

# Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2)

## What is the DRA?

The Developmental Reading Assessment provides teachers with a method for assessing and documenting primary students' development as readers over time. Its purpose is to identify students' reading level, defined as a text on which students meet specific criteria in terms of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Additional purposes include identifying students' independent reading strengths and weaknesses, planning for instruction, monitoring reading growth, and, for the grades 3-5, preparing students to meet classroom testing expectations and providing information to teachers, schools, and region regarding reading achievement. The assessments are conducted during one-on-one reading conferences as children read specially selected assessment texts. A set of leveled texts, which increase in difficulty, are used for the assessment. The DRA evaluates the major aspects of reading that are critical to independence as a reader.

## What is the DRA Word Analysis?

The DRA Word Analysis is designed to evaluate the phonological awareness and phonics skills of students in kindergarten and early first grade and the word analysis skills of below-grade-level readers in Grades 1-5.

## How do I administer the DRA?

The DRA should be administered on a semiannual basis or more frequently in the case of struggling readers. Teachers should administer the assessment to their own students to provide them with information on which to base their teaching practices. Assessment should take place in a part of the room that allows for one-on-one observation and conversation without distractions or interruptions. Other students should not overhear the stories being read aloud or retold. The assessment should take place in one sitting. Don't break off in the middle of an assessment. If it appears that the student will need further assessment, you should continue on another day. Set yourself up in a quiet area with texts and observation sheets where other students cannot hear the conversation.

Try to assess at least 1 or 2 students each day during an independent work time. This creates minimal disruption to the class and allows the teacher to fill out the forms while the reading behaviors of the child are fresh in his/her memory.

Explain to students that you will be sitting down to read with everyone so you can get to know what they have learned about reading. **Telling students they are being tested only creates stress!**

## **Overview**

For levels A to 2

- ✓ Teacher selects the text
- ✓ Teacher introduces the text
- ✓ Teacher reads one or two pages
- ✓ Child points and reads the rest of the story; teacher takes running record of oral reading

For Levels 3 to 12

- ✓ Teacher or student selects the text that seems just right for him or her
- ✓ Teacher introduces the text
- ✓ Student reads complete text aloud; teacher takes running record of oral reading
- ✓ Student retells either the story or the information read to demonstrate comprehension

For Levels 14 to 24

- ✓ Teacher selects a range of three texts
- ✓ Student chooses one that seems just right
- ✓ Teacher introduces the text
- ✓ Student reads the first two to four paragraphs or pages aloud; teacher takes a running record of oral reading and records time
- ✓ Student reads remaining text silently in another location
- ✓ Student retells story or shares information gained from text

For Levels 28 and above

- ✓ Teacher selects a range of three texts
- ✓ Student chooses one that seems just right
- ✓ Teacher introduces the text
- ✓ Student reads the first two to four paragraphs or pages aloud; teacher takes a running record of oral reading and records time
- ✓ Student reads remaining text silently in another location
- ✓ Student respond in writing to questions and prompts in the student booklet

## **Before the Assessment**

- Duplicate the black line masters from the CD of the levels needed. Running records will be recorded on the out loud reading of books/passages. Plan on a minimum of one for each student.
- Stopwatch or watch with second-hand.
- Become familiar with the stories the students will be reading.

## **Introduction**

- Choose a level that is a good estimate of where a student is able to be successful. If a student struggles, **STOP**, go back to an easier level, or say, “This isn’t a very good book to read today. You go back to your seat now and I’ll look for a better one to read another time.” Be careful to not let frustration set in at the onset of this assessment.
- In Levels 18-44, you will ask the student to read aloud the first few paragraphs to determine if you have selected an appropriate text.
- The converse is also true. If a student easily reads the level with few or no errors in a short amount of time, then it would be appropriate to have the student move up to a higher level. It is not required to have each level read. Once the appropriate level has been established, proceed with the steps to give the assessment.
- Introduce the book by reading the first script on the Observation sheet.
- This is a time to also let the student know that they will be retelling the story to you from beginning to end. They will have a chance to re-read the story silently before they begin the retell.

### **Introducing the Text**

Sample introduction: “I am going to ask you to read a story aloud to me. Read it as best you can. I can’t help you; so if you come to a word you don’t know, just try your best. I’m going to take some notes while you’re reading so I can remember what you say.” Allow the student to take a “picture walk” through the text. There is no time limit for this. The student may want to tell you a story based on the illustrations and this is allowed.

Teacher may continue with: “The story you are going to read is called \_\_\_\_\_. (Supply the title). It is about \_\_\_\_\_. “ (Supply one line plot summary provided.)

This is a time to also let the student know that they will be retelling the story to you from beginning to end. They will have a chance to re read the story silently before they begin the retell.

### **During the Assessment**

- Start the timing as soon as the child begins to read.
- An accurate note of minutes and seconds must be made when the reading stops.
- Once the oral reading is over, the student should take the book and read it again silently. This gives them another opportunity to check themselves on comprehension before the retelling. During this time the teacher should mark the score for phrasing based on the rubric on the Student Information Sheet.
- Once the student has finished reading the book or portion silently, the teacher may prompt the retelling with “Think back to the beginning, and tell me the story. Tell me everything you remember about it.” If the retelling seems incomplete, the teacher should prompt with, “Tell me more.” This prompt should be used only once. Or start the first section of the student booklet.
- When the student finishes the retelling, the teacher should score that skill before seeing another student based on the rubric on the Student Information Sheet.

### **After the Assessment**

- Add up all the scores for accuracy, fluency rate, phrasing and retelling will indicate the strength or weakness of the student at that level.
- Analyze the Data – In performance-based assessments, it is important to move beyond just the score and look at what strategies and or skills the student used effectively, used ineffectively or neglected. Certain questions can be explored.
  - Did the error make sense?
  - Did the student use meaning when the error was made?
    - Noticed an error and reread
    - Attempted self-correction
    - Used picture clues to attempt words
    - Read something sensible, even if it didn't match letter sounds of the correct word
    - Skips word or reads ahead
    - Inserted extra words which supported the meaning
  - Are there any visual similarities between the error and the actual text?
  - Did the student look through the word for known parts or endings?
    - Substituted a word that started with the same sound as the correct word.
    - Appears to “sound out the word”
    - Covers ending or prefix
    - Gets beginning or ending sounds correct although the word is wrong
    - Made a sound for each letter in the word
  - What does the student do at difficulty? Stop? Reread? Appeal for help?
- Plan Teaching – With this type of assessment, it can become an integral part of the teacher's ongoing instruction, providing them with strategies to understand students' early reading performance. This assessment also helps the teacher identify and document change over time.

## Oral Reading

- Take a running record of oral reading for all Levels.
- Ticking each correct word is not necessary and allows the recorder to note other behaviors more accurately.
- Appeals are noted (A); they are scored as errors ONLY if the word is told to the student (T). The **only acceptable prompt is “try something.”** The prompt is given after about a 5 second wait. Wait again. Tell the word if necessary (T). (A wait with a questioning look or tone can be considered an appeal. This prompt does not count as an error.)
- Other prompts such as “Look at the first letter.” or “Look at the picture” are **absolutely not** admissible.
- Use standard conventions for recording so others can refer to the record and “read” it accurately. (See laminated sheet)
- Record self corrections. Be watchful, however, for students who make many, many errors, constantly self-correcting. This behavior clearly interferes with fluency.

## Fluency

The total number of oral reading errors is converted to an accuracy score. Beginning at level 14, oral reading is timed, using a words-per-minute (WCPM) metric. Three to four aspects of oral reading are rated on a 4-point scale: expression, phrasing, rate, and accuracy.

## Comprehension

- In Levels 3-16, once the oral reading is over, the student should take the book and read it again silently. This gives them another opportunity to check themselves on comprehension for retelling. Then, you will close the book and tell the student to, “Start at the beginning and tell me what happened in the story.”
- Underline information that the student is able to give, but which requires prompting.
- Note information that the student is able to give, but which requires prompting, with a TP (teacher prompt).
- Follow-up questions follow the summary and if used need to be tallied to the left. The number of prompts to elicit more information will be calculated as part of the comprehension score.
- Try to use only the follow-up questions provided, but if you need to ask others, be sure to record them in the space provided. All information provided by the child (both prompted and unprompted) is considered valid information when determining the comprehension score.

**Using the Comprehension Rubric** – *To pass a level a student should score in the Adequate (16-24) range.*

In the early levels (A-6) there is very little substance to the stories: little to retell that is not apparent from the pictures, few events and characters and very little room for misinterpretation. Therefore, this rubric does not work well, and retelling at these levels is not necessary for the average student except to build the understanding that this is something we need to learn how to do.

In levels 8-16 the rubric works better; however, some stories have only 2 characters, characters may not be given names, and the stories do not lend themselves to inferential thinking.

The general rule when scoring the rubric at these levels is to NOT penalize the student for information that is not in the story (i.e., if there are only 2 characters and the student mentions 3 in the retelling, score a 3 or 4).

### **Overall Tips**

- **Readings are administered only as far as the student is able to read with:**
  - **At least 90% accuracy (Levels A-1)**
  - **At least 91% accuracy (Level 2)**
  - **At least 94% accuracy (Levels 3-44)**
  - **Adequate comprehension (see DRA Observation Guide sheets)**
- Make notes about reading behaviors and strategies for future reference.
- Stop once a student falls into the Instructional or Independent level and information is gained that would drive instruction for that student to progress as a reader.

### **Questions**

What if a student is successful at passing a level beyond their grade level?

The student should be retested to verify that the information on the last assessment is correct. It is highly recommended that students reaching Level 44 have an independent score for fluency and comprehension before they are considered proficient at this level. If a student reads several levels above grade level, speak with your site literacy specialist for recommendations for this issue.

What is the difference between independent and instructional levels?

The 90-94 percent range represents the student's instructional level, and it is the instructional level that should be reported. A student's independent level is the level at

which he/she reads with 95-100 percent accuracy, with fluency, and comprehension. A student's independent level is generally one or two levels lower than his/her instructional level.

Can I use the DRA for monthly monitoring of students' independent reading level?

The DRA is not an appropriate tool to use for the monthly monitoring of students' independent reading level. This leads to over-use of the DRA and students will eventually learn the test. Teachers can use a running record with leveled/benchmark books for monthly monitoring.

Can I share this information with parents?

Yes! Parent Teacher Conferences are an excellent time to share this information with parents. Share results. It is important for this to be an informing, yet hopeful encounter. It may be helpful to provide a copy of the level book that the student read. This is an opportunity for the parents and the teacher to form a partnership focusing on the support of their child's progress. Some strategies you might suggest to parents are:

- ✓ Read with child daily.
- ✓ Talk about reading strategies.
- ✓ Talk about the story, highlighting main points.
- ✓ Practice high frequency words.
- ✓ Listen to books on tape.
- ✓ Tape the child while reading and have them listen to it.

Adults can provide a role model for daily reading with book, newspapers, and