



Instructions for Spelling and Reading Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to guide you as parents/educators and to help you see where your child's gaps are in literacy.

Assessments are KEY and should be one of the first things you or your educator/tutor should do. This assessment includes reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding). It will help you understand what your child does and doesn't know and give you a place to start.

This assessment does not include all the steps of a full scope and sequence, but it does include the main spelling patterns and rules that should be taught.

This Assessment pack Includes:

- Instructions
- Concept Key
- Spelling (encoding) sheet – teacher's copy
- Spelling (encoding) sheet - student's copy
- Reading (decoding) sheet – teacher's copy
- Reading (decoding) blank sheet for recording – teacher's copy (if you choose to use it)
- Reading (decoding) sheet – student's copy

Make sure you are encouraging the student throughout the assessment saying: "well done, fabulous, amazing spelling/reading, love all the effort you're putting in". Never let on if they spelled or said the word wrong. This is very important as some children have a fear of failing and if they think they got it wrong they can shut down and refuse to continue.

Start with the spelling so you get an accurate result as I have used the same words for both assessments.

Spelling (encoding) assessment

- Give the student the sheet called “Spelling Assessment – Student’s Copy”. This sheet is blank so they have something to write the words you will dictate. You can use any sheet of paper lines or grass/sky/dirt. Use what will work best for the student.
- Using the teacher’s copy of the spelling assessment, start dictating the words for the student to write. Please do not prompt the student.
- We do recommend using a sentence to help with the word, but this can also distract some students and they can forget the word when too much language is being used. I have given some examples below.
- We also recommend you get the student to repeat the word back to you. This will ensure the student has heard the correct word and is also pronouncing the correct word to spell. I have given an example below.

Examples:

- **Mum** – Mum takes in the washing - **Mum**
- **Bed** – I go to bed – **Bed**
- **Shut** – Shut the door – **Shut**

When using this method emphasise the word to make it clear that this is the word you want the student to spell.

Example:

- **Teacher** says the word - **Mum**
- Teachers ask student to repeat back the word they said - **Mum**
- **Student** says - **Mum**
- Then direct the student to write the word either by a hand gesture to the paper or say - **now spell the word.**

We limit the words we use here so the student does not forget the word “mum” to spell.

Start dictating each word from the spelling assessment sheet left to right and watch the student write the word.

You are looking for:

- Correct spelling
- Correct formation of the letters and their starting point.
- Sizing of the letters.
- Does the student sound out the word using their hands or fingers?
- Are they rushing and writing anything?
- Are they staring at the ceiling ?
- Are they using a not so helpful strategies long term like I know how to spell room can I make broom (rhyming strategy).
- Not thinking about the word.

STOP if the student makes more than 8 errors on a numbered word list. When this happens go straight to the irregular word list (these are the last 12 words on the list) and dictate these words the same way as above.

Where do I start?

I would always recommend starting at the beginning even if you are confident they know the answers. It will build their confidence up for when it gets more challenging.

Done the assessment - now what?

After the assessment use the "Concept Key" sheet provided and mark what spelling patterns and spelling rules the student knows. You now have a place to start your teaching.

If they spelled all the CV and CVC words wrong, you start with closed and open syllables or VC and CVC.

If they spelt "bed" as "bid" then there is confusion with the vowels. The vowels "e" and "i" are the trickiest.

If they miss the "m" on lamp you need to start with blends and building their phonemic awareness.

If they spell "song" as "soing" then you need to start teaching the NG sound.

If they spell "tank" as "tainkg" then you need to teach the NG and NK sounds.

If they miss the "e" off "cube" you need to teach silent e.

If they spell "makeing" with an "e" you teach the dropping rule.

If the spell "gym" with a "i" "gim" you need to teach the Y says an (i)

With regards to the vowel groups, knowing what vowel team to use is something that needs to be taught so don't be overly concerned if they have a few spelling errors.

There are many variations of vowels and spellings: common to the not so common.

Reading (decoding) assessment

- Give the student the sheet called “Reading Assessment – Student’s Copy” and you keep the “Reading Assessment – Teacher’s Copy” and the teacher’s blank copy if you wish to use it.
- Ask the student to start reading from left to right.
- Tick each word the student reads (decodes) correctly on the teacher’s copy.
- If the student reads each sound individually before blending the word, count it correct, but mark the word “s/o” for “sounded out.”
- If the student self corrects the word within 5 seconds, mark it wrong , write the word down they did say and write “S/C” for self-correction. (This is important as more teaching is needed to map the word to memory).
- Stop if the student makes more than 8 errors on a numbered word List.
- When this happens, ask the student to look over the words and see if they can read any more words from their sheet, especially the last section which is irregular words.

After the assessment look over the results and refer to the assessment key. This should give you a guide on what knowledge the student has.

Disclaimer

This assessment was created by Sharon Scurr for the members of the Dyslexia NZ Evidence Based FaceBook page. The assessment is only a tool/guide for helping you build knowledge of where your student or child is at with reading and spelling.

The Dyslexia NZ Evidence Based FaceBook page always recommends training before implementing a structured literacy approach, but we also understand this is not always possible and this is why we have provided this assessment - to help you find your starting point for teaching. We strongly recommend you now purchase a Structured Literacy approach to teach your child the skills they are missing. Please refer to the File on our Facebook page called “What we do and do not recommend”. The file called “What I can do at home” will also be useful.

This document was created by Sharon Scurr founder of the deb in August 2021