Are Doing	Assessment Tool Used	Subsequent Instructional Modification
<b>Comprehension:</b> The student will be able to summarize main points in fiction or non-fiction text (for any content like science or social studies).	Retell—either oral or written In an oral retell, the individual student reads a piece of text and summarizes the main points to the teacher. In a written retell, the entire class can read a piece of text and respond in writing. This assessment would be useful in content area reading where the teacher may give an assignment such as “Summarize the five main points this article or chapter text makes about sound nutrition.”	Retell on pages 34–35 Prompt students to summarize the main points of what they read, either in writing or orally.	If students cannot summarize main points, the teacher may follow-up by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modeling with easier text or using text that has bullets or clear titles and subtitles to guide readers.</li> <li>The teacher may also use graphic organizers or divide the text into chunks—with each section having a main idea.</li> <li>Students may need help in learning good outlining skills to use when reading.</li> <li>Or they may need to be prompted to find key words that help build an understanding of the main points. For example, in nutrition or science, students may need to understand carbohydrates, fats, proteins, metabolism, etc. to understand the key points in sound nutrition. This building of the vocabulary is a key strategy to help students understand what they are reading.</li> </ul>





# Assessment Tools



The tools in this handbook are not sequential or organized in a consecutive fashion. Teachers should feel free to use them to focus on areas they feel will be most useful for their particular students.

The assessments are designed to help teachers clarify, for themselves and for their students, important targets for reading. The tools were designed to be used as formative assessments—that is, to provide feedback to students and information about what further instruction students need.



# Strategies Checklist

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

Students need to know what good reading strategies are. While effective readers use strategies quickly and easily without consciously thinking about how they are using them, less effective readers need to be more deliberate in their thinking about and use of strategies. Some students may not even realize they should be using strategies and, therefore, need exposure to those strategies. Or they may have only one or two strategies that they try to use in every situation. Using a variety of strategies is particularly important in content-area reading.

The checklist on page 15 reminds students of the reading strategies they may engage in and asks them to monitor those strategies. Teachers could also monitor students' use of strategies, especially if strategies match the text and purpose for reading.

## How do I use this assessment tool?

- 👤 You modify this checklist for the level of your students.
- 👤 You may duplicate it for each student and ask that it be placed in the reader's portfolio or comprehension folder for informal self-assessment. The student may check appropriate strategies or write a short explanation of how certain strategies were used.
- 👤 You may make a classroom poster for students to refer to the strategies.
- 👤 You may modify and choose particular strategies to apply to particular pieces of text.
- 👤 You may use the list as a springboard for small group or classroom discussion about how to strategize before, during, and after reading.
- 👤 You may ask students to add other strategies to the list.
- 👤 You may ask students to share strategies with parents or siblings.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☒ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation

### Remember to...

#### Model

Model for your students what these different reading strategies mean and how to use them when they read.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they learn how to use these strategies in different contexts. Explain why it is important to identify and use strategies.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's ability to apply these strategies. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)

# Strategies Checklist

Place a check by each strategy used.

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
<b>What do I already know?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set or identify purpose.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Activate background knowledge.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (What do I already know about this text?)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preview by skimming, looking at titles, subtitles, pictures, charts, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify the type of text, and review characteristics of that genre.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Predict what the selection will be about.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider the author—What do you know about him or her? What is his or her point of view?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask questions about the texts.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review vocabulary words that are new or may need attention.</li> </ul>	<b>How can I help myself?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Find categories and large ideas.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus and refocus attention.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor comprehension by knowing what you understand and what is confusing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Anticipate, predict; check predictions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use context to figure out vocabulary.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Generate questions about the text.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clarify ideas and relationships.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visualize: What do the scenes or the characters look like?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adjust reading speed or strategies according to text difficulty.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When you come to a difficult word, you may (1) read on, (2) look for a pattern in the word, or (3) predict a word that makes sense.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make personal connections.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notice what is interesting about the text.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notice structure of words (like compound words), sentences, and text.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take notes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Answer questions you have asked yourself and add new ones.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use text features to aid comprehension.</li> </ul>	<b>What did I learn?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talk about or write about some aspect of what you have read.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check predictions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on the major ideas of the text.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Summarize to check comprehension.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reread parts, if necessary.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on the effectiveness of reading strategies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate the text—Was it accurate, interesting, informative, etc.?</li> </ul>





# Self-Assessment: Strategies for Student Involvement

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

This tool helps students to engage in metacognition, which is the ability to self-reflect and to become more aware of, insightful about, and purposeful in their use of reading strategies. This assessment, which is particularly useful in reading content-area materials, will give the teacher valuable insights to help monitor students' use of and application of the strategies over time. You may wish to use the Strategies Checklist on page 15 in conjunction with this student self-assessment.

## How do I use this assessment tool with my students?

- ⌚ Ask students to fill out this tool periodically to self-assess how their uses of strategies change over time.
- ⌚ Discuss this tool with them, either as a whole class or in individual conferences.
- ⌚ Ask students to share how these strategies help them understand difficult text, especially in the content areas.
- ⌚ Prior to using this self-assessment tool with students, conduct a lesson on self-assessment and/or setting goals.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☒ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation

### Remember to...

#### Model

Model for your students what these different reading strategies mean and how to use them when they read.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they learn how to use these strategies in different contexts.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student ability to apply these strategies. (Opportunities can be self and/or teacher assessment.)

# Self-Assessment of Reading Strategies

	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>
I used different strategies with different kinds of text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
These strategies helped me to understand what I was reading.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The strategies made me read more carefully and thoughtfully.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The strategies that I found most useful were

---



---

My strengths in reading strategies are

---



---

I do not understand how to use these strategies and need some help. Explain:

---



---



---

Short-term goal I want to set based on this analysis:	Some things I need to do to meet this goal:	What evidence will I have to show that I met my goal?
Long-term goal I want to set based on this analysis:	Some things I need to do to meet this goal:	What evidence will I have to show that I met my goal?



# Assessment Questions to Target the Understanding of Purposes and Types of Text Prior to Reading

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

Methods of assessment include questioning, which can be oral or written. Answers to questions can provide excellent feedback if the questions are well crafted and focused on an appropriate target.

Students often do not understand that effective readers know they read for different purposes. For example, readers may approach newspaper articles very differently, perhaps looking at the headlines to get a brief summary, scanning the sports page to find the final scores of a particular game, and then reading an interesting story for complete and thorough details. Thus each newspaper article is read differently with respect to speed, attention to details, and the amount of distractions the reader can tolerate. So the reader's purpose in reading varies based on what is being read.

In addition, most readers approach types of text differently. For example, a reader expects a party invitation to contain concise, factual information—to answer the questions “who, when, where,” etc. A reader may expect a poem to invoke an emotional response or to invite insight and reflection. A reader would expect science fiction to be based on events that people create and to include a great deal of scientific information, but the reader would realize it is still fantasy rather than fact. Effective readers think about the type of text they are about to read and how they would read that type of text.

## How do I use this assessment tool?

The following tool contains sample questions to prompt different types of thinking students may use when reading for a particular *purpose* or in reading a particular *type of text*. Teachers in different content areas will find it useful to adapt these questions for the specific purposes and types of text relevant to their content area. This assessment clarifies for the teacher, and for the student, if the reader is approaching text in a manner that will prepare him/her to understand what is read.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☐ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation

### Suggestions for Using Questions

- ⌚ Teacher asks questions in individual interviews.
- ⌚ Teacher monitors discussion of questions in small groups or whole class.
- ⌚ Teacher asks students to respond in writing.
- ⌚ Students use questions to monitor their own understanding or that of their peers.

### Remember to...

#### Model

Model for your students how readers determine purpose and type of text.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they ask appropriate questions and modify their reading strategies according to purpose and type of text.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions in order to understand and assess the student's ability to modify approaches to reading different types of texts appropriately. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)

# Sample Questions

Teachers in different content areas will find it useful to adapt these questions for the specific purpose and types of text relevant to their content area.

## Questions you might ask when the *purpose* is reading for *specific information*

**Clarify:** What information am I trying to find?

**Preview:** What can I learn from the title, subtitle, and charts?

**Classify:** What categories/key ideas can I identify?

**Reading speed:** Am I reading closely and slowly enough to find information?

**Notes:** Can I underline, or should I take notes?

**Summarize:** Have I found the information I need?

**Clarify:** Do I understand the information and have enough detail?

## Questions you may ask when dealing with a particular *type of text*. These questions address *narrative text*.

**Setting:** When and where does this story take place? Can I visualize the scene? What should I expect from this time and place?

**Characters:** Who are the main characters? Can I differentiate among them? Visualize them? Begin to understand who they are and why they are doing the things they are doing? How have they changed over time?

**Plot:** What is happening as this story progresses? Can I identify the major conflict? Can I predict what will happen next?

## Questions you may ask when reading a scientific report for the *purpose of critique or evaluation*:

- ⌚ What is the hypothesis underlying this study?
- ⌚ What audience did the study target?
- ⌚ What information was given to help me understand the study?
- ⌚ How was the study designed?
- ⌚ What data are given as evidence? Was there enough evidence?
- ⌚ What are the results, and do they seem valid and reliable?
- ⌚ What did researchers conclude about the study? Were their findings supportive of the hypothesis?
- ⌚ Was this study worth the money, time, and effort expended? Does it have a significant impact?
- ⌚ How could I use these results in my own life?

### Other purposes of reading could include:

- ⌚ To be entertained
- ⌚ To determine if information is reliable and valid
- ⌚ To form an opinion
- ⌚ To understand a concept or idea
- ⌚ To understand research
- ⌚ To determine if something should be read in more depth



# Assessment Questions for Comprehension and Higher Order Thinking

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

It is important for readers to identify and analyze the type of questions being asked before they begin to formulate an answer. Understanding different types of questions and the purposes that underlie those different types (for example, to assess the reader's understanding of the main idea) helps the student think about the question and formulate an answer. If students do not understand the purpose of the question, they are much less likely to formulate an accurate and thoughtful answer.

Although these questions are short-answer, they ask for the same reading outcomes and skills similar to multiple-choice questions on many standardized tests, including state tests.

## How do I use this assessment tool?

These questions are organized by reading comprehension and higher order thinking categories. For example, the first set of questions focuses on how the student can monitor thinking. The questions may be used as handouts or as guides for some oral questions and class discussions. They are particularly useful in diagnosing and strengthening a student's ability to respond to certain types of questions. The teacher should use these selectively—focusing on the comprehension strategy he/she wants to assess. The teacher may also find other categories to target. Finally, the teacher may decide to use this tool in an interview or group discussion or give as homework.

If you use the provided materials as student handouts, please be aware that they were not written to be used in sequence, nor were they designed for all students to respond to all types of questions.

The following questions are general to all disciplines; content-area teachers will probably wish to adapt them for their specific discipline. They may either adapt the category or make the question more specific to the content being addressed.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☒ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☒ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation



## Suggestions for Using Questions

- ⌚ Teacher asks questions in individual interviews.
- ⌚ Teacher monitors discussion of questions in small groups or whole class.
- ⌚ Teacher asks students to respond in writing.
- ⌚ Students use questions to monitor their own understanding or that of their peers.

## Remember to...

### Model

Model for your students how to identify the purpose of a question.

### Guide

Guide your students as they learn how to formulate an answer depending upon the question's purpose.

### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the students' ability to formulate effective answers to questions (opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment) and to begin to formulate questions themselves.

# Sample Questions for Assessing Comprehension and Higher Order Thinking

## Sample questions that ask about monitoring thinking

- 1) What strategies should I use to read this type of text?
- 2) How does the author get the reader's attention?
- 3) What is the best way to use the graphics, glossary, charts, maps, and other visuals given in the text?
- 4) What is the author's purpose in writing this text?
- 5) Where did I have difficulty when reading this text?
- 6) What is your purpose in reading this text?
- 7) How should I adjust the way I read for this purpose?
- 8) Do I understand what has happened so far?

## Sample questions that ask about organizing details

- 1) What is the main point or idea in the section?
- 2) What specifics does the author give to support that idea or point?
- 3) What comparison does the author make in this section?
- 4) How does he/she support that comparison?
- 5) What are the most important facts (ideas) in this text? Why or how are they important?
- 6) How does the author organize his or her ideas? For example, from most important to least important?

## Sample questions that ask about analyzing information in reference material

- 1) Is the information in this text accurate? Complete? Biased? What do you use as evidence to support your judgment?
- 2) In evaluating the accuracy of this article, what would be the most important thing to consider?
- 3) What kind of book would have the following type of information?
- 4) If you wanted additional information about \_\_\_\_\_, what source would be best?

## Sample questions that ask the reader to determine mood, tone, purpose, and style

- 1) What is the mood of this story? Give three specific incidents (or passages) that made you draw this conclusion about the mood.
- 2) Think of several books you have read by the same author. What did these books have in common?
- 3) What is the author's style? Write a paragraph in which you imitate the style of the author.
- 4) What do you think was the author's purpose in writing this piece?



## Sample questions that ask students to determine the elements of fiction (plot, setting, conflict, characterization, etc.)

- 1) Describe the setting in the story. What evidence in the text leads you to draw that conclusion? How is the setting important to the story?
- 2) How does the author use dialogue, actions, and description to characterize the main character in the story? What conclusions about the characters can you draw from their action or their speech? Be specific.
- 3) What is the conflict in the story and what is the resolution?

## Sample questions that ask students to draw conclusions (make inferences) from information that is both explicit and implicit in the text

- 1) What type of person is the main character in this story? Give three examples of something he/she did or said that indicated this character trait.
- 2) Which of the following is not stated directly but could be concluded from this passage?
- 3) Which prediction is best supported by the information in this article?
- 4) What does the fact that \_\_\_\_\_ tell the reader?
- 5) Which lines best express the poem's theme?
- 6) Which of the following statements would be the most logical conclusion to draw about the author?

## Sample questions that ask students to critically analyze and evaluate text

- 1) Do you think the ideas in this text are valuable? Why or why not?
- 2) In evaluating the value of the ideas in this text, what would be the most important thing to consider?
- 3) How does the author make his/her argument effective?
- 4) Are the characters' actions believable and interesting? Explain.
- 5) Would you recommend this story to a classmate? Write a brief description of why you would or would not. Be sure to give your criteria for recommendation.
- 6) How does the author make this story interesting?

## Sample questions that ask students to define unknown vocabulary words by examining context

- 1) Can you use strategic word attack to figure out unknown words? Be sure to:
  - ⌚ Read to the end of the sentence.
  - ⌚ Reread and look at pictures/graphs/diagrams.
  - ⌚ Consider what word (especially any word that has the same prefix, suffix, or root) would make sense and substitute this word.
  - ⌚ Ask yourself: What clues in the sentence would indicate that this would be a good substitution?
  - ⌚ Ask yourself: Does a substitution maintain the author's meaning?

- 2) Use the following questions to examine the word:
- ⌚ Can you break the word into prefix, root, and suffix? If so, what is the meaning of that part of the word? Can you think of similar words that you know the meanings of?
  - ⌚ What part of speech is this word—noun, adjective, adverb, etc.? Will that information help you figure out what the word means?
  - ⌚ Are there any clues in the structure of the sentence that would help you figure out what the word means?

## **Sample questions that ask students to analyze and compare different types of text**

- 1) How are fables and fairy tales alike and different?
- 2) What are the characteristics of science fiction, historical fiction, etc.?
- 3) In this text, the author is presenting an argument. What techniques (for example, factual information, the words of an authority, emotional appeal, use of examples, etc.) does he use to persuade the reader?
- 4) What types of sources would be most appropriate on which to take notes on an informational paper?
- 5) Read the following newspaper article. Did the writer include all the necessary factual details the reader needs?
- 6) If you were doing a report on \_\_\_\_\_, what kinds of resources would provide the most valuable information?

## **Sample questions that ask students to paraphrase the main idea**

- 1) In a few words, can you describe the main idea of this passage?
- 2) How would you summarize the main points the author wanted the reader to learn?
- 3) What is the most important information in this text?
- 4) What lesson did you learn from this passage?
- 5) Construct a chart or a matrix that illustrates the main ideas of the passage (see an example of how a chart could be set up on page 24 and a sample chart on page 25).





## Paraphrasing the Main Idea: An Example

The following compare/contrast chart comes from Jean Schmidt at Union Pines High School; she uses a blank chart to ask students to discuss the work and the values of Native Americans and Puritans. The teacher can quickly glance at the student's entries to determine if he/she understands the main idea under each category. Below is a chart derived from the responses of one class (from *NCETA Notes*, Spring 1997).

Foundations of Society	Native American Values 1600s	Puritan Values 1600s
Environment	People are one with the land and animals. They live in harmony with nature. They use only what they need.	People are superior to the land; they are masters. Nature (especially the forest) and natural impulses are evil. People possess the land and value ownership.
Religion	Religion and state are the same. God is nature, animal, male, and female. Harmony with nature is physical and spiritual at the same time. Dead often regarded as present in spirit.	The Church governs as a supreme authority with the right to punish. God is a white male. Some are predestined to go to heaven; some are not. Heaven is ultimate escape from sinful earth and flesh.
Education	Elders and nature are the most valued teachers. People learn best when they are open to experience.	Education for boys is valued (not for girls). Institutions of the church are the best educators.
Economy	Sharing is the basic economic act (wealth is lost but land is forever). Produce for need, not for profit.	Competition for profits is the basic economic act. Material possessions and land ownership are highly valued. Inheritance is important.

# Tool for Paraphrasing the Main Idea



Main Idea	Comparison 1	Comparison 2



# Discussion Matrix for Teacher Assessment Purposes

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

Students need to be able to discuss the text they have read in order to clarify ideas and deepen their comprehension and understanding of what they have read. In addition, the teacher needs to have a written record of observations he/she makes during the student discussion, which provides:

- ⌚ A mechanism for fair and consistent feedback to the students.
- ⌚ A way of making sure that every student is being observed in a timely fashion.
- ⌚ Assurance that the information from observations is not forgotten over time.

Use the information from this assessment in order to individualize instruction or plan lessons for small groups or the entire class.

## How do I use this assessment tool?

The teacher may use the matrices, which exemplify formative assessment, to make notes and observations about students' participation in discussion, either in small groups or in discussion involving the entire class. Discussion is extremely important in developing the ability to critique and analyze text. Sharing a matrix like the one on the next page, explaining to students what they are expected to do during discussions, and giving them feedback on their performances help to make this process visible for students. It also allows the teacher to record and keep track of observations, ensuring a more comprehensive and accurate picture of each student's participation.

The teacher may wish to define the criteria for students so that they understand what makes a good discussion. Specific indicators can be displayed, for example on an overhead, so that students can refer to them as they discuss.

The teacher may wish to individualize the list of criteria or focus on just a few criteria. A blank chart is provided for this individualization.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☒ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☒ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation

### Remember to...

#### Model

Model for your students how to contribute to a discussion. Explain why discussion is so important.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they learn how to participate effectively in discussions.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's ability to discuss. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)

# Discussion Matrix

Text Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Focus of Discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

## Criteria for Observing

Student's name	Contributed to discussion	Listened to others	Referenced the text	Substantiated ideas with reasoning	Made inferences	Notes/ observations



## Assessment Tools

Page  
28

**Focus of Discussion:**

(See explanation of Four-Traits and Criteria for each listed on pages 29–30)

[illegible]

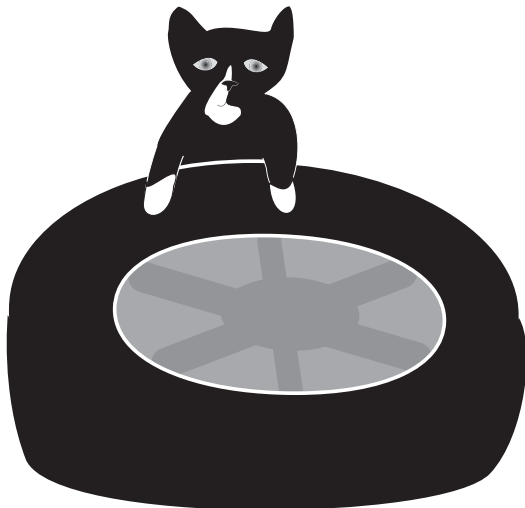
# Group Discussion Criteria

(Criteria from “Group Discussion Rubric,” Assessment Training Institute, 2000.)

## TRAIT 1: Content Understanding

(Comprehension of the content under discussion)

1. The student understands significant ideas relevant to the issue under discussion. This is indicated by correct use of terminology, precise selection of the pieces of information required to make a point, correct and appropriate use of examples and counterexamples, demonstration of which distinctions are important to make, and explanations that are concise and to the point.
2. Information and knowledge are accurate.
3. The student elaborates statements with accurate explanations, reasons, or evidence.



## TRAIT 2: Reasonability

(Ability to use the content to explore an issue, reach agreement, make a decision, or discuss a point)

1. The student actively participates in the development of the group mission.
2. The student states and identifies relevant and subordinate issues. These can be ethical (“Should we make a value judgment of what is right or wrong?”), definitional (“Are we using this word in the same manner?”), or factual (“What evidence do we have for this claim?”). There is deliberate and systematic consideration of embedded and related issues.
3. The student takes a position or makes a claim and defends it with explanations, reasons, or evidence.
4. The student stipulates claims or definitions (e.g., “for our discussion, let’s agree that conduct refers to behaviors while on military duty or while off duty but in uniform”). The student realizes when such stipulations are needed.
5. The student recognizes values or value conflict that form the assumption basis of arguments and recognizes when it is important to acknowledge these values.
6. The student argues by analogy.
7. The student recognizes the accuracy, logic, relevance, or clarity of statements. The student recognizes contradictions and irrelevant comments.
8. The student has a clear idea of the shape of the task and sustains inquiry until the task is completed. The student knows when the task is completed satisfactorily.
9. The student asks clarifying questions and knows when clarifying questions need to be asked.
10. The student distinguishes fact from opinion.
11. The student summarizes points of agreement and disagreement to set the stage for further movement; the student knows when such summaries are useful.



# Group Discussion Criteria

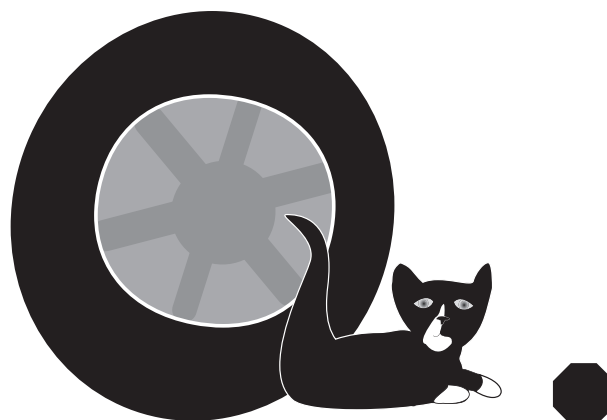
(Criteria from “Group Discussion Rubric,” Assessment Training Institute, 2000.)

## TRAIT 3: Interaction With Others

1. The student initiates the development of the group process, including identifying roles and accepting responsibility for fulfilling assigned roles within the group.
2. Interaction reflects group norms—the student is appropriate for the group and setting.
3. The student invites contribution from others as needed, and the student knows when such contributions are needed.
4. The student acknowledges the statements of others in a way that builds a consecutive interchange between participants. Replies to others are responsive to the statement and indicate that the student understood it and thought about it.
5. When disagreeing, the student does it respectfully. The nature of the disagreement is stated and an invitation to respond extended.
6. The student makes sure that all relevant points are heard.
7. The student is courteous and attentive.
8. Nonverbal behavior is consistent with verbal behavior; both are positive. Positive non-verbal behavior includes nodding, leaning forward, and maintaining eye contact.
9. The student is aware of cultural differences in social interaction and behaves in an appropriate fashion.
10. When conflicts arise, the student attempts to resolve them.
11. Talking is task-oriented and group-oriented—“we.”
12. Decision-making is shared—there is lots of evidence of teaming and collaboration.

## TRAIT 4: Language

1. The student uses precise vocabulary and economical syntax. Words and syntax are purposefully chosen to make a point.
2. The student uses language that others in the group will understand.
3. The student defines or clearly explains in language concepts that might be unfamiliar to others; the student knows when such explanations might be necessary.



# Discussion Matrix

Text Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Focus of Discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

## Criteria for Observing

Student							





# Self-Assessment of Discussion for the Student

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

The goal for assessment should be the student's independence and autonomy in self-assessing. Thus, it is important to provide students with instruction, guidance, and multiple opportunities for self-assessment. This assessment also informs the students of the quality of their participation in discussion and helps them set personal goals for improvement.

Students should evaluate their own performances in discussion using the same criteria as the teacher's matrix on page 33. You may wish to schedule an individual conference to look at the student's evaluation of his or her discussion compared with the evaluation of the teacher.

Use the information from this assessment in order to individualize instruction or plan lessons for small groups or the entire class or have the students determine what they need to work on for individual growth goals to improve their own ability to discuss what they read.

## How do I use this assessment tool?

The teacher may make comparisons between the observations he/she made about the students and their self-assessments. Most students will be able to self-assess in a reasonable, insightful way, allowing teachers to concentrate their attention on the students who lack reflection, insight, and ability to analyze their contributions to discussions.

Students should be encouraged to set goals they need to work on once they have analyzed their performance.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☒ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☒ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation



### Remember to...

#### Model

Model for your students how to self-assess.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they assess their contributions to discussion.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's ability to self-assess. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)

# Self-Assessment of Discussion for the Student

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Text we discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

	Often	Somewhat	Not Often
1. I contributed to the discussion.			
2. I listened to others.			
3. I referenced the text.			
4. I substantiated ideas with reasoning.			
5. I made inferences I could support with evidence.			
In this discussion, describe the connections you were able to make to your own life, another content area, or the real world.			
Analyzing Performance and Setting Goals: Describe what you did well in this discussion and what you need to do to improve.			



# Retelling: Assessing Comprehension

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

The retell allows the teacher to understand how well the student comprehends text and is able to summarize the main ideas or sequence of the story. Retell is beneficial to the teacher in pinpointing problems that students have in basic understanding of text, in seeing the structure of the text, and in remembering important details.

## How do I use this assessment tool?

In retell, the teacher may choose an appropriate piece of text or ask the student to choose an interesting piece of text and read it aloud (if the purpose is to check skill in oral fluency). If the purpose is to check comprehension, the teacher may choose to read the text or ask the student to read it silently. The student should be instructed to tell the story (or summarize the information) as if he or she were telling it to a student who had never read the piece.

The teacher may use an unaided retelling, in which the reader tells the story whatever way he/she prefers, with no prompting from the teacher. Or, the teacher may choose an aided retelling, in which he or she probes with questions. The teacher may use the following kinds of questions to probe:

Nonfiction	Fiction
What were the most important points or ideas?	What was the setting?
What questions did you have?	What happened next?
Can you remember any specific examples of _____?	Was there a major conflict in the story?

Rate the reader's comprehension with either a rubric or a checklist (examples follow). The retell can be recorded or written if the teacher needs a more complete record of the student's retelling or if the teacher needs to assess a number of students.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☒ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation

### Remember to...

#### Model

Model for your students how to do a retell. Explain the importance of retell.

#### Guide

Guide your students to use retell with different types of text.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's ability to retell. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)

## Retelling: Fiction Checklist

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Story: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Included in retelling	Responded to prompt	Notes
Established setting and character			
Identified the major conflicts of the story			
Described the resolution of the conflict			

Reading Type:    Silent \_\_\_\_\_                      Oral \_\_\_\_\_



## Retelling: Non-Fiction Rubric

- 4** Included main ideas and important examples; retelling was accurate, precise, and clear.
- 3** Included main ideas and important examples; retelling was mostly accurate, precise, and clear.
- 2** Included some main ideas or important examples; retelling was somewhat accurate, precise, and clear.
- 1** Did not include main ideas or important examples; retelling was basically inaccurate, not precise, and unclear.



# The Think Aloud

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

The Think Aloud enables the teacher to assess the student's ability to process information during reading. This information is important in helping the teacher understand the cause of any misunderstanding the child may be having in making meaning of the text. The Think Aloud provides a window into the student's thinking as he or she reads.

## How do I use this tool?

The Think Aloud is an activity where the teacher provides a text for the student to read and asks the student to say aloud everything that comes to his or her mind immediately after he or she has read. Only indirect cues are used to probe when necessary; for example, the teacher may ask, "Can you tell me more?" The student's remarks are recorded, usually on audiotape. The teacher should also be observant for behavior that indicates the student is anxious, frustrated, interested in reading, etc.

Directions for administering a Think Aloud are given on the next page. On the following pages, three different patterns of comprehension are examined. For each of the three types of comprehenders, a sample student response that illustrates the typical pattern is given, followed by suggested strategies for helping the comprehender.

Three common types of readers are the schema-imposer, the non-integrator, and the non-risk-taker.

Adapted from Wade, S.E. (1995). Using think alouds to assess comprehension. In *Reading assessment in practice: A book of readings*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Copyright 1995 by the International Reading Association.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☒ Oral Fluency
- ☒ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation



### Remember to...

#### Model

Model think alouds for your students.  
Explain the importance of think alouds.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they learn how to engage in think alouds.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's ability to read fluently and process information by using think aloud. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)

# Procedure for Administering and Scoring a Comprehension Think Aloud

## I. Preparing the text: Choose a short passage (expository or narrative) written to meet the following criteria:

1. Text should be 80–200 words in length, depending on the reader's age and reading ability.
2. It should be new to the reader but on a topic that is familiar.
3. Text should be at the reader's instructional level—somewhat challenging but not overwhelming.
4. Passage should be untitled and the topic sentence should appear last (you may need to alter the text).
5. Text should be divided into segments of 1–4 sentences each.

## II. Administering the Think Aloud (session should be taped and notes taken)

1. Tell the reader that she or he will be reading a passage in short segments of 1–4 sentences.
2. Tell the reader that after each segment she or he will be asked to tell what the story is about.
3. Have the student read a segment aloud; ask the reader to tell what is happening.
4. Follow with nondirective probes if necessary. The questions should encourage the reader to generate hypotheses ("What do you think this is about?") and to describe how he or she came to that hypothesis ("What clues in the story helped you?").
5. Continue until the entire passage is read. Then ask the reader to retell the entire story in her or his words. The reader may reread the entire passage first.
6. You may also ask the reader to find the most important sentence in the passage.

## III. Analyzing results

1. Does the reader generate hypotheses?
2. Does he or she support hypotheses with information from the passage?
3. What information from the text does the reader use?
4. Does he or she relate material in the text to background information or previous experience?
5. Does the reader integrate new information into the schema he or she has already activated?
6. What does the reader do if there is information that contradicts the schema he or she has created?
7. How does the reader deal with unfamiliar words?
8. At what point does the reader recognize what the story is about?
9. What kinds of strategies does the reader use?
10. How confident is the reader about her or his hypothesis?
11. What other observations can be made about the reader's behavior, attitudes, or strategies?

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Adapted from Wade, S.E. (1995). Using think alouds to assess comprehension. In *Reading assessment in practice: A book of readings*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Copyright 1995 by the International Reading Association.



## Going further...

### What Type of Reader Is This Student? Using Think Alouds to Diagnose the Type of Reader

Notice how the teacher-student dialogue helps the teacher identify students' strengths and to diagnose the pattern of the problems the reader is having. Here are three very common types of reading problems.

1. **Schema-imposer.** A schema is the overall theory about the meaning of the text being read. The reader integrates his or her background knowledge with the new knowledge from the text in order to form a schema to explain what he or she is reading. A schema-imposer develops an initial hypothesis and then holds on to the idea even after new information from the text conflicts with or even contradicts the hypothesis. Notice how this reader seems unable to "let go" of the initial hypothesis about meaning.

---

**TEXT:** It sat very still, not moving its body, just throwing its head this way and that to toss the silk in the right place.

**T:** What do you think this could be about?

**S:** Mmmmm. Maybe a cat.

**T:** Why do you think it's a cat?

**S:** 'Cause of the silk. You know how cats play with yarn.

**TEXT:** Finally, its home for the winter is done at last.

**S:** The cat has to make a home for itself for the winter.

**TEXT:** As it hangs, soft and gray in color, it looks like a dead leaf.

**S:** Well, it's probably a kitten. Yeah, a kitten.

**T:** What makes you think that?

**S:** Kittens are soft and gray and when they're asleep they kinda look like they're dead.

**TEXT:** It seems to be dead, but inside something wonderful is happening.

**S:** I know. It's a mother cat with kittens inside her.

---

Instructional strategies for helping the schema-imposer:

- a. Present two alternate hypotheses and ask which one is better, given what the student has read in the text.
- b. Ask questions that probe for alternative interpretations: "Are there other ways to make sense of this?"



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Adapted from Wade, S.E. (1995). Using think alouds to assess comprehension. In *Reading assessment in practice: A book of readings*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Copyright 1995 by the International Reading Association.

- c. Make sure that the reader has adequate background knowledge, both of the topic and the kind of text being read, before he or she begins reading.
  - d. Use guided reading to help students form an appropriate schema before they read independently.
  - e. Make sure students understand what they are doing in schema-imposing; ask them to focus on how and why they reason out an answer, not just what the correct answer is.
  - f. Ask student to reference the text: "Where in the story does it say that?"
2. **Non-integrator.** This problem reader develops a new hypothesis for every segment of text, without integrating ideas to form a cohesive meaning.

---

**TEXT: It sat very still, not moving its body, just throwing its head this way and that to toss the silk in the right place.**

- S:** Spider!
- T:** Okay, what clues in the story tell you that it's a spider?
- S:** Spiders make silk come out of their bodies.
- T:** Anything else that gives you a clue about it being a spider?
- S:** Because it stays still.
- T:** Oh, because it stays still sometimes.

**TEXT: Finally, its home for the winter is done at last.**

- S:** A polar bear.
- T:** Oh, a polar bear. Remember all these sentences belong together to make a story. Do you think that these sentences have anything to do with a spider?
- S:** No.
- T:** What made you change your mind?
- S:** Because a spider doesn't have a house under the ground.
- T:** Does the story say anything about houses under the ground?
- S:** Yes, the polar bear makes a house under the ground to get ready for winter.
- T:** Okay, are you ready for more?

**TEXT: As it hangs, soft and gray in color, it looks like a dead leaf.**

- S:** Opossum!
- T:** Now you think it's an opossum? What makes you think that?
- S:** Because an opossum hangs from its tail.
- T:** Any other things that might make you think it's an opossum?
- S:** Yes, it looks like a leaf.

---

Non-integrators have difficulty maintaining an interpretation and discard interpretations too often. They do not make connections between sentences and paragraphs to form one coherent interpretation of what they are reading.




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Adapted from Wade, S.E. (1995). Using think alouds to assess comprehension. In *Reading assessment in practice: A book of readings*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Copyright 1995 by the International Reading Association.





Instructional strategies to help the non-integrator:

- a) Help the student to develop relevant background knowledge before he or she begins to read, helping her or him to develop a schema.
- b) Help the student to link ideas together from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph. A graphic organizer or a semantic map may help with coherence.
- c) Ask the student to reference the text: "Where in the story does it say that?"
- d) Remind the student that the paragraphs in the text work together to complete a whole story.

3. **Non-risk-taker.** This reader is very reluctant to develop a hypothesis about meaning, relying on the literal words of the text or the teacher. The non-risk-taker tends to repeat words from the text in order to answer questions; if asked to go beyond a literal interpretation, she or he will indicate, "I don't know," or "It doesn't say."

---

**TEXT:** The first thing you will want to do is to find a big person to help you out.  
Have a grown-up hold on tight so that everything remains steady while you climb on up.

- T:** What do you think this is about?  
**S:** I don't know.  
**T:** Can you give me any guesses?  
**S:** (no response)  
**T:** Can you describe for me what is happening?  
**S:** A big person is helping.  
**T:** Can you tell me anything else?  
**S:** (shrugs no)
- 

Instructional strategies to help the non-risk-taker:

- a) Model your own thinking for students or allow students who are effective readers to model theirs. It is important that the non-risk-taker understand that effective readers make hypotheses based on the text and then test those hypotheses.
- b) Using schematic maps and graphic organizers can help the student to link ideas together for comprehension and coherence.
- c) Make sure the reader has adequate background knowledge, both of the topic and the kind of text being read, before he or she begins reading.
- d) Remind students that effective readers draw conclusions and make connections with their own experiences.
- e) Read a portion of a text and allow students to "Stop—think about what you have read—discuss the text."



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Adapted from Wade, S.E. (1995). Using think alouds to assess comprehension. In *Reading assessment in practice: A book of readings*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Copyright 1995 by the International Reading Association.

# The Reading Record

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

The record (on page 42) of a student's self-selected reading of text outside of class encourages fluency, provides a way for the teacher to give feedback to the student, and helps the student to develop organization skills and a method of tracking what he or she reads over a period of time.

## How do I use this assessment tool?

The teacher may ask the student to record her/his reading daily or weekly. Students may use a blank reading record such as the one on the following page. In a follow up conversation they may also evaluate their reading based on questions such as the following:

- 🕒 If there were any books you did not finish, why did you stop reading?
- 🕒 Look at the categories. Were you reading different kinds of books or the same kind?
- 🕒 What do you like most about the categories you chose? Do you plan to try new categories?
- 🕒 What was your favorite book? Why?
- 🕒 What was the most difficult book? Why? How was it worth or not worth the difficulty involved in reading it?
- 🕒 Did the graphics or pictures help you to read the book?
- 🕒 Tell a little about how and why you selected to read what you did. Did friends or family recommend the book? Did you choose a book because of your interests or because you saw the movie?
- 🕒 About how much time do you spend reading each week? When do you read?
- 🕒 Write a brief evaluation of your reading. Base your evaluation on the time you spent reading, the amount you read, your interest in the books, and the quality of what you read.
- 🕒 Why is it important to keep track of your readings?

If you question whether the students actually read the books they listed on their reading records, you may plan to use the following activities:

1. Schedule a short individual conference with each student to discuss his or her reading record.
2. Ask students to engage in book discussions in small groups during the marking period. Monitor these group discussions.
3. Ask your students to write something about one of the entries (adapted from Claggett, 1996).
4. Calculate the total number of pages and time students reported their reading. It is important to have a target you want the entire class to read per month/year to encourage participation.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☐ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☒ Motivation



### Remember to...

#### Model

Model for your students how to use a reading record showing your own personal reading record or another student's record. Explain why doing this is important.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they complete their reading record.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's reading record. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.) This record could be part of a portfolio or notebook students keep.



# The Reading Record

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Title	Author	Category (i.e., sci-fi, bio.)	Pages/ time	Comments

"The Reading Record" is adapted by permission from *A measure of success: From assignment to assessment in English language arts* by Fran Claggett. Copyright 1996.

*Use additional sheets if necessary*

# Fluency Check

## Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

Fluency is the ability to read text accurately and quickly, recognizing words automatically and gaining meaning from the text. Fluency allows readers to read effortlessly, with natural expression, as if they were speaking. Readers who lack fluency read slowly, word by word, in a choppy, plodding manner. Thus, fluency, because it helps the reader to focus attention on what the text means, is a necessary characteristic of an effective reader.

A student having trouble with fluency may:

- ⌚ Read at an inappropriately slow pace.
- ⌚ Pause or stop often.
- ⌚ Sound unnatural.
- ⌚ Not attend to punctuation.
- ⌚ Read with little or no expression.

(See the matrix on page 8 for some indicators of oral fluency.)

## How do I use this assessment tool?

The following fluency check allows the teacher to focus on and gather information as the student reads orally. The teacher may record observations or make notes immediately following the student's reading aloud.

You may have the student tape record her/himself for self-assessment. Or, students may pair off and listen to each other read and give feedback based on understanding the criteria they are using to judge each other.

After listening to a student, the teacher should discuss the observations made and offer advice on how to improve. The teacher needs to know what to look for in an effective reader before giving feedback. The student should know what the criteria are that the teacher is using to evaluate their fluency.

Refer to the Five Targets of Assessment Matrix on pages 8–10 for a more comprehensive explanation of oral fluency and modifications to instruction.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☒ Oral Fluency
- ☐ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☐ Motivation



### Remember to...

#### Model

Model fluent reading for your students.  
Explain why reading fluently is important.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they learn how to read fluently.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's ability to read fluently. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)



Fluency Check

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency Criteria	Notes
<b>Pace</b> (speed of reading)	
<b>Flow</b> (attending to rhythm or meaningful chunks, including punctuation)	
<b>Sound</b> (resembling speech, natural-sounding language)	
<b>Expression</b> (using emphasis and tone of voice)	
<b>Other criteria</b>	
<b>Feedback for student:</b>	

# Response Journal

## Why would I use this tool?

Effective readers stop and reflect upon what they are reading. They make connections to their own lives, and they monitor emotional responses to what they are reading. A journal allows students to record these kinds of responses in a systematic way, and it allows the teacher to understand how well students are making connections as they read.

## How do I use this assessment tool?

Each student should keep a written response journal. The teacher may assign open-ended questions to be completed (such as the sample questions for categories of comprehension on pages 21–23), allowing the student to choose from among selected questions or allowing free-response entries.

Response journals should be used not merely to summarize what students have read but to react to the text personally, logically, and/or aesthetically. In addition to text, students may respond to activities in class or to the logistics of a situation. For example:

- 🕒 What did you enjoy or not enjoy?
- 🕒 Recall the events of the day and respond to the one you liked the most, telling why.
- 🕒 What was the most significant finding of our science experiment? Why is it significant?
- 🕒 Can you relate what we just read to an example in your personal life?

The teacher can use a rubric to assess (and to help students to self-assess) the levels of insight and reflection as well as the quality and depth of their entries, or ask students to assess their own journal entries using the rubric. This assessment can help students extend their thinking about what they read, and it can offer the teacher valuable insights into the students' thinking and their personal responses. However, it should not be over used, since students can come to view it as burden rather than an opportunity to share.

**\*Note:** Should students choose to write personal entries or things they do not want the teacher to read—ask them to fold those pages over or mark them as private.

**\*Note:** A teacher may ask students to identify the type of response they have written—for example,

- 🕒 Retell
- 🕒 Personal response
- 🕒 Analysis, etc.

They could use icons as an organizing feature to track their responses over time.

### Explanation

#### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☐ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☒ Higher Order Thinking
- ☒ Motivation

### Remember to...

#### Model

Model for your students how to use a response journal. Explain why this is important.

#### Guide

Guide your students as they learn how to use the response journal.

#### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's response journal. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)



## Sample Rubric for Literature Response Journals

## Excellent

- ☐ Used relevant and accurate specifics from the story that clarified characters, actions, setting ideas
- ☐ Responded aesthetically or personally
- ☐ Demonstrated a creative, insightful, or analytical response such as make connections to the real world

## Getting There

- ☐ Used some specifics from the story but their relevance and accuracy were not clear or well-connected to ideas
- ☐ Implied or suggested an aesthetic or personal response
- ☐ Showed some creativity, insight, or analysis in response

## Not Yet

- ☐ Either confused or did not mention specifics
- ☐ Did not demonstrate a clear aesthetic or personal response
- ☐ Showed little creativity, insight, or analysis in response



# Sample Rubric for Science Response Journals

## Excellent

- ☐ Understood and analyzed what they read
- ☐ Understood the vocabulary and used the vocabulary in their responses
- ☐ Made connections to the real world that make sense
- ☐ Critiqued and evaluated the text

## Getting There

- ☐ Understood some information and was able to analyze what was read
- ☐ Used some of the vocabulary words in responses, but evidence showed limited understanding of vocabulary
- ☐ Connections to the real world were weak through the examples given
- ☐ Responses showed some analyzing was done but the text was not evaluated

## Not Yet

- ☐ No evidence of analyzing for depth of understanding
- ☐ Vocabulary was not used in responses—little evidence to support vocabulary knowledge
- ☐ Connections to the real world were not made
- ☐ No evidence to support a critique or evaluation of the text read

# Checklist: Attitudes Toward Reading

## For the Student

### Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

Effective readers develop positive attitudes toward reading. They are self-aware and insightful about their attitudes and behaviors, and they actively and purposefully construct and work toward goals. Developing positive and constructive attitudes will help students to improve comprehension. It is most helpful if students are given an opportunity to self-assess attitudes toward reading and then given an opportunity to dialogue with others or to compare and contrast attitudes and beliefs.

### How do I use this assessment tool?

The checklist may be completed at the beginning and ending of the grading period, or it may also be completed several times during the course or grade. Comparisons should allow the student and you to see the reader's changing attitudes toward reading.

The student should also fill in his or her goals for developing a positive attitude and monitor progress toward the completion of these goals.

Students could be given this assessment to complete individually then be asked to get with a peer or group to discuss attitudes and beliefs and determine how they could help each other think about reading differently.

The teacher may wish to conduct an open-ended interview with each student to gain even more information and help him or her set reachable goals.

#### Explanation

##### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☐ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☒ Motivation



#### Remember to...

##### Model

Model for your students how to monitor their attitudes by discussing goal setting.

##### Guide

Guide your students as they learn to use the checklist. For example, discuss "sometimes" vs. "usually."

##### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's attitudes. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.) For example, "I never read nonfiction books—I will read one nonfiction book this grading period."





# Self-Assessment: Attitudes Toward Reading

Statements	Usually	Sometimes	Not often
1. I enjoy reading.			
2. I choose to read in my free time.			
3. I read every day for at least 1 hour.			
4. I read different kinds of books—fiction and nonfiction.			
5. I read magazines and newspapers.			
6. I talk with other people about what I have read.			
7. I enjoy writing about or responding to what I have read.			
8. I choose to read things that are difficult to read.			
9. I think of myself as a good reader.			
My goals in reading for this grading period are to:			

# Checklist: Attitudes Toward Reading

## For the Teacher

### Why do I want to use this assessment tool?

Effective readers develop positive attitudes toward reading. They are self-aware and insightful about their attitudes and behaviors, and they actively and purposefully construct and work toward goals. Developing positive and constructive attitudes will help students improve comprehension. Asking students to share how a reading assessment activity was conducted is very powerful in helping to provide the teacher with feedback for making improvements in the learning cycle.

### How do I use this assessment tool?

This assessment may be completed at the beginning and ending of the grading period, or it may also be completed several times during the course or grade. Comparisons should allow you and the students to see overall how a class or group of students feels about specific reading activities conducted in the classroom.

This tool can be revised to include other reading texts—like articles, stories, poems, etc.—that are more specific to content area. It can also be used as a guide for a discussion with students about their attitudes.

Explain to students how this information (from the assessment) will be used to help the teacher improve reading instruction.

#### Explanation

##### Reading Checklist

- ☐ Oral Fluency
- ☐ Comprehension
- ☒ Strategies
- ☐ Higher Order Thinking
- ☒ Motivation



#### Remember to...

##### Model

Model for your students why they need to monitor their attitudes and how the teacher can use this information to improve teaching. Explain why this assessment will give valuable information.

##### Guide

Guide your students as they learn how to use this checklist to provide information on their reading.

##### Apply

Provide various opportunities for teacher and student interactions to understand and assess the student's attitudes. (Opportunities can be self- and/or teacher assessment.)

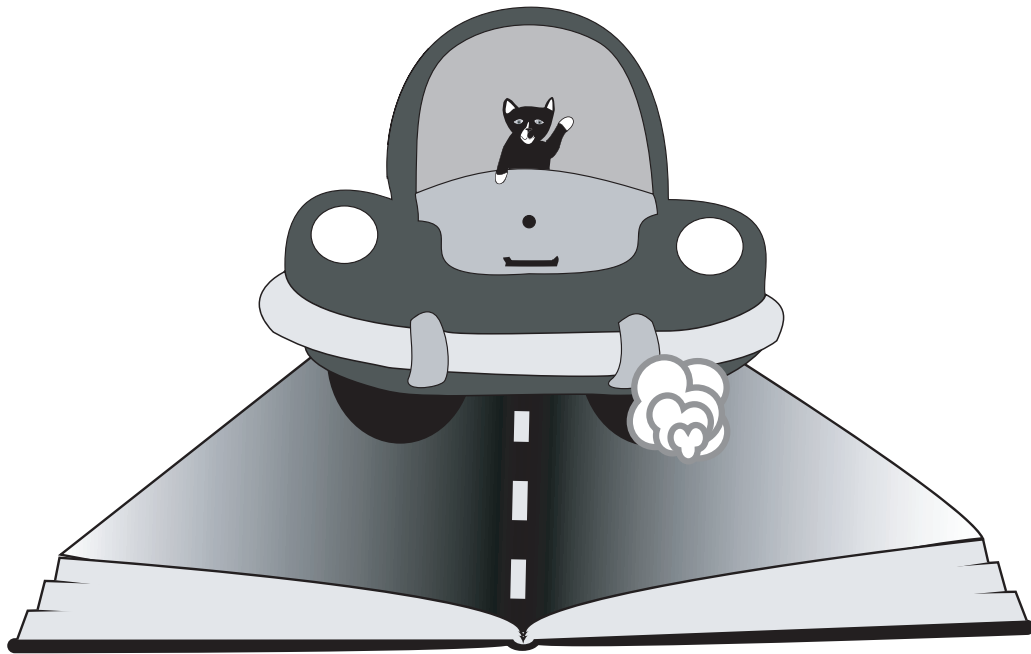


# Self-Assessment: Attitudes Toward Reading

- 1. How well did you read this book?
  - ☐ Very carefully
  - ☐ Just enough to get by in class
  - ☐ Didn't make it through the whole thing
- 2. How interesting was this book to you?
  - ☐ Very interesting (I'd read it again or recommend it to a friend.)
  - ☐ Somewhat interesting (I skimmed over the few parts I didn't enjoy.)
  - ☐ Barely interesting (I read it, but it was hard to stay focused.)
  - ☐ Not at all interesting (I really disliked reading this.)
- 3. How often did you find yourself reading words/pages without really getting the point?
  - ☐ All the time
  - ☐ Sometimes
  - ☐ Never
- 4. Were there any parts of this book that you found hard to read or understand?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No

If yes, which parts?
- 5. How did you feel about the classroom activities we had around this book?  
(The activities could be listed below so the students could make comments about each one.)
- 6. What could we do in this class to making reading more enjoyable?

# Conclusion



# Conclusion

## Reading Assessment Tools for Grades 3–12

When assessing reading, teachers should remain mindful that an effective reader is engaging in a multitude of mental activities as he or she reads. It is also important to remember that, while teachers may target the five categories for assessing effective reading (oral fluency, comprehension, strategies, higher order thinking, and motivation) discussed in this handbook, reading is a complex process that ultimately must be assessed holistically. In order to gain a holistic view of students' effectiveness in reading, it is necessary to provide multiple and diverse opportunities for students to demonstrate effective reading ability over time.

### Effective Readers Engage Holistically in the Following Complex Processes:

- ⌚ Demonstrate intellectual engagement with the text: experiment with ideas; think divergently; take risks; express opinions; speculate, hypothesize, visualize characters or scenes, explore alternative scenarios; raise questions; make predictions; think metaphorically.
- ⌚ Explore multiple possibilities of meaning; consider cultural and/or psychological nuances and complexities in the text.
- ⌚ Fill in gaps; use clues and evidence in the passage to draw conclusions; make warranted and plausible interpretations of ideas, facts, concepts, and/or arguments.
- ⌚ Recognize and deal with ambiguities in the text.
- ⌚ Revise, reshape, and/or deepen early interpretations.
- ⌚ Evaluate; examine the degree of fit between the author's ideas or information and the reader's prior knowledge or experience.
- ⌚ Challenge and reflect critically on the text by agreeing or disagreeing, arguing, endorsing, questioning, and/or wondering.
- ⌚ Demonstrate understanding of the work as a whole.
- ⌚ Attend to the structure of the text; show how the parts work together; how characters and/or other elements of the work are related and change.
- ⌚ Show aesthetic appreciation of the text; consider linguistic and structural complexities.
- ⌚ Allude to and/or retell specific passages to validate and expand ideas.
- ⌚ Make connections between the text and their own ideas, experience, and knowledge.
- ⌚ Demonstrate emotional engagement with the text.
- ⌚ Reflect on the meaning(s) of the text, including larger or more universal significances; express a new understanding or insight.

"Effective readers engage holistically in the following complex processes" is reprinted from *A measure of success: From assignment to assessment in English language arts* by Fran Claggett. Copyright © 1996 by Mary Frances Claggett. Published by Boynton/Cook, a subsidiary of Reed Elsevier Inc., Portsmouth, NH.

Given the complexity of reading assessment, how does the teacher record, organize, and use evidence of students' reading effectiveness?

One way to collect evidence of each student's reading effectiveness is to create a Reading Portfolio, a collection of student work over time with an emphasis on progress. You may choose from the activities in this handbook to generate a list of requirements for the student portfolio. If you do decide that students should be responsible for a reading portfolio, first make sure there is a purpose for the portfolio, (for example, students could create their own reading profile) then you may find the following suggested criteria useful in planning and implementing a reading portfolio with students:

- 👤 The student should decide, at least in part, what will be included.
- 👤 The student should assess and reflect upon his or her work.
- 👤 The portfolio should represent growth over time.
- 👤 There should be specified criteria for evaluation of work to be included and specific criteria for evaluating the portfolio as a whole.
- 👤 The portfolio should be the student's responsibility (not the teacher's).

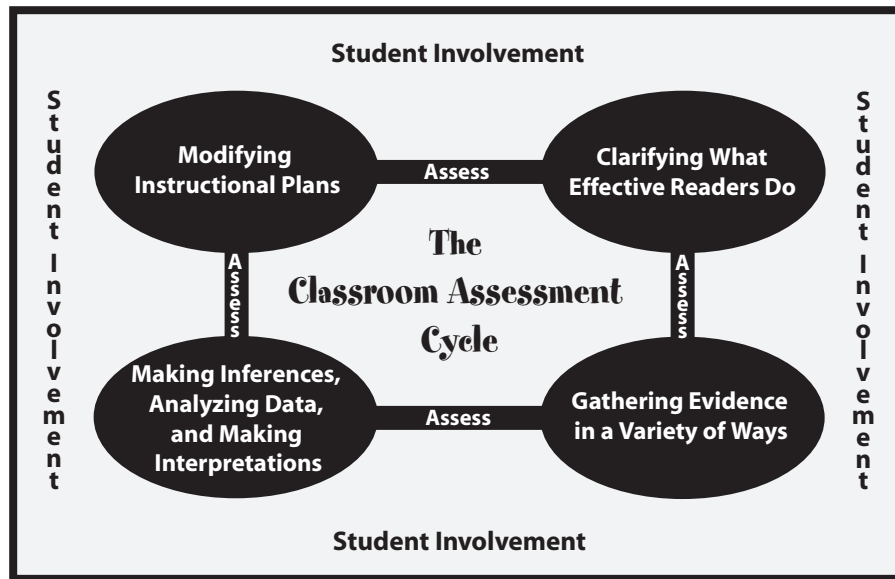
Some sample criteria could include:

- 👤 **Reflection:** Are self-assessments sincere, insightful, and real?
- 👤 **Organization:** Does the portfolio have a clear purpose and good organization?
- 👤 **Purposeful:** Do the selected items, taken as a whole, reflect and represent the purpose?
- 👤 **Audience:** Does the portfolio demonstrate an awareness of audience?
- 👤 **Evidence:** Does the evidence provided give enough information to show the student met the intended purpose?
- 👤 **Ownership:** Is the portfolio attractive and well presented?
- 👤 **Completion:** Is the portfolio complete?
- 👤 **Breadth:** Do the selected items reflect an appropriate breadth of activity and learning?

Finally, instituting portfolio assessment in the classroom is a long-range, complex process, and the teacher will need to find resources, experiment, and hone the process over several years. The students need to be clear that they are selecting evidence that supports their performance based on specific criteria. Help students understand what criteria mean and what good evidence looks like. The portfolio process is a good way to involve students in assessing their own learning, and they can learn to make good inferences and determine what modifications they need to become a better reader.

The teacher who is planning to work on reading assessment with their students should remember to use the on-going, recursive cycle of classroom assessment that was discussed in the introduction. (A reminder that although this cycle can be used in any content area, the intent of this handbook is to target reading and assessment.)

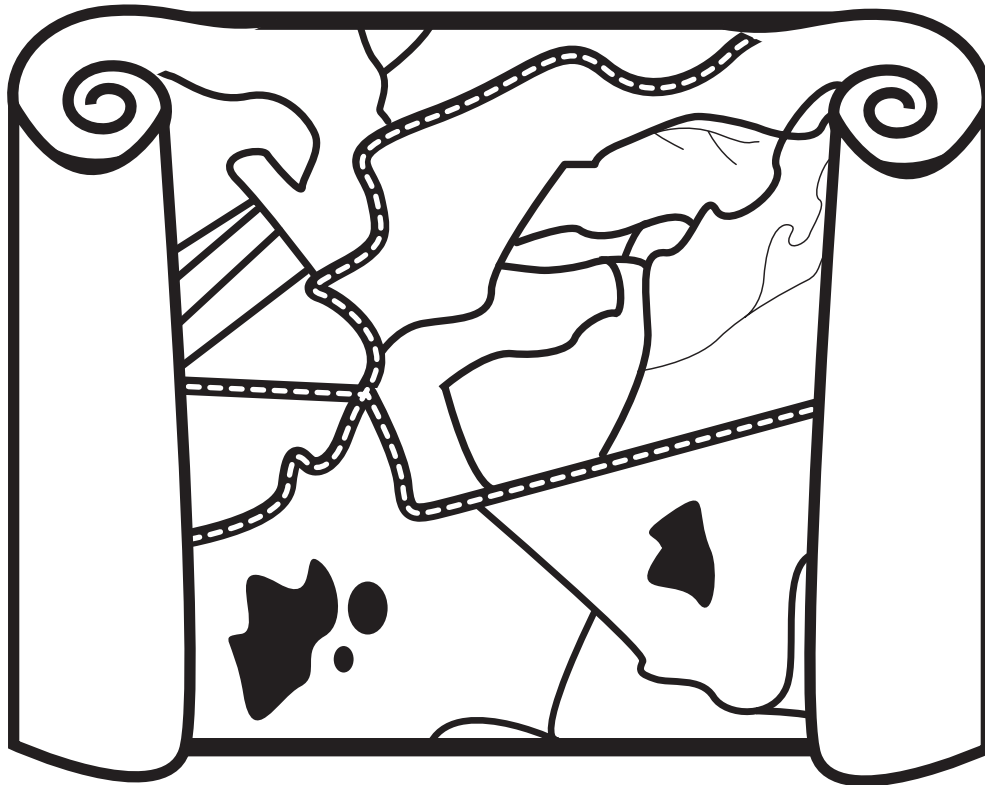




In any formative assessment process remember to:

- ① Use your state or local reading competencies (or standards) to define targets clearly for yourself and your students.
- ② Use multiple, diverse, and quality assessment tools, over time, to gather information about students' strategies, comprehension, and characteristics or habits. A good thing to remember is to have at least three pieces of evidence from students for the targets you are assessing. This is often referred to as triangulation of assessment evidence.
- ③ Use the information from those assessments to make inferences and interpretations about students' reading proficiencies.
- ④ Use those inferences and interpretations to formulate instructional plans or modifications to address specific things a student needs in order to improve.

# Additional Information





# The Cueing Systems

Teachers may wish to read this section for background information on how readers use these systems to synthesize the reading process. It may benefit upper grade teachers (3–12) to read over this section to gain an understanding of how students learn to read in their early years or how some readers who are not English proficient are still struggling to use these systems to improve their reading.

These cueing systems usually used by teachers in grades K–2 consist of:

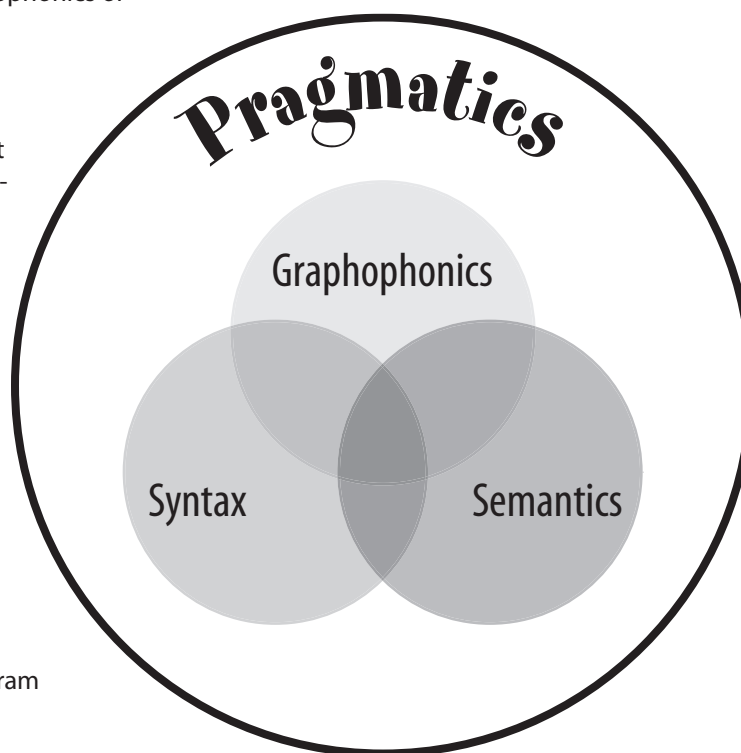
1. Graphophonics
2. Syntax
3. Semantics

Effective readers use three cueing systems and pragmatics to employ a variety of strategies in comprehending text. The semantics cueing system involves background knowledge and personal experience. The graphophonics cueing system involves the knowledge of sound-symbol relationships. The syntax cueing system involves the knowledge of the way the language works. Pragmatics is the knowledge of the social rules and conventions of language in a particular context. In using these cueing systems, readers essentially ask themselves three questions:

- ⌚ Does it sound like language? (Syntax or Structure)
- ⌚ Does it sound or look right? (Graphophonics or Letter/Sound patterns)
- ⌚ Does it make sense? (Semantics or Knowledge and Experience)

Humans use language differently in different situations. Many factors (how formal the situation is, how well we know the people, etc.) influence the use of language. Pragmatics thus involves external knowledge surrounding the context of the language. This could include knowledge of background information that is pertinent to a subject area, social situation, historical time period, or geographical location. For example, reading a news headline that states “Tiger Woods is 5 under par for the day” would have little or no meaning unless the reader understands scoring methods used for the game of golf.

The interaction of the cueing systems and pragmatics can be illustrated by the diagram on the right.



In assessing the students' use of the cueing systems and pragmatics, you will want to listen to them read aloud and reason their way through a piece of text. In listening to students read aloud and think their way through text, you may include the following:

- 🕒 Ask the student to choose from several appropriate pieces of text, which he or she has not already read, and read aloud, doing what he or she would normally do if he or she came to an unfamiliar word.
- 🕒 Ask the student to retell what he or she had just read as if he or she were explaining it to another student who has not read the selection. Be sure to give complete directions regarding the Read Aloud and Retell before the student begins. Rehearsing during instruction will strengthen retells.

## Consider the following when trying to determine how the student is using the cueing systems:

### Syntax

#### "Does it sound like language?"

In the Read Aloud, the reading should sound like English. Even when the reader makes substitutions, he should do the following:

- 🕒 Keep the function of the word (for example substituting a verb for a verb).
- 🕒 Keep the same word ending (for example substituting similar plurals and tenses).
- 🕒 Keep the word order of the sentences the same.

An English language learner or a limited English proficient student who has not yet developed a sense of the sound and structure of English may read this sentence, "But nobody brought any caps that morning" as "But nobody birthday and they the morning."

On the other hand, Lewis Carroll's poem "Jabberwocky" uses nonsense words in a way that sounds like language:

"'Twas brillig and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gymbol in the wabe."

Instructional activities for students who need support with syntax:

- 🕒 Provide opportunities for students to read aloud and ask themselves, "Does this sound like language?"
- 🕒 Teach students to reread and/or adjust their rate of speed if what they are reading doesn't "sound right."
- 🕒 Teach students to pay attention to how punctuation (question marks, commas, semicolons) indicates the speed and inflection with which to read.
- 🕒 Provide opportunities for students to listen to, read, and discuss different types of sentence structures.



## Graphophonics

### “Does it sound and/or look right?”

As the student reads aloud, the teacher determines how closely the substitutions look like and/or sound like the original text.

For example, a student may read this sentence, “But nobody bought any caps that morning” as “But nobody purchased any caps that day.” The graphic similarity between “bought” and “purchased” is quite low as is the similarity between “morning” and “day.” However, the reader has made meaning from the text, meaning that is at least relatively similar to the author’s meaning. Effective readers make substitutions that allow them to read on, or they quickly self-correct.

Other readers who are evaluated as needing help in reading often pay too much attention to the relationship between sounds and letters. These readers may be very slow and deliberate in their reading aloud, with their focus on looking at and sounding out words, rather than making sense of the text.

Instructional activities for students who have difficulty with graphophonics:

- 🕒 Teach students that certain letters or letter combinations represent certain sounds. Give them practice and reinforcement.
- 🕒 Teach students to recognize letter-sound relationships. Have them ask themselves, “Do the letters match the sound?”
- 🕒 Teach students to look at the ordered sequence of letters.
- 🕒 Teach students to look for familiar spelling patterns and provide practice with word families.

## Semantics

### “Does it make sense?”

The teacher can listen during the Read Aloud to determine if the sentences make sense. For example, a student may read the line, “The cowboy jumped on his horse and rode away,” as “The cowboy jumped on his hose and rode away.” The sentence sounds like language; the graphic similarity between “horse” and “hose” is high. However, the substitution makes no sense.

The Retell, however, is the most accurate check to see how the reader was making sense of the entire text as he was going along. Many students read aloud well but can retell little of what they have read with clarity, precision, and accuracy. Reading strategies will probably be most effective with these students. They are readers, just not strategic readers.

Instructional activities for students who need support with semantics:

- 🕒 Teach students to use context to predict and confirm meaning.
- 🕒 Provide opportunities to practice rereading, reading ahead, and substituting words to figure out meaning from context.
- 🕒 Instruct students in how to formulate questions of the book or of the author to clarify what they understand and what they are confirmed about.
- 🕒 Ask students to summarize, synthesize, and retell periodically as they are reading.

# Shifts in Reading Self-Assessment

**Directions:** Respond to this self-assessment in terms of where you feel you currently are. Read each statement as “In assessing reading, I...” and mark your current practice on the continuum. For example, if you conclude that “In assessing reading, I use only text-bought assessments,” then you would mark “1.” If you conclude that “In assessing reading, I use a variety of reading assessments that include listening to a child read in a one-on-one conference,” then you would mark “5.” If you believe that you fall somewhere in between the two, you would mark “4,” “3,” or “2.”

In assessing reading, I...	5	4	3	2	1	In assessing reading, I...
Use a variety of reading assessments that include listening to a child read and talk about his or her reading in a one-on-one conference.						Use primarily text-bought assessments that focus on assessing factual recall or isolated skills of reading rather than the processes or system of reading.
Assess for a variety of summative and formative purposes (emphasized during instruction at frequent intervals to let students know how they are doing) and to let me know how effectively I am teaching.						Assess only at the end of instruction or instructional units to see what was learned or to assign a grade. I use more summative assessment practices.
Use evidence collected from assessments for a <i>variety of purposes</i> , including determining the strengths and confusions of the performance at this moment in time.						Use evidence collected from assessments only to determine students' ability to read or predict future reading performances.
Plan my instruction to take students to the next learning step in reading based upon the evidence collected from student assessments.						Plan my instruction based upon the scope and sequence or the programmed reading curriculum.
Allow students to have an active role with their assessments through self-assessment and reflection.						Play the solo role of assessor.
Develop a shared vision of what to assess and how to do it with my students.						Am the sole developer or selector of assessments in my classroom.
Continuously share assessment information with my students in the form of feedback as well as help them set goals for improvement in reading.						Keep assessment information to myself until the end of the reporting period at which time students see their grades.

Competent Assessment of Reading Professional Development Toolkit

**What does this mean for me as a teacher of reading? Where do I fall on this scale?**

Competent Assessment of Reading:  
Tools for Providing Feedback in Reading



Additional Information

# Setting Goals for Yourself:

**What do you need to work on  
to build your expertise in the area of reading assessment?**

(Note your own personal beliefs and goals for teaching and assessing reading in your classroom.)

# Glossary

**Note:** Words with an asterisk (\*) are discussed within the assessment activities found in this handbook. The additional terms are included to provide further information to those interested in reading instruction and assessment.

<b>Analysis</b>	This term is referred to as the third level of thinking, according to Bloom's Taxonomy, which looks at the parts to understand the whole. Examples of analysis are to compare, to deduce, or to categorize.
<b>*Assessment</b>	The act of collecting information about individuals or group performances in order to understand their learning. By definition, assessment means, "to sit by," suggesting a relationship between learner and teacher that is one of feedback for improvement and a continuous process for learning.
<b>Bodies of Evidence</b>	Systematic or regular samplings of a reader's performance on a range of reading understandings used to determine the level of operation and effectiveness of the reader's reading system. Bodies of evidence are used to make decisions and take action regarding student learning. An instructional portfolio used day-to-day in classrooms is one example of a body of evidence.
<b>*Comprehension</b>	The process by which readers create meaning for the texts they read, images they view, or language they speak. These meanings are built from the connections the reader makes between the new material and his or her prior background knowledge, the ways the reader structures meaning, and decisions the reader makes about what is important or relevant.
<b>*Constructing Meaning</b>	The work done by the reader to make sense of the print read.
<b>*Context Clue(s)</b>	Information from the immediate textual setting that helps identify a word or word group, including phrases, sentences, illustrations, syntax, typography, etc. Additionally, the background knowledge readers bring to reading, readers' purposes for reading, and the conditions under which material is read all contribute to the reading context. When readers meet unfamiliar words, context cues narrow down the possible word choices, thereby making word identification more efficient.





<b>Individual Reading Conference</b>	An assessment method used as a one-on-one vehicle to assess reader progress and achievement with specific setting, materials, and procedures for before, during, and after a reading.
<b>*Inference</b>	A judgment or conclusion derived from information, where consistent patterns in written language represent particular sounds.
<b>Informational</b>	Text read in any form that gives information or explains something.
<b>*Learning Targets</b>	These are often referred to as standards or achievement targets. These targets may include knowledge and reasoning, skills, products, and any dispositional targets warranted. The targets need to be clear, steady, and reachable goals for learning that educators have agreed upon that all students should know and be able to do.
<b>Literature Circles</b>	A reading assessment that involves student discussion and response focused on student-selected print. The assessment is conducted in a small and temporary group setting with specific performance criteria.
<b>Meaning-Making Processes</b>	Thinking processes the learner uses to create meaning from print. The reader sets relevant purposes for understanding print, actively engages the reading system, and continuously thinks about the meaning. As with code breaking, meaning making depends on the learner operating effortlessly on print and growing more sophisticated at making sense of print structures and content.
<b>*Metacognition</b>	Awareness and control of one's thinking, where there is a consciousness of the thinking and learning strategies with knowledge of when to apply them.
<b>*Pragmatics</b>	Pragmatics is the knowledge of the social rules and conventions of language in a particular context.
<b>*Prefixes</b>	Meaningful parts attached to the beginning of words, such as re + play = replay and un + cover = uncover.
<b>*Prior Knowledge (or Background Knowledge)</b>	Knowledge and experience related to a topic a reader/writer brings to the task.
<b>Quality Feedback</b>	Information given to the reader regarding performance that is frequent, specific, timely, and describes performance compared to that of an effective reader performance.







- \*Text** Text is printed communications in varied forms; oral communications, including conversations, speeches, etc.; and visual communications, such as film, video, and computer displays.
- \*Think-Aloud** Think-aloud means to verbalize what is thought while reading, writing, or representing.
- Thinking Skills** These skills are relatively specific cognitive operations that can be considered the “building blocks” of thinking. Specific examples are information gathering, organizing, analyzing, and evaluating skills.
- Word Recognition** Word recognition is the quick and easy identification of the form, pronunciation, and appropriate meaning of a word previously met in print or writing. Included is the word identification process of determining the pronunciation and some degree of meaning of a familiar or new word in written or printed form.



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# SERVE Organizational Capabilities

The SERVE Center for Continuous Improvement is an education organization with the mission to promote and support excellence in educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast. The organization's commitment to continuous improvement is manifest in an applied research-to-practice model that drives its work. Building on existing research and craft knowledge, SERVE staff develops tools and processes designed to assist practitioners and policymakers with their work, in support of improved student achievement in the region. Evaluation of the impact of these activities combined with input from affected stakeholders expands SERVE's knowledge base and informs future research.

An experienced staff strategically located throughout the region supports this vigorous and practical approach to research and development. This staff is highly skilled in providing needs-assessment services, conducting applied research in schools, and developing processes, products, and programs in response to identified needs. In the last four years, in addition to its R&D work with over 170 southeastern schools, SERVE staff has provided technical assistance and training to more than 18,000 teachers and administrators across the region.

At the core of SERVE's work is the operation of the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL). Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the REL at SERVE is one of ten regional organizations providing research-based information and services to all 50 states and territories. These Laboratories form a nationwide knowledge network, building a bank of information and resources shared nationally and disseminated regionally. Each of the ten Laboratories was assigned a different National Leadership Area. SERVE's National Leadership Area focuses on Expanded Learning Opportunities (pre-K and extended-day programs).

In addition to the Lab, SERVE is involved in a broad spectrum of programs and activities that strengthen the usefulness of its work with schools, districts, and states. SERVE operates the Southeast Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education at SERVE (SERC), the Southeast Initiatives Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR♦TEC), and administers a subcontract for the Region IV Comprehensive Center. Additional funding from the U.S. Department of Education allows SERVE to provide services in migrant education and to operate the National Center for Homeless Education.

## Disseminating Research

A key role for SERVE is to provide timely, useful, and relevant research to southeastern K–12 practitioners, policy-makers, and state department of education officials. The dissemination of research occurs through SERVE's *The Vision* magazine, Policy Briefs, and Special Reports, which summarize research and practice on emerging issues, technical assistance, professional development, and training and are primary vehicles for disseminating research to practitioners across the region and nationally. Products and services are scaled up by SERVE, Inc., a commercial, not-for-profit outreach arm to UNCG (SERVE, Inc. is a 509(a)3 support corporation to UNCG). Annual SERVE conferences on school improvement and expanded learning opportunities and networking events for various role-alike groups such as rural school district superintendents and state education policy staff have also been implemented successfully by SERVE. In addition, SERVE conducts research and evaluation studies in collaboration with state school superintendents as part of an annual Memorandum of Understanding developed with each superintendent.

SERVE works alone and with partners in describing and documenting the implementation of new initiatives such as class size reduction efforts, Comprehensive School Reform (CSR), state programs to assist low-performing schools, state efforts to develop Early Learning Standards, high-quality professional development as described in the No Child Left Behind Act, data use at the school level, and high school reform. Another important contri-



## Conducting Research and Development (R&D)

- 🕒 The Eisenhower Consortium at SERVE participates with other Eisenhower programs nationally in a Middle School Mathematics Project to provide support to mathematics teachers at selected low-performing middle schools.
- 🕒 SERVE has also provided technical assistance to several low-performing districts through its participation in a group called SERVE-Leads, which is a district consortium that meets several times a year to plan strategies for improving the quality of instruction.

## Conducting Evaluations

The SERVE Evaluation staff has established a solid reputation in providing evaluation services and technical assistance to school districts, state education agencies, and community organizations. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used as appropriate.

## SERVE, Inc.

SERVE, Inc. is an outreach arm of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro created to disseminate tested and proven products and services into communities, districts, schools, and classrooms. It is a market-driven dissemination organization positioned to respond to needs highlighted by federal, state, and local school improvement initiatives like NCLB and Goals 2000. Revenues generated by SERVE, Inc. are recycled into new R&D products and services to continuously better serve the educational community.

The SERVE, Inc. mission is to provide proven, cost-effective, customized products and services to enhance the growth potential of individuals and groups by disseminating the highest-quality products and services developed through R&D work performed at the SERVE Center for Continuous Improvement at UNCG and other independent sources.

Many educational products and services have been developed through the conceptual stage into implementation at the regional level through the SERVE Center. All go through rigorous field-testing to determine their effectiveness in helping practitioners/teachers to help students. The Center sponsors programs throughout the Southeast. Through the UNCG Technology Transfer process, such innovations can be licensed for dissemination on a national basis, creating opportunities in technology transfer to commercialize proven educational products and services.

For educational products and services to be considered for dissemination by SERVE, Inc., each must have been documented as research-based. This means that credible studies have been performed, published, and critiqued by objective researchers and practitioners in the field. A program then earns the SERVE Seal of Assurance. A higher-rated SERVE Seal of Assurance is awarded when programs have been further scrutinized in random clinical trials that test for effectiveness. Building on theory and craft knowledge, SERVE then develops tools and processes designed to assist practitioners and, ultimately, to raise the level of student achievement in the region. Evaluation of the impact of these activities, including input from stakeholders, expands SERVE's knowledge base and directs future research. This research-to-practice-to-evaluation cycle is critical to the rigorously applied SERVE Quality Assurance system.





# Tools for Providing Feedback in Reading

A Reading Assessment Handbook for All Teachers in Grades 3–12

Teachers are busy people with more work to do than can be done in the time they have available. With so much on their plates, why should teachers, across disciplines, think about assessment of reading? Isn't that the responsibility of the reading teacher? In reality, it is the responsibility of all teachers because every content area involves some form of reading.

This handbook encourages teachers of all subject areas to use their insights into themselves as readers to strengthen their understanding of how their students read. Our focus is not upon evaluating or labeling students but how to use formative assessment. Formative assessment is a continuous monitoring of student learning with the purpose of providing feedback to the learner as to progress and achievement. Formative assessment supports and informs the teacher in making the next instructional decisions and helps students understand what they need to work on to improve.



AACARH

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