Contents

Introduction 5

Time for Assessment or Time for Instruction? 6

Advantages of 3-*Minute Reading Assessments* 6

Use *3-Minute Reading Assessments* Throughout the Year 6

What's Included in *3-Minute Reading Assessments* 6

A Word About Readability Determination 7

Directions for Administering *3-Minute Reading Assessments* 8

Scoring and Interpreting the Assessment 9

Word Recognition Accuracy (Decoding) 9

Reading Fluency-Automaticity 9

Reading Fluency-Expression 10

Comprehension 11

Test Passages 13

Grade 1 13

Student Form A 14

Teacher Form A 16

Student Form B 17

Teacher Form B 19

Student Form C 20

Teacher Form C 22

Student Form D 23

Teacher Form D 25

Grade 2 27

Student Form A 28

Teacher Form A 29

Student Form B 30

Teacher Form B 31

Student Form C . . . 32
Teacher Form C . . . 33
Student Form D . . . 34
Teacher Form D . . . 35

Grade 3 . . . 37
Student Form A . . . 38
Teacher Form A . . . 39
Student Form B . . . 40
Teacher Form B . . . 41
Student Form C . . . 42
Teacher Form C . . . 43
Student Form D . . . 44
Teacher Form D . . . 45

Grade 4 . . . 47
Student Form A . . . 48
Teacher Form A . . . 49
Student Form B . . . 50
Teacher Form B . . . 51
Student Form C . . . 52
Teacher Form C . . . 53
Student Form D . . . 54
Teacher Form D . . . 55

Charts for Recording Results . . . 56

Class Record Sheet . . . 56

Individual Student Record Sheet . . . 57

Administration and Scoring Aids . . . 58

Instructional Ideas for Word Recognition, Fluency, and Comprehension . . . 59

References . . . 64

Introduction

Assessment is a critical element of successful instruction. Assessment helps teachers determine if the instruction they provide students has resulted in adequate student progress. It allows teachers to identify students who can benefit from a more accelerated instructional program and those who need more intensive instructional intervention and support. And, if the assessment has sufficient precision, it allows teachers to identify a focus for their instruction. In a sense, assessment provides teachers (and schools and parents) with roadmaps that indicate where their children *are* academically, and where they need to go.

Research has indicated that assessment is critical to successful instruction. An international study of reading achievement, for example, found that regular assessment was a key factor associated with student success in learning to read (Postlethwaite & Ross, 1992).

In recent years, state and federal education mandates have required schools and school districts to more closely monitor student performance across a number of content areas and grade levels. These types of large-scale, typically norm-referenced assessments are most valuable for school administrators and policy makers in determining general trends in achievement and recommending policies and procedures at the national, state, and district levels for improving educational quality. For several reasons, however, these kinds of assessments cannot provide teachers with the information they need to make instructional decisions for individual students. One problem is timing—it frequently takes months for teachers to receive assessment results. In some cases a student has already moved on to the next grade before results are available. In addition, the scores on these tests do not lead naturally to instructional changes. Most often, scores simply tell whether or not a student has achieved "proficiency" rather than providing information about diagnostic needs or instructional direction.

Beyond the large-scale, general assessments that provide snapshots of achievement for a large number of children, a number of other reading assessments that lead to more precise instructional interventions are available. Some are commercial standardized tests such as the group-administered *Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test* and the individually administered *Woodcock Reading Mastery Test*. Others, such as informal reading inventories (IRIs) and running records (Clay, 1993) are more informal in nature and are based on teachers' ability to interpret the reading behaviors that they record. Still others, such as the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (Beaver, 1997) and the *Qualitative Reading Inventory* (Leslie & Caldwell, 2000) are hybrids of commercial standardized tests that include a strong informal, teacher-interpretation component. Most of these assessments provide teachers with an in-depth view of their students as readers—their level of achievement and, to some extent, their various strengths and areas of concern in reading.

If there is one major drawback to these sorts of assessments it is time. These and many of the other formal and informal reading assessments that are available to teachers take a considerable amount of time to prepare, administer, and score. The full-scale administration of an informal reading inventory, for example, can take one to two hours to give to a student and another hour (at least) to score and interpret. Although the data obtained from such an assessment are valid and valuable, the amount of time needed to administer such an assessment to every student in a classroom is prohibitive.

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources

Nevertheless, we are seeing instances in many schools in which teachers are expected to administer an informal reading inventory to every child in their classrooms two, and in some cases three, times per year. In a classroom of 25 children, three administrations of an IRI, even if each required only one hour per child, would take 75 hours—the equivalent of nearly three full weeks of school!

Time for Assessment or Time for Instruction?

As valuable as assessment is for teachers, it is in instruction where the rubber meets the road. Students learn as a result of instruction, not assessment. While assessment most certainly must guide instruction, it is no substitute for it. And in schools and classrooms where inordinate amounts of time are taken for assessment, an equal amount of time is taken *from* instruction. In short, time given to assessment is time taken away from instruction. The irony of the situation is that the very thing that assessment is intended to measure—achievement—is curtailed by the time that must be taken away from instruction in order to do the assessment. The 50 hours that it might take to administer an informal reading inventory to every child in a classroom, for example, could have been used to provide reading instruction that would have made those students better readers!

Advantages of *3-Minute Reading Assessments*

With the above considerations in mind, we developed this set of assessments to provide classroom teachers and specialists with a quick way to obtain valid diagnostic information about students' reading achievement. In fewer than five minutes, you can use this system to measure a child's progress and identify areas of strength and concern that may need special and intensive instruction. You will be able to sample a student's reading and determine his or her level of performance in three critical areas—word recognition (decoding), reading fluency, and comprehension. The information obtained from *3-Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency, and Comprehension* will enable you to monitor student progress over time across these three dimensions of reading, identify areas of special need for individual children, and communicate to parents and others about student progress in reading.

Use *3-Minute Reading Assessments* Throughout the Year

We recommend that you use *3-Minute Reading Assessments* with an individual student three or four times per year at regular intervals—once at the beginning of the school year, once or twice in the middle of the year, and once at the end of the year. You should be able to assess and score a classroom of 25 students in about two hours. Since we've provided four forms for each grade, you will be able to use a different, but equivalent form for each assessment throughout the year.

By assessing students at regular times during the school year you will be able to measure progress in word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension over the course of the year. You will be able to identify students who are not responding well to your instructional efforts. This will allow you to plan additional or more targeted instruction for those students who are struggling or who are not demonstrating the kind of progress you hope to see.

What's Included in *3-Minute Reading Assessments*

In addition to the background discussion above, this Introduction provides you with a full set of specific directions for administering these assessments. Immediately following those directions we

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources

provide scoring and interpretation guides for each of the three major areas covered by the assessments (note that fluency is assessed in *two* distinct dimensions—fluency-automaticity and fluency-expression). Included are

1. the procedure for calculating **word recognition accuracy**,
2. a chart for measuring **fluency through reading rate**,
3. a scale for figuring **fluency through expression**, and
4. a rubric for determining **comprehension**.

In addition to these fully detailed guides (pages 9–12), you'll also find a condensed version of all four guides on page 58. This page is intended to offer you a handy aid that can be torn out and laminated for use during the administration of each passage. We hope it will give you an easy reference point as you listen to the student's reading.

The passages themselves are divided into four grade-level booklets. Each booklet includes the four equivalent forms (A through D) mentioned above. To vary subject matter and maintain interest, the forms are organized by themes: Form A passages pertain to family outings; Form B passages to foods; Form C passages to extreme weather; and Form D to unique individuals. For each form there is a student page, which includes the passage only and is intended for direct use with the student, and an accompanying teacher page. The teacher page reproduces the passage and gives you additional information, such as overall word count and the word length of each printed line. In addition, at the bottom of each teacher page, a scoring section enables you to jot down the student's scores as you figure them, as well as any additional comments.

We strongly recommend recording the data yielded by the assessments, and to make keeping these records easy, we provide two different recording charts. On page 56, you'll find a class record sheet and on page 57, an individual student record sheet. The former enables you to get an overview of class performance at a glance, while the latter helps you track testing data for all four forms for an individual student. You may wish to use both, or simply choose the one that best fits your needs. These charts allow you to highlight areas where performance is below your expectations as well as areas with no growth over time. You may want to address these areas with additional assessment and instruction and bring them to the attention of parents, school administrators, or other teachers.

In order to help you address targeted areas of concern, we include a brief section of Instructional Ideas for each of the three major areas assessed. Pages 59–63 offer instructional suggestions for teaching word recognition, fluency, and comprehension skills. Of course, these ideas are just a springboard for each topic. Entire books of instruction for each area are available!

A Word About Readability Determination

As described above, four different passages for each grade level are presented in separate grade-level booklets. We have spent considerable time checking the readability of these passages before designating each to be at a specific grade level. In doing so, we applied either all or several of the following formulas: the Flesch Reading Ease Formula; the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Formula; the Fry Readability Graph; the Spache Readability Formula; and the Dale-Chall Readability Formula. As well, we tapped our own expertise as professors of literacy and researchers to level the passages.

In the end, readability is often a matter of judgment. It is well known that readability results will vary depending on which formula is used and that each formula has its own limitations and drawbacks. That said, there are currently no better alternatives that offer a more accurate or efficient approach to determining grade level for a particular reading passage. Thus, with all this

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources

in mind, we feel confident in stating that these passages are on grade level and are equivalent, within each form, in terms of difficulty.

A few additional notes about grade levels and the way we've set up these assessments: We recommend having students read passages at their assigned school-year grade levels because this will help you determine their level of performance on passages that they are expected to master during that school year. In other words, while one third grader may be reading comfortably at fourth-grade level and another at second-grade level, this assessment enables you to determine how well both students will be able to read the grade-level texts you use for instruction. Students whose grade-level performance is excellent may not need repeated assessment. Those who struggle with the grade-level passage will need additional diagnosis. Retesting these students on grade-level test passages throughout the school year will easily allow you to gauge their growth.

Directions for Administering *3-Minute Reading Assessments*

Administering these assessments is simple and straightforward. You simply ask students to read a grade-level passage to you and ask them to recall what they remember from the passage after they've read it. While students read and recall the passage, you monitor their performance for word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Specific directions are outlined below:

1. Present the student with a copy of the passage from *3-Minute Reading Assessments* that corresponds to his assigned grade level. Ask the student to read the passage orally to you in the way he might normally read the passage. Tell the student that at the end of the reading you will ask him to tell you what he remembers about the passage.
2. The student reads the passage aloud for 60 seconds. If she stops at an unknown word and does not attempt to pronounce it for 2 seconds, or if she attempts the word but clearly has little chance of reading it correctly, tell her the word and ask her to continue reading. During the oral reading, keep your copy of the passage in front of you. Mark any uncorrected errors that the student makes by drawing a line through the missed word. Errors include words that are mispronounced or that you provide to the student and words that the student omits. If a student initially mispronounces or omits a word, but corrects it, write and circle a *c* above the word to indicate it was corrected (and do not count these corrected words as errors). At the end of the 60-second period, mark the point the student has reached in her reading of the text.
3. After the student has read for 60 seconds, direct his attention to the beginning of the text and ask him to follow along silently while you read the text aloud. Read the passage to the child in a normal and expressive voice. (We ask that you read the text to the student to remove any difficulties he may have had in word recognition or fluency that could hamper his comprehension of the passage. Listening comprehension is a good measure of the students' reading comprehension [Biemiller, 2003].)
4. At the end of your reading, remove the passage from the student's view and ask her to tell you what she remembers from the passage. After she has retold the passage, ask her if there is anything else she remembers about what she read. If the student is unable or unwilling to retell anything at all from the passage, you may ask for specific information (for example, "What is the main idea of this story?" or "What was described in this story?").

   Note: If the student has made few oral reading errors and has not reached the end of the passage within 60 seconds, you may, as an alternative to reading the passage to the student, ask him to read the balance of the passage silently. At the end of the student's

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources

reading, remove the passage from view and ask him to retell what he remembers from the reading. Keep in mind, however, that a source of any difficulty in comprehension may be subtle or undetected problems in word recognition or fluency.

After the student has retold the passage, the assessment is complete.

Scoring and Interpreting the Assessment

Scoring *3-Minute Reading Assessments* is simple and quick. The following procedures should be followed:

Word Recognition Accuracy (Decoding)

Word recognition is determined by calculating the percentage of words read correctly in the 60-second oral reading. Divide the number of words read correctly by the total number of words read (correctly *or* incorrectly). For example, if the student read a total of 94 words in the 60-second reading and made 8 errors, the percentage of words read correctly would be reflected in the following fraction:

$$\frac{86}{94} \text{ (86 divided by 94)} = 91.5\%$$

In other words, the student read 91.5 percent of the words correctly.

Instructional reading level is normally marked by a word recognition accuracy rate of 92–98 percent. Independent reading level is normally marked by an accuracy rate of 99–100 percent.

A normally developing student should begin the school year reading grade-level material at an instructional level and, by the end of the school year, at an independent word recognition level. For example, a third grader's performance on a third-grade passage would be instructional at the beginning of the year but independent by the end of the year. Students who perform at the frustration level at the end of the school year, or who do not demonstrate good progress over the year, should be considered for additional assessment to confirm their decoding difficulty. Such students may benefit from specific instructional intervention in decoding (see pages 59–60).

Note that the above progression does not apply to first grade. Although first graders should be able to read first-grade material with 99–100 percent accuracy at the end of grade one, no expectations should be made for the first six months of grade one. During this period, students are just gaining initial decoding skills and should not be expected to decode first-grade material at an instructional or independent level.

Reading Fluency-Automaticity

One way reading fluency can be measured is through reading rate. Reading rate provides a measure of the extent to which a reader can automatically decode words, thus leaving cognitive resources free for the more important task of comprehending a passage. To determine rate, simply count the number of words the student has read correctly during the 60-second oral read. Words read correctly include those words that were initially misread but corrected by the student. Then, using the appropriate grade level and time period, compare the student's performance against the reading rates shown on page 10.

A student whose reading rate falls within the appropriate range shown above is performing at grade-level expectations. Students who fall below the range may be considered at-risk in terms of fluency-automaticity. Additional assessment may be

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources

TARGET READING RATES BY GRADE LEVEL

Grade	Fall wcpm*	Winter wcpm	Spring wcpm
1	0–10	10–50	30–90
2	30–80	50–100	70–130
3	50–110	70–120	80–140
4	70–120	80–130	90–140
5	80–130	90–140	100–150
6	90–140	100–150	110–160
7	100–150	110–160	120–170
8	110–160	120–180	130–180

*wcpm=words correct per minute

appropriate for students who perform poorly at the end of the school year or who do not show improvement over the course of the year. These students may benefit from instruction aimed at improving reading fluency (see page 60). Students whose reading rate is above the range limits may be considered to be performing well in fluency-automaticity. However, an important caveat must be noted: Students who read exceptionally fast without attending to punctuation and other phrase boundaries, and who read without sufficient expression may also be considered at-risk in fluency. The following assessment for fluency-expression should be used with all students to give you the fullest picture of a student's fluency skills.

Reading Fluency-Expression

Reading fluency is more than just reading fast. It is also the ability to interpret a text with appropriate phrasing and expression. You can measure this dimension of fluency by listening to the student's 60-second oral reading and rating it on the Multidimensional Fluency Scale (see page 11). Initially you may need to tape record the student's reading and listen to it in order to provide a rating for each of the four scales. Soon, however, you will be able to score the scales on the spot.

At the beginning of the school year, it is not unusual for students to score in the bottom half of each of the fluency dimensions (i.e., to have a total fluency score of 8 or below). However, by the end of the school year, students should be rated in the top half in each dimension when they are reading grade-level material (i.e., they should be able to achieve a total fluency score of 9 or above). End-of-year ratings in the bottom half for any of the fluency dimensions, or a total fluency score of 8 or less, may indicate a need for additional assessment or instructional intervention (see pages 60–61). The Multi-dimensional Fluency Scale is also useful for helping students evaluate their own reading and in developing their own understanding of fluency in reading.

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources

MULTIDIMENSIONAL FLUENCY SCALE

Rating	Expression & Volume	Phrasing and Intonation	Smoothness	Pace
Circle one →	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
1	Reads words as if simply to get them out. Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language. Tends to read in a quiet voice.	Reads in monotone with little sense of phrase boundaries; frequently reads word-by-word.	Makes frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts.	Reads slowly and laboriously.
2	Begins to use voice to make text sound like natural language in some areas but not in others. Focus remains largely on pronouncing the words. Still reads in a quiet voice.	Frequently reads in two- and three-word phrases, giving the impression of choppy reading; improper stress and intonation fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses.	Experiences several "rough spots" in text where extended pauses or hesitations are more frequent and disruptive.	Reads moderately slowly or too quickly.
3	Makes text sound like natural language throughout the better part of the passage. Occasionally slips into expressionless reading. Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text.	Reads with a mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness; reasonable stress and intonation.	Occasionally breaks smooth rhythm because of difficulties with specific words and/or structures.	Reads with an uneven mixture of fast and slow pace.
4	Reads with good expression and enthusiasm throughout the text. Varies expression and volume to match his or her interpretation of the passage.	Generally reads with good phrasing, mostly in clause and sentence units.	Generally reads smoothly with some breaks, but resolves word and structure difficulties quickly, usually through self-correction.	Consistently reads at conversational pace; appropriate rate throughout reading.

** This scale is an adaptation of one developed by Zutell & Rasinski, 1991. Kimberly Monfort, a third-grade teacher at Bon View School in Ontario, California developed the format above for the scale.*

Total Score: _____

Comprehension

How well students understand what they read is the ultimate hallmark of proficient reading. You can get a good sense of a student's ability to understand a text through the retelling. When you are satisfied that a student has told you as much as he or she can remember from the passage, rate the recall on the Comprehension Rubric (see page 12). As mentioned in the Directions for Administering section, under some circumstances you may wish to have the student himself or herself read the balance of the passage silently. Use the same comprehension rubric to score the retelling whether you read the passage aloud to the student or whether you allow the student to read the passage silently.

A score of 3 or below suggests inadequate recall and comprehension of the passage. At the beginning of the school year, it is not unusual for a student's recall of a grade-level passage to be rated at level 3 or below. By the end of the school year, student performance should be in the upper half of the scale (levels 4–6). Scores in the lower half of the scale at the end of the year should signal the need for a more in-depth diagnosis and perhaps instructional intervention in comprehension. See pages 61–63 for suggested instructional ideas to use with students who may have comprehension difficulties.

COMPREHENSION RUBRIC

- Student has no recall or minimal recall of only a fact or two from the passage. **Rating Score: 1**
- Student recalls a number of unrelated facts of varied importance. **Rating Score: 2**
- Student recalls the main idea of the passage with a few supporting details. **Rating Score: 3**
- Student recalls the main idea along with a fairly robust set of supporting details, although not necessarily organized logically or sequentially as presented in the passage. **Rating Score: 4**
- Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea. **Rating Score: 5**
- Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea. Student also makes reasonable connections beyond the text, such as to his/her own personal life or another text. **Rating Score: 6**

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources

Test Passages

GRADE 1 BOOKLET:

Student Passages and Teacher Pages

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources

We went to the park. My mom and dad took me. I had so much fun. The park was big. There was a lot to do. I went on the swings first. I flew high in the air. My mom said not to go so high. I told her birds fly higher than me.

Then we went on the slide. It was the little one. My dad went on with me. My mom said he looked silly. I thought so, too. I was afraid of the big slide. It was too big. My mom and dad went on it. I was still afraid.

3-Minute Reading Assessments: Grades 1-4 © Rasinski & Padak, Scholastic Teaching Resources