

# Literacy Education (Birth – Grade 6) Literacy Diagnostic Evaluation

Name: John Doe  
Grade: 1

Age: 7

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

John Doe was brought to the NYU Literacy Clinic by his parents after having completed the first half of 1<sup>st</sup> grade. His parents expressed their desire for J. D. to be able to read an entire book on his own. They reported that although J. D. has an excellent memory and enjoys reading, he has significant trouble with vowel combinations and he often substitutes an incorrect word that is similar in meaning to the correct word. J. D.'s parents reported that he loves reading about animals and the planet Earth. J. D. uses a computer at home, and receives extra support from his school's reading teacher.

J. D.'s reading teacher referred him to the clinic. She teaches him reading every day for 50 minutes, and reported that he needs additional one on one support that will allow his reading to become more reflective of his excellent intellect. She reported that although J. D. is very bright, has a great vocabulary, and maintains a wealth of background knowledge, he is still taking a significantly longer time to read than the other children. Although J. D. is able to detect patterns in stories and recognize many sight words, the reading teacher reports that J. D. experiences trouble listening carefully, is often lost in his own thoughts, and requires frequent redirecting. She also reports that he experiences trouble with letter-sound correspondences, handwriting, and letter and number reversals. Overall, J. D.'s reading teacher suggests that additional work in phonemic awareness, phonics, spatial orientation, and listening skills would be especially helpful. She also stresses that J. D. responds most positively to structure, clear expectations, one on one settings, and a variety of activities that are active, fun, and stimulating.

During the testing, J. D. was initially quiet, but he responded appropriately to the questions I posed. He was eager to read and he expressed that he enjoyed both academic and recreational reading. He also expressed that he does not enjoy reading aloud in class, and he dislikes it when the teacher asks him questions about his reading. However, J. D. was very excited about coming to the clinic, and appeared very happy to be there.

## TESTS ADMINISTERED

<i>Qualitative Reading Inventory</i>	N/A (too difficult, see below)
Word Recognition	preprimer, low instructional (70%)
Oral Reading	preprimer, frustration (17 miscues), 0 WCPM
Comprehension	preprimer, frustration (3/5 correct)
<i>Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)</i>	Level 2, 97% - Independent
	Level 3, 98% - Independent
	<b>Level 4, 89% - Instructional</b>
	Level 6, <88% - Frustration

<i>DRA</i> WCPM	Level 4: 47 WCPM
<i>DRA</i> Hasbrouck and Tindal Fluency, Winter	Level 4: 75 <sup>th</sup> percentile
<i>Words Their Way</i> ESI Power Score	13/33
<i>Words Their Way</i> ESI Feature Score	13/24
<i>Words Their Way</i> Stage	Middle Letter Name – Alphabetic
<i>TOWRE</i> Sight Word Percentile	17 <sup>th</sup> percentile
<i>TOWRE</i> Phonemic Decoding Percentile	35 <sup>th</sup> percentile
<i>Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey</i>	
Recreational	58 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Academic	34 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Full scale	43 <sup>rd</sup> percentile
<i>Observation Survey</i>	
Letter Identification	53/54; Stanine 4-5
Dictation (Hearing Sounds in Words)	30/37, Stanine: 3
Writing Vocabulary	27, Stanine: 3
<i>Concepts of Print</i>	13/16
<i>Fry Sight Word List</i>	
Sight Words	35/100
Decoded	21/100
Total	56/100
<i>Informal Phonics Inventory</i>	
Consonant Sounds	19/20
Consonant Digraphs	3/5
Beginning Consonant Blends	18/20
Final Consonant Blends and <i>ng</i>	7/12
Short Vowels in CVC words	8/10
The Rule of Silent e	0/4
Long Vowel Digraphs	2/10
Diphthongs	1/6
<i>r</i> -controlled vowels and <i>-al</i>	2/6
TOTAL	60/93

## OBSERVATIONS DURING TESTING

### Word Recognition

#### *Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)*

The *Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)* is an informal assessment that helps teachers determine a child's independent reading level, instructional reading level, and frustration level. The teacher can also assess the child's background knowledge in an area, keep track of reading miscues, learn about the child's fluency, and evaluate the child.

In order to determine the appropriate *QRI* level with which to start, the child first reads a graded word list. I wanted to know whether or not this assessment would be appropriate for J. D.'s developmental level, so I started with the "preprimer" word list, which is the easiest list for this particular assessment. J. D. read this list with 70% accuracy, which is at the frustration level. Please see the Oral Reading section for information about how J. D. performed on the text portion of the *QRI*.

#### *Fry Sight-Word Inventory*

The *Fry Sight-Word Inventory* assesses a child's ability to recognize up to 300 words that occur most often in text. J. D. correctly read 56/100 words, and he automatically decoded 35 of them. By looking at J. D.'s incorrect responses, it can be seen that he often reads only the first letter or two and guesses the rest of the word. He also confuses long and short vowels within words, and switches the letters b, d, p, and q. Consider the following:

<u>Actual Word</u>	<u>J. D.'s Oral Response</u>
Or	Off
By	Bee
Word	Water
What	Which
How	Who
Many	My
Water	Worst
Come	Came
Write	Where
Do	Boo
Then	Theen
But	Bot

#### *TOWRE*

The *TOWRE* assessment also assesses word recognition by testing sight word efficiency and phonemic decoding efficiency. For the first part of the assessment, the child has 45 seconds to correctly read as many high frequency words as possible. The words increase in difficulty as the list continues. For the second part of the assessment,

the child has 45 seconds to read nonsense words. The child must decode them, as he or she would any other unfamiliar word. These words increase in difficulty.

In 45 seconds, J. D. was able to correctly read 15 sight words on the first part of the test. While this only puts him at the 17<sup>th</sup> percentile among other 1<sup>st</sup> graders, J. D. correctly identified 15/17 sight words correctly.

In 45 seconds, J. D. was able to correctly decode 9 “made up” words, or phonemes, correctly. Although this only puts him at the 35<sup>th</sup> percentile among other 1<sup>st</sup> graders, J. D. correctly decoded 9 “made up” words correctly. Among his mistakes, some were because he read a short vowel as a long vowel, or visa versa, and some were because he added an extra letter or sound at the end of a word. Consider the following:

<u>“Made Up” Word</u>	<u>J. D.’s Oral Pronunciation</u>
Ip	Ip
Ga	Gap
Ko	Cop
Ta	Ta
Om	Um
Ig	Ig
Pim	Pim
Wum	Wum

## **Oral Reading**

### *Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)*

The oral reading portion of the *QRI* is designed so that teachers can assess many different aspects of reading. The teacher ascertains the student’s prior knowledge by asking a few questions and rating the given answers. The child then reads a passage aloud while the teacher listens and records the child’s miscues. After the passage is read, the child provides a retelling of the passage and answers comprehension questions.

I gave J. D. the easiest passage to read. J. D. scored at a frustration level, with 17 miscues while reading the text. Continuing with the *QRI* would be too difficult for J. D., and inappropriate for further assessment. In order to find an instructional level text, I gave J. D. the Developmental Reading Assessment.

### *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)*

Similar to the *QRI*, the *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)* enables a teacher to determine an instructional reading level. The child reads each passage aloud, and then retells what he or she remembers from the story. Comprehension questions are then asked by the examiner. It also informs the teacher about a child’s reading behaviors in decoding, fluency and comprehension.

I administered levels 2, 3, 4, and 6 to J. D. (level 5 does not exist). J. D. scored at an independent level for levels 2 and 3; that is, he would be able to read these texts by himself. J. D. scored at an instructional level for level 4; that is, J. D. would benefit best from reading these texts with a teacher. J. D. scored at a frustration level for level 6; that is, J. D. would benefit from extra instruction before he attempts this level. For levels 2,

3, and 4, J. D. comprehended adequately, while with level 6, J. D. only had some comprehension of the text.

At this point, I decided that level 4 of the *DRA* leveled texts would be most appropriate to start using for instruction.

### *Reading Rate and Fluency*

While the ultimate goal of reading is to comprehend, it is important that a child be able to read at a rate that is appropriate for their particular grade level. That being said, an emphasis on just trying to read quickly is never advocated. It is important to try to read as quickly and fluently as possible, but never to the point where it sacrifices one's comprehension.

On level 4 of the *DRA*, which is his instructional level, J. D. was reading 47 words correct per minute. According to the Hasbruck and Tindell norms chart, his fluency level is at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile when compared to other 1<sup>st</sup> graders reading at this particular text level. However, it is important to note that this text level is below grade level for a mid-year first grader.

### **Informal Phonics Inventory**

At this point, I wanted to determine what J. D. knows about the alphabetic system. I gave him the *Informal Phonics Inventory*, which is a criterion-referenced measure intended to assess the child's knowledge of letter sounds in isolation and in words.

J. D. scored very well on consonant sounds, beginning consonant blends, and short vowels in consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. He will need a review of consonant digraphs, such as "th," "sh," "ch," "wh," and "ph." J. D. will need systematic instruction of final consonant blends and *ng*, the rule of silent *e*, long vowel digraphs, diphthongs, and *r*-controlled vowels and *-al*. For the exact scores in each of these subtests, please see the above section, Tests Administered. Please note the following examples where J. D. experienced difficulty:

The Rule of Silent E	<u>Actual Word:</u>	<u>J. D.'s Response:</u>
	Cape	Keep
	Tote	Teet
	Cube	Cubby
	Kite	Keet
Final Consonant Blends	Lilt	Light
	Lisp	Lips
	Bask	Bast
	Lint	Lift
	List	Lips
Long Vowel Digraphs	Loaf	Laughed
	Aim	Am
	Weed	Weed
	Ray	Rary
	Gain	Ga-een

Coal  
Heat

Cow  
He – at

### **Pre-reading Knowledge and Abilities (Concepts of Print)**

In order to be true readers, children need to have a secure knowledge of some basic concepts. They need to have a secure concept about print, understanding that words carry meaning, knowing what print is used for, and possessing directionality. They also need to have a comfortable knowledge of letters. Finally, they need to have an awareness of phonemes or sounds in spoken words. This awareness is needed so that a child can match written letters to individual sounds.

J. D. was tested in each of these areas and he showed that he is very knowledgeable in these areas. J. D. understands the orientation of a book, print carries meaning, directional understanding, speech-to-print matching, recognition of periods, lowercase and uppercase letters, the concept of a letter, the concept of a word, and the concept of the first and last letter in a word. J. D. did not know the name for a question mark, the function or name for a comma, and the name for quotation marks. However, he did know the function of a question mark and quotation marks.

### **Spelling**

#### *Words Their Way Elementary Spelling Inventory*

The spelling inventory is an assessment that helps the teacher determine the child's stage of spelling development. Each word on the test is more difficult than the previous word and contains features that the teacher can analyze to determine what the child understands about spelling and what is difficult for the child.

J. D. had no trouble spelling initial and final consonants of words. He had difficulty spelling the correct short vowels, as he only spelled 25% of the short vowel words correctly. He spelled 1/2 words containing digraphs (sh/ch) correctly, and 2/6 words containing blends correctly. J. D. did not spell any words containing long vowels correctly.

An analysis of his spelling mistakes puts him at the "Middle Letter Name-Alphabetic" spelling stage. This means that instruction will start with short vowels, and move on to digraphs, blends, and eventually long vowels.

### **Reading Attitude**

#### *Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*

The *Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* is a quick survey that indicates the student's attitudes toward reading. I read each statement aloud and had J. D. choose a Garfield picture that displays the emotion he feels about the statement. Overall, J. D. has a positive attitude about both academic and recreational reading. He fell in the 43<sup>rd</sup> percentile when compared with other 1<sup>st</sup> graders, which indicates that about half of all first graders feel the same way that he does about reading. In general, J. D. enjoys

recreational reading more than academic reading. He does not like taking reading tests or reading aloud in class. J. D. enjoys reading during free time and going to reading class.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

J. D. is a mid-year first grade student having difficulty with reading. He was given the *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)* and found to be reading at an instructional level for level 4. This level is equivalent to a pre-primer text, which is appropriate for the beginning of first grade. There is a clear text structure with many repeated phrases and words. The pictures always correlate to the text. After reading this level, I realized that many of J. D.'s miscues were guesses based on the first one or two letters of the target word. Information gathered from the *Informal Phonics Inventory* tells me that although J. D. is confident reading words that contain consonants, short vowels, and beginning consonant blends, he has trouble reading words that contain long vowel digraphs, final consonant blends, and silent *e*. J. D. was also given the *Words Their Way Elementary Spelling Inventory* Feature Guide, for which he was determined to be at the Middle Letter Name – Alphabetic spelling stage. Interestingly, J. D.'s invented spelling shows that he hasn't yet mastered distinguishing short vowel sounds from each other when spelling words. Yet, while reading, he is able to pronounce short vowel words correctly. This is most likely because when reading, there are context clues, other letters in the word, and structural elements of text that J. D. is drawing from to decode the words. This indicates that J. D. needs systematic, explicit instruction of short vowels, digraphs, and blends.

J. D. was also given the *Fry Sight Word Inventory*, for which he recognized 35/100 words as sight words. His lack of automatic sight word recognition significantly hinders his fluency and comprehension during reading.

Throughout all of the assessments, J. D.'s comprehension has been excellent. His prediction skills are always thoughtful and logical, and his final comprehension is often on target, given he was able to decode the words in the passage. At this stage, his comprehension is adequate.

I recommend the following goals and activities for J. D. to be implemented over the next several months:

1) *Develop decoding ability: Look from the beginning through the end of a word.*

J. D. understands most aspects of the basic concepts about print, yet he is reading below grade level with many miscues. Therefore, it appears that he needs systematic, explicit instruction in decoding unknown words through the direct teaching of vowel sounds, digraphs, and blends. J. D. is already monitoring text for meaning, syntax, and visual cues, which is an excellent start. By teaching him more strategies, he will soon develop better decoding skills. Learning about short vowels will particularly enable him to figure out how to read and spell unknown words.

By engaging J. D. in matching games and picture sorts, he can start gaining more knowledge of vowels, digraphs, and blends within words. J. D. should be able to match a picture with its respectful text feature. For example, if one is teaching short vowels, J. D. should match the picture of a cat with the symbol for "short a." Likewise, if one is teaching digraphs, J. D. should match the picture of a whale with the symbol for the digraph "wh." Another strategy is to read a list of words to J. D., show him the words,

and then ask him to sort the words according to text feature. For example, if one is teaching blends, J. D. should put the word “brick” in the “br” column. Likewise, if one is teaching long vowel digraphs, J. D. should put the word “leaf” in the “ea” column. However, before teaching such long vowel digraphs, it is important to first teach all of the preceding features.

J. D. can also benefit from building words with alphabetic letters or index cards with individual letters. He can also write high frequency words that frequently appear in texts at his level. This will allow him to make the connection between reading and writing, and more importantly, will help to engrain the spelling and patterns of certain words.

Another method to help J. D. develop word decoding strategies is to allow him to dictate sentences in his own words to the teacher. The sentences should always be tied to the texts he is reading. The teacher will write down the sentence, for accuracy’s sake, and then encourage J. D. to try to write it himself. When J. D. gets to a difficult word or misspells something, the teacher should help him figure out the spelling. Elkonin boxes are perfect to use here. At J. D.’s stage, the boxes should consist mostly of individual letters, but where there are difficult digraphs, blends, or long vowel digraphs, one box should be designated for these. In some cases, it is most useful to tell and explain the spelling to J. D., instead of allowing him to guess aimlessly. His developmental level should constantly be kept in mind. Once J. D. writes his sentence correctly, the teacher should write it on a sentence strip, cut it up word by word, and in some cases, segmenting words, and have J. D. put the sentence back together. This activity can help develop J. D.’s fluency, confidence, sight-word recognition, decoding and encoding skills.

*Essentially, we want J. D. to be actively looking from the beginning of a word through the end of a word.* When assessed, he frequently based his guesses on the first letter or two of a word. We want him to make a conscious effort of looking at every letter or combination of letters in words. Once he has a better grasp on vowels, digraphs, and blends, this will become an easier task. For every task that J. D. performs in the clinic, looking from the beginning through the end of a word will be stressed.

## 2) *Develop a sight vocabulary.*

J. D.’s beginning base of sight words is relatively small, as evidenced by his knowledge of 35/100 words on the Fry list. We recommend playing the game, “Three Strikes and You’re Out,” which requires J. D. to correctly identify sight words within 1 second, 3 times in a row, to retire them from the pile. Children are often excited by this game, and motivated to learn the words so they can remove them from the working pile. Writing high frequency words, most of which should be embedded words in the text, can also help develop a sight vocabulary.

## 3) *Develop oral reading.*

J. D.’s fluency is currently hindered by the difficulties he experiences automatically recognizing the most frequently occurring words in English print and decoding words. J. D. is unfamiliar with many words. At this point, his reading sounds slow and laborious. He is still decoding words, and needs to go slowly in order to do so. By reading stories repeatedly, J. D. will become familiar with the text, and will be able to



apply some oral reading skills. We will continue to assess J. D.'s oral reading by tracking his Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM).

## References

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