

# READING ASSESSMENT CHART

Reading assessment is more than just a grade. This chart can help you identify specific reading difficulties and offers some general suggestions for planning next steps.

<p><b>The student’s instructional reading level is a full grade or more below the rest of his class.</b></p>	<p>It is vitally important for students to read text at their instructional level. For students reading one or two grades below level, we recommend that the majority of their reading be at their <i>instructional</i> or <i>independent</i> reading level. Only by using such texts can strategies be taught which, with repeated practice, will gradually raise their reading ability and measured reading level. For more information about matching books and readers, check out “<i>Reaching Struggling Readers with Books they CAN and WANT to Read.</i>”</p>
<p><b>The student reads very slowly and hesitantly.</b></p>	<p>Dysfluency may be a symptom of other reading issues. Although fluent reading doesn’t guarantee comprehension, dysfluent reading almost always leads to comprehension problems. To work on oral reading fluency, we recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• always using texts at or below the student’s instructional reading level</li> <li>• repeated reading of text with one-on-one coaching to improve fluency</li> <li>• building automatic word recognition</li> <li>• work on expression and phrasing as well as pacing and speed</li> <li>• shared, paired and choral reading of appropriate text</li> <li>• Reader’s theater with plenty of time to practice before performance</li> </ul>
<p><b>The student relies too heavily on “sounding out” unfamiliar words.</b></p>	<p>Phonics is only one way to approach unfamiliar words – and not necessarily the best way for upper grade readers. The teacher should offer direct instruction and modeling in other techniques, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyzing words for meaningful chunks</li> <li>• thinking through word meanings from prefixes, roots and suffixes</li> <li>• inferring word meanings from context</li> <li>• looking for visual cues such as a pictures</li> <li>• accessing “signal” words such as <i>for example, in other words, as opposed to...</i></li> <li>• get help from a dictionary or other source</li> </ul> <p>Readers should be able to solve the occasional unfamiliar word independently (no more than 3-5 per 100 words read). If the text is too difficult, however, they will not have enough comprehension resources at their disposal to word-solve challenging words.</p>

<p><b>The student reads the words accurately but does not understand or remember what was read.</b></p>	<p>“Word calling” indicates that basic word recognition and decoding skills are in place, but comprehension skills need work. Explicit instruction, modeling and guided practice in reading strategies such as inferring, connecting, questioning, summarizing and self-monitoring will help build comprehension.</p>
<p><b>The student reads on without stopping to correct miscues or make sense of text.</b></p>	<p>Self-monitoring is one of the biggest challenges for a struggling reader. Show students how a good reader approaches text to look for meaning by thinking aloud and asking questions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this making sense to me?</li> <li>• What is the author trying to say?</li> <li>• This reminds me of...</li> </ul> <p>Show students how good readers go back to reread when they don’t understand a passage. Help students develop strategies like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being aware of clicks and clunks</li> <li>• Remote control reading (Hit that “pause” button)</li> <li>• Stop and summarize</li> <li>• Self-talk (“talk to your brain”) during reading</li> <li>• Work on building awareness and proficiency in specific comprehension strategies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The student does not access prior knowledge as a comprehension tool.</b></p>	<p>Often struggling readers fail to make connections from what they read to their existing schema, or they may make inappropriate connections that do not support comprehension. Model your own thinking during reading. Guide students in understanding that what they already know impacts how they will respond to a piece of reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach students that not every text will generate a text-to-self connection. Sometimes they will connect to other books, to other media or to general knowledge.</li> <li>• Help students become metacognitive about using schema by tabbing points of connection during reading. Discuss whether these connections helped them understand the text, and how they helped.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The student struggles with higher level comprehension, beyond the literal context of the text.</b></p>	<p>Start with simple texts, pictures and cartoons to practice awareness of inference. Encourage students to identify the clues from the text and the necessary background knowledge that enables them to draw the inference about the visual or text. Picture books work well for building metacognitive awareness of inferences. Gradually increase the level of sophistication of the text, always encouraging readers to “bring it back to the book” by citing the evidence from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan “pause points” during reading and have students turn and talk about what they infer at that point.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students tab points in the reading where they had to draw an inference.</li> <li>• Work with forms of inference such as prediction</li> <li>• Have students make comparisons between literal interpretations and inferential interpretations of a piece of text.</li> </ul>
<b>The student has trouble summarizing what was read.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the difference between main idea and supporting details</li> <li>• Start with retelling, then work on combining and generalizing individual details into a summary.</li> </ul>
<b>The student reads narrative text with little difficulty, but has trouble with non-fiction text.</b>	<p>Nonfiction reading offers unique challenges to the reader; in addition to more density of information, unique text structures and challenging vocabulary, it also challenges the traditional mode of top to bottom, left to right reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that informational texts are at the students' reading level.</li> <li>• Work on building background knowledge.</li> <li>• Help students become aware of nonfiction text features such as a table of contents, index, headings and visuals.</li> <li>• Provide tools for accessing challenging vocabulary</li> <li>• Model "mapping the page" to guide students in reading the various pieces of the nonfiction page.</li> <li>• Teach students notetaking and summarizing techniques.</li> </ul>
<b>The student is disengaged or even actively negative about reading.</b>	<p>Many students will avoid reading or engage in inappropriate behaviors because they don't want to do something they're not good at. Providing reading materials at appropriate levels and helping students build reading strategies promotes confidence as well as competence for most readers.</p>

***For more student and professional resources for struggling readers, look at the High Interest Publishing website at [www.hip-books.com](http://www.hip-books.com).***