

Chapter 1 Assessments for the Emergent Stages

NOTES FOR THE TEACHER

This chapter provides you with a variety of tools to assess your students in the emergent stage. These assessments, which complement the ongoing assessment you do as you observe students daily, can be used as pre-assessments or post-assessments, as well as to group students, to monitor growth, and to guide instruction. We describe alphabet assessments, including alphabet tracking, recitation, and recognition; phonological assessments, including rhyme and alliteration; letter–sound assessments, including beginning consonant sounds, observations of students’ writing, and a spelling inventory appropriate for kindergarten students and other emergent learners; and concept of word assessments, including various forms of word recognition. Refer to the page numbers given with each assessment to find the necessary blackline masters.

In a number of instances, benchmark scores, which are based on the *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergartners (PALS-K)* (Invernizzi, Juel, Swank, & Meier, 2007), are reported for alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, spelling, and concept of word. These benchmark measures from PALS have been tested on a very large sampling of children and have been found to be reliable and valid (<http://pals.virginia.edu>).

ALPHABET ASSESSMENTS

Alphabet Recitation and Tracking

Teach the alphabet song to preschoolers and kindergartners and sing it often. Slow it down and model pointing to the letters on a chart as it is sung. Observe to see who is able to sing along. Look for students who

- Know the song and handle *LMNOP* in punctuated fashion
- Need the support of the group but can keep up
- Need more practice with the song

Assess students individually to see who can point accurately as they sing or recite the letters. Prepare an alphabet strip like the one on page 95. Ask students to touch and name each letter. Record results on the Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet on page 14.

Alphabet Recognition Uppercase

To assess students’ uppercase alphabet recognition, pull students aside individually. Using a copy of page 15, say to the student, “Put your finger on each letter and say the name of the letter. Skip the letter if you do not know its name.” As each child points to and names the letters, record responses on the Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet. Indicate substitutions by writing in what the student says. If the child identifies *O* as “zero” or *I* as “one,” ask what letter it could be. You can time students if you wish.

Note the ease with which students are able to name the letters. Do they respond quickly and confidently, or do they hesitate and perhaps recite the alphabet to help them recall the name of the letter? Students who score at least 16 are ready to be assessed on the lowercase recognition task.

Benchmarks

At the beginning of kindergarten, most students know the names of between 10 and 18 letters. At the end of kindergarten, students on average know all of their uppercase letters. Based on the PALS benchmarks, students who know more than nine letters often know many letter sounds and can benefit from further study of beginning consonant sounds through picture sorts.

Alphabet Recognition Lowercase

Using page 16 and the same procedure as for the uppercase letters, assess students' lowercase alphabet recognition and record results on the Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet. You can time students if you want. As before, say, "Put your finger on each letter and say the name of the letter. Skip the letter if you do not know its name." If the child identifies *l* as "one," ask the student what letter it could be. Write down what the student says if they make a substitution such as *b* for *d*. Expect that reversals will be common with young children learning the lowercase letters.

Benchmarks

According to PALS benchmarks, at the end of kindergarten, students on average know the names of 24 of the 26 lowercase letters.

Alphabet Production

If students seem to know most letters you can ask them to write the alphabet without looking at a model to assess how well they can produce the letter forms. Note if they write capitals or lowercase or both.

PHONOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

Rhyme Identification

Make a copy of the assessment on page 17 for each student. Fold it in half so that only one side shows at a time. You can conduct this individually or in small groups. Enter scores on the Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet.

Instructions

1. Tell the student that you want him or her to find some rhyming words. First, demonstrate the procedure by modeling with the first item. "We are going to find pictures that rhyme. Let's do one together. Put your finger on the picture of the duck. Next to the duck is a ball and a truck. What are the two things that rhyme? Listen: *duck, ball, truck*. Which ones rhyme or sound the same at the end? *Duck* and *truck* rhyme. Circle the two pictures that rhyme." Help students complete the sample item.
2. "Now you will mark the others on your own. Look at the bear, the keys, and the cheese. Circle the two things that rhyme. Listen: *bear, keys, cheese*. Which two rhyme?" Name the pictures each time for students to be sure they use the correct labels and guide them in the completion of this assessment.

The picture words used in the Rhyme Identification assessment are as follows.

* <u>duck</u>	ball	<u>truck</u>
1. bear	<u>keys</u>	<u>cheese</u>
2. <u>bed</u>	<u>bread</u>	sock
3. <u>mop</u>	jar	<u>shop</u>
4. box	<u>bell</u>	<u>shell</u>

5. <u>bug</u>	<u>rug</u>	cat
6. <u>snake</u>	<u>cake</u>	fish
7. feet	<u>pan</u>	<u>man</u>
8. <u>clock</u>	<u>rock</u>	fan
9. <u>star</u>	glass	<u>car</u>

Beginning Sounds: Alliteration

Make a copy of the assessment on page 18 for each student. You can conduct this individually or in small groups. Do not do it immediately after the rhyme assessment because students will find it confusing to shift their attention to the beginning of words after listening to the ends. Enter scores on the Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet.

Instructions

1. Begin by modeling the first item. "We are going to find pictures that begin with the same sound. Let's do one together. Put your finger on the sun. Say the word *sun*. Now look at the pictures beside the sun. Say them with me: *book, soap, jet*. Which one begins with the same sound as *sun*? *Sun* and *soap* begin with the same sound. They begin with /s/." (Say the sound, not the letter.) "Circle the picture that sounds like the first picture." Help students complete the sample item.
2. Name the rest of the pictures for students to be sure they use the correct labels and guide them in the completion of this assessment. Say the words naturally and do not overly elongate the initial sound.

The picture words used in the Beginning Sound Identification assessment are as follows. Correct responses are underlined:

* sun	book	<u>soap</u>	jet
1. nose	fan	kite	<u>nine</u>
2. rabbit	<u>rug</u>	dog	leaf
3. lamp	cat	toes	<u>log</u>
4. watch	<u>web</u>	zero	van
5. belt	kitten	yo-yo	<u>bird</u>
6. pie	<u>pig</u>	ball	gum
7. zebra	key	<u>zipper</u>	hand
8. dog	jet	leaf	<u>desk</u>

Benchmarks

By the end of kindergarten students should complete seven out of eight correctly.

LETTER-SOUND ASSESSMENTS

Assessment of Beginning Consonant Sounds and Letters

In this assessment (pages 19 and 20) students are given a letter and told to circle the picture that begins with that letter. If students score at least four on the first page, continue

to the second page. Do this assessment with students who know at least half of their alphabet letters. Enter the score on the Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet.

Instructions

1. "We are going to find pictures that begin with certain letters. Let's do one together. Put your finger on the letter *m*. Circle the picture that starts with the sound the *m* makes: *kite, man, soap*. Which begins with *m*? (Say the letter.) "Yes, *man* begins with *m*, so circle it." Help students complete the sample item.
2. Name the pictures for students to be sure they use the correct labels and guide them in the completion of this assessment.

The picture words used in the Beginning Consonant Sounds assessment are as follows. Correct responses are underlined:

Beginning Consonant Sounds (1)

* Mm	kite	<u>man</u>	soap
1. Pp	<u>pig</u>	moon	gum
2. Ss	block	cap	<u>sink</u>
3. Nn	bowl	<u>nest</u>	dog
4. Ff	sock	<u>foot</u>	cat
5. Gg	<u>game</u>	seal	rabbit
6. Kk	rug	<u>king</u>	mouse
7. Ll	bun	car	<u>leaf</u>
8. Ww	<u>watch</u>	zoo	bird

Beginning Consonant Sounds (2)

9. Tt	map	<u>tack</u>	rope
10. Cc	zipper	pan	<u>cat</u>
11. Yy	bat	<u>yo-yo</u>	fork
12. Bb	<u>bird</u>	sheep	mop
13. Dd	sled	<u>door</u>	horse
14. Jj	<u>jump</u>	bag	comb
15. Rr	lamp	fish	<u>rock</u>
16. Hh	cake	<u>hill</u>	needle

Benchmarks

By the end of kindergarten students should be able to identify the correct response in 6 of 8 (for assessment 1) or 14 of 16 (for both).

Observing Students' Writing

Students' independent writing offers information that can be recorded on the Emergent Class Record form on page 21. By capturing the change from scribbling to letterlike forms to random letters that characterize developmental changes in the early emergent stage, it can be used in preschool and kindergarten to create a class profile based on your

observation of student writing or in place of the feature guide and class composites for the Primary Spelling Inventory found in *Words Their Way*. The information you collect from students' efforts to write daily in journals or labeling pictures should be used to corroborate what you find when you administer a spelling inventory. If students are not using any letter-sound correspondences in their writing, even when prompted to "Write the sounds you hear," you may decide not to administer the spelling assessment described next until later in the year.

Kindergarten Spelling Inventory (KSI)

Using a developmental assessment such as one of the spelling inventories described in *Words Their Way* is a useful way to find out if your students are able to identify and write the sounds they hear in words. We have included the Kindergarten Spelling Inventory (KSI) in this text as a resource to better understand what alphabetic clues your students may be using or not using in their writing. A form is provided on page 22 to duplicate for each student. Note that the bottom half of the form should be folded up so that it is out of sight while students are writing the words. The KSI gives you information about students' abilities to segment phonemes (i.e., break words into sounds) and choose phonetically acceptable letters to represent the beginning, middle, or ending sounds of simple short vowel words. The KSI is adapted from the PALS-K Assessment (Invernizzi, Juel, Swank, & Meier, 2007).

- To prepare students for this assessment you should conduct several lessons such as the one described in Chapter 2 of *Words Their Way* in which students are introduced to the idea of "spelling the best they can."
- You will be asking students to spell only five words. Students are not to study these words because doing so invalidates the goal of finding out what they truly know about phonics and spelling. Do *not* pre-teach these words and do *not* have them displayed during testing.
- Most teachers find it easiest to administer this assessment in small groups. Seat students so that they cannot see the papers of their classmates. Manila folders sat on end can provide a screen.
- Model *mat* as a practice item, helping students to focus on the letter sounds by stretching out or repeating the sounds made by the letters. Sounds are indicated in the directions between slash marks / /. Do not demonstrate the sounding-out process beyond the *mat* example. You may prompt students by saying, "What else do you hear? Do you hear any other sounds in the word _____?"
- Point out the picture of the word as you dictate it to give students visual support for what you are saying.
- Observe the students' writing. If you are not sure about the intended letter due to poor letter formation, ask the student what letter he or she has written or ask the student to point to the letter he or she meant to write on the alphabet strip. To help with scoring, write the intended letters above the student's attempt.

Instructions

1. Tell the students that you want them to spell some words. First, demonstrate the procedure by thinking aloud, using a blackboard or chart paper. Say, "We're going to spell some words. I'll go first. The word I want to spell is *mat*. I am going to begin by saying the word slowly. MMM-AAA-TTT. Now I'm going to think about each sound I hear. Listen. MMM. I hear an /m/ sound so I will write down the letter *m*. MMM-AAA. After the /m/, I hear an /ah/ sound so I will write down the letter *a*. MMM-AAA-TTT. At the end of the word, I hear a /t/ sound, so I will write down the letter *t*."

2. Say, “Now I want you to spell some words. Put down a letter for each sound you hear. You can use the alphabet strip at the top of your sheet if you forget how to make a letter. Ready?” Ask the students to spell the following words in this order:

1. nap
2. kid
3. log
4. jet
5. gum

A picture of each word is next to the line where it should be written. These pictures are additional support for identifying the word you are saying. The picture is not a substitute for your oral dictation.

Scoring

Please note that spelling is scored based on phonetically acceptable letter–sound matches because we are interested in whether students are able to segment the individual phonemes and choose a logical letter to represent each one. Therefore, you may see more than one possible phonetic representation for each sound. For example, *b* and *p* are often confused because they are articulated the same way and differ only because *b* is voiced and *p* is unvoiced. Read more about these logical substitutions in *Words Their Way*.

- Compare students’ spelling to the boxes on the scoring grid at the bottom of the page.
- Read the grid for each word vertically, column by column, left to right, and put a check in boxes that match the student’s response. Each check is worth one point. Only one check per column is possible for each word.
- Static reversals, where the student writes a mirror image of a single letter (e.g., Я for R), and self-corrections are *not* counted as errors.
- Leave each box blank if there are no matches and proceed to the next column.
- Count the number of boxes checked in each column and record on the bottom line labeled “Spelling Feature Analysis.”
- Add all points and record this total in the column marked “Total Phonetically Acceptable.”

Benchmarks

A score of 12 out of 15 is the benchmark for the end of kindergarten.

CONCEPT OF WORD ASSESSMENTS

Students’ ability to accurately track or point to the words of something they have memorized is easily assessed in daily classroom activities when you ask students to read for you. Below are some guidelines about how to do this more formally. (A scoring rubric adapted from PALS-K is provided for *Humpty Dumpty*, but a blank form is also provided on page 26 so you can do this with any short text that students have memorized. See Chapter 5 of *Words Their Way* for a complete discussion of concept of word.)

Instructions

1. Teach a rhyme such as *Humpty Dumpty* as a whole-class activity. Use the picture cards on page 23 to teach it orally first by enlarging them and holding up a picture for each line. Practice until children have memorized it.
2. Make a printed copy of the rhyme (page 23) or write it on a chart or sentence strips and present it so that all can see. Explain, “This time as I say the rhyme I am going to

point to the words.” Model saying the rhyme slowly enough to point to each word. Then ask the students to say it along with you as you point again.

3. Assess concept of word with one child at a time. Make a copy of the poem for the student to read and a copy of the word list (page 24). Make a copy of the teacher recording sheet (page 25) for each student. If you are not sure whether students have memorized the poem have them recite it using the pictures as prompts before they are asked to read it.
4. Have each student read the poem. Say, “Read *Humpty Dumpty* to me and point to the words as you read.” Note whether the student has accurately tracked each line, and use the rubric to score each child’s efforts from 0 to 6 for each line. Score each line of the rhyme and then compute an average. Transfer this to the Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet.
 - 0 No left to right directionality established. May go right to left or change directions.
 - 1 Points left to right but pointing seems vague or random with no consistent units.
 - 2 Points to a letter for each syllable or rhythmic beat.
 - 3 Points to words for each rhythmic beat or syllable, getting off track.
 - 4 Points accurately to words but gets off track on two-syllable words.
 - 5 Points accurately, getting off track on two-syllable words, but self-corrects.
 - 6 Points accurately.

Word Recognition in Context

Point to the selected words on the student’s copy of *Humpty Dumpty* (they are underlined on the teacher recording sheet) and say, “Can you tell me this word?” Give one point for each word that is correctly identified. Note strategies used by the student. Did he reread to figure out the word or did he name it immediately? Ask how he knew a word. He may say, “I knew it was *horses* because it started with *h*.”

Word Recognition in Isolation

If a student’s concept of word score is 4 or better you can also assess the student’s recall of words in isolation. Use the list of words from page 24. Point to each word in turn, and ask the student to say the words she can read in the list. Note correct responses on the right-hand side of the teacher recording sheet and then transfer scores to the Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet.

Benchmarks

At the beginning of kindergarten most children in the early emergent stage will score between 1 and 3 on concept of word and will identify few, if any, words even in context. By the end of kindergarten most students should have a *rudimentary* concept of word and score 4 to 5 (pointing to words but occasionally getting off track). They will be slow and hesitant about identifying words you point to but will know some of them. Students who consistently score 5 to 6 have a *full* concept of word and are probably in the letter name–alphabetic stage of spelling. They should be able to identify nearly all words quickly in context (6 of 7) and will identify most of the words in the list (7 of 10).

REFERENCE

Invernizzi, M., Juel, C., Swank, L., & Meier, J. (2007). *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening-Kindergarten (PALS-K)*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Printing.

Emergent Assessment Summary Sheet

Name _____ Date _____ Teacher _____

Alphabet Tracking Observations

Alphabet Recognition: Capitals

M P S O X N A F G K L T U C Y

B I V D J E Q R Z H W Number Correct ____

Alphabet Recognition: Lowercase

m p s o x n a f g k l t u c y

b i v d j e q r z h w Number Correct ____

Rhyme Identification ____/9

Beginning Sounds: Alliteration ____/8

Beginning Letter-Sounds Identification ____/8 ____/8 Total ____/16

Kindergarten Spelling Inventory	Number of Beginning Phonemes	Number of Middle Phonemes	Number of Ending Phonemes	Total Phonetically Acceptable
	/5	/5	/5	/15

Concept of Word:

Pointing Score Average: _____

Word Identification in Context: _____ of _____

Word List Identification: _____ of _____

Observations:

Alphabet Recognition: Uppercase

M P S O X

N A F G K

L T U C Y

B I V D J

E Q R Z H

W

Alphabet Recognition: Lowercase

m p s o x

n a f g k

l t u c y

b i v d j

e q r z h

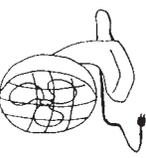
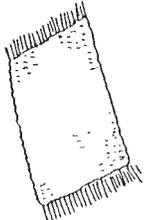
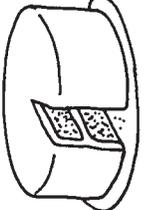
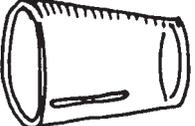
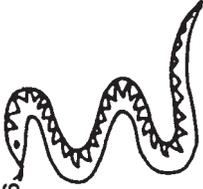
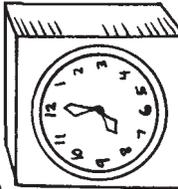
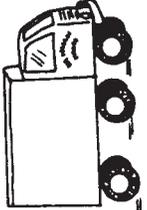
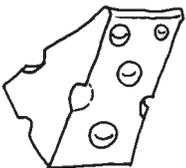
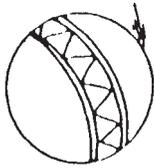
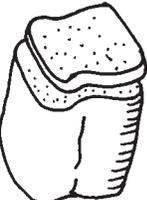
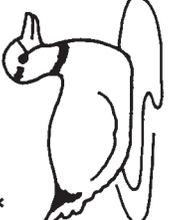
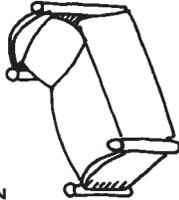
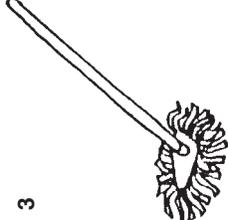
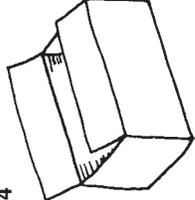
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Assessment for Rhyme

Instructions: Circle the two pictures that rhyme.

Name _____ Date _____

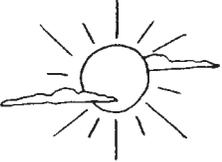
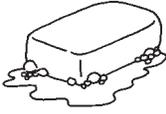
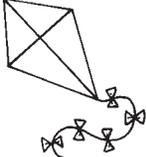
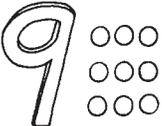
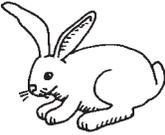
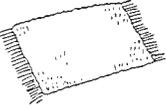
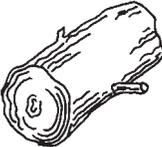
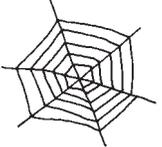
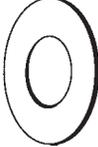
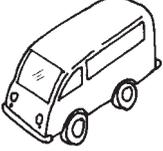
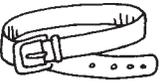
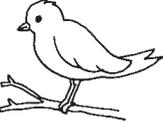
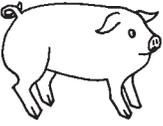
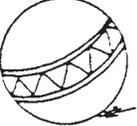
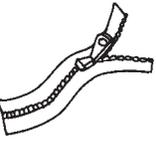
				
				
 <p>5</p>	 <p>6</p>	 <p>7</p>	 <p>8</p>	 <p>9</p>
				
				
 <p>*</p>	 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>	 <p>3</p>	 <p>4</p>

*Practice

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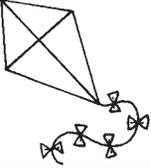
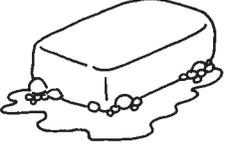
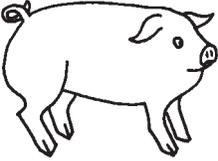
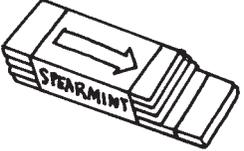
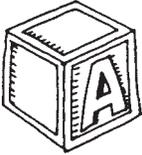
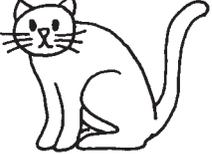
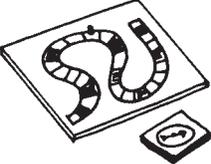
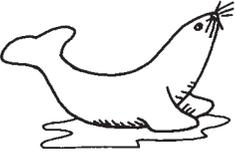
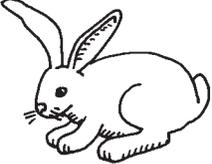
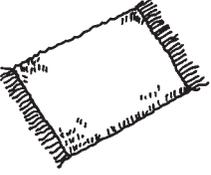
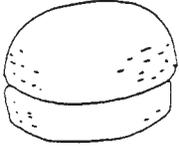
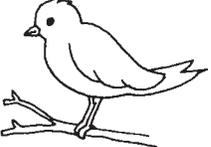
Beginning Sounds

Instructions: "Put your finger on the sun. Say the word *sun*. What picture sounds like *sun* at the beginning: *book*, *soap*, *jet*. Circle the picture that sounds like the first picture." Name the pictures for students to be sure they use the right labels and guide them in the completion of this assessment.

*				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

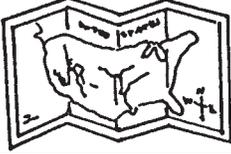
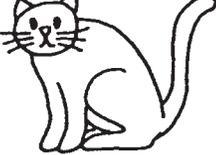
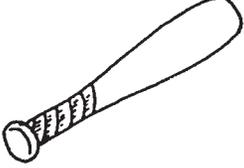
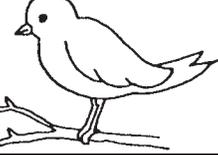
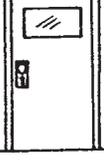
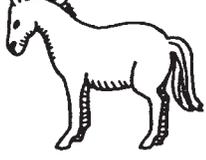
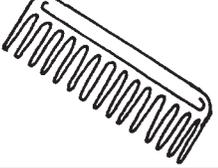
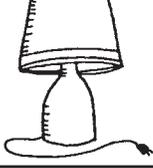
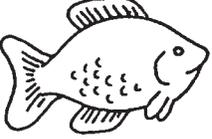
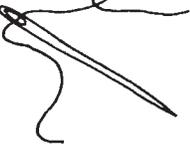
Beginning Consonant Sounds and Letters

Name _____ Date _____ # Correct _____

* Mm			
1 Pp			
2 Ss			
3 Nn			
4 Ff			
5 Gg			
6 Kk			
7 Ll			
8 Ww		 	

Beginning Consonant Sounds and Letters (continued)

Name _____ Date _____ # Correct _____

<p>9</p> <p>Tt</p>			
<p>10</p> <p>Cc</p>			
<p>11</p> <p>Yy</p>			
<p>12</p> <p>Bb</p>			
<p>13</p> <p>Dd</p>			
<p>14</p> <p>Jj</p>			
<p>15</p> <p>Rr</p>			
<p>16</p> <p>Hh</p>			

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Student Spelling Inventory

Name _____

Date _____

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1. _____ 

2. _____ 

3. _____ 

4. _____ 

5. _____ 

Adapted from PALS Quick Checks, University of Virginia

Fold here

Scoring Grid

	Beginning	Middle	Ending	
1. nap	n	a	p	_____ # phonetically acceptable
		e	b	
2. kid	k	i	d	_____ # phonetically acceptable
	c or g	e	t	
3. log	l	o	g	_____ # phonetically acceptable
		i	k	
4. jet	j	e	t	_____ # phonetically acceptable
	g	a	d	
5. gum	g	u	m	_____ # phonetically acceptable
	k or c	o		

Spelling Feature Analysis	Number of Beginning Phonemes	Number of Middle Phonemes	Number of Ending Phonemes	Total Phonetically Acceptable
				/15

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Humpty Dumpty

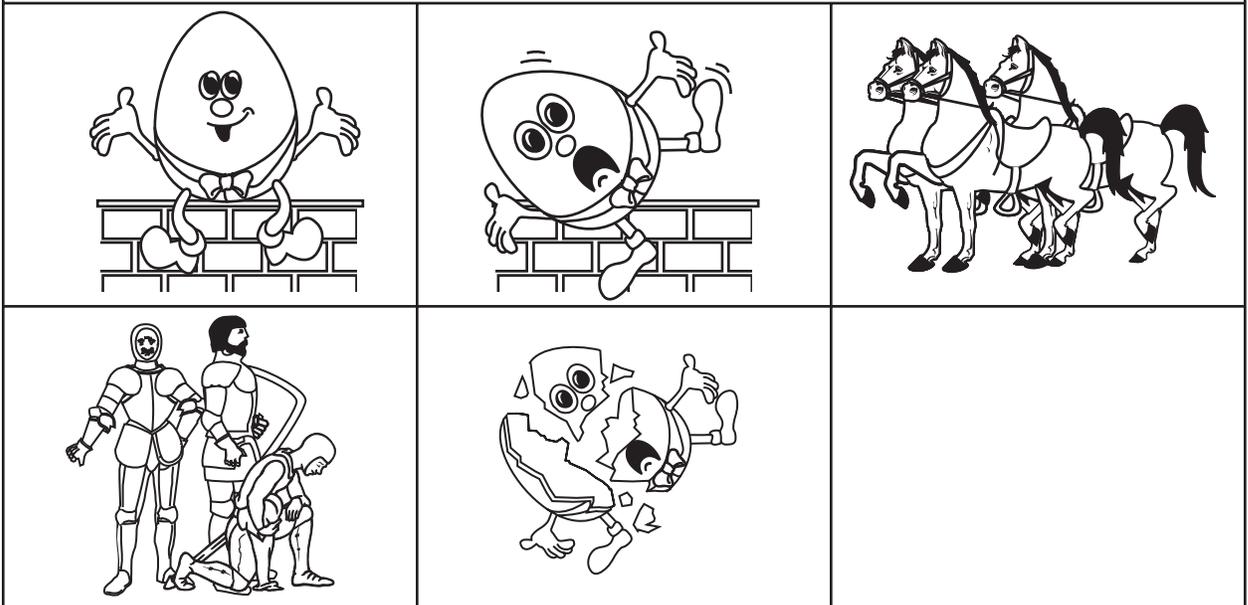
Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the king's horses

And all the king's men

Couldn't put Humpty together again!



Humpty Dumpty Word Recognition in Isolation

on

Humpty

put

horses

sat

men

king's

wall

had

fall

Concept of Word in Print with *Humpty Dumpty*

Name _____ Date _____ Teacher _____

	Pointing	Word ID	Word List
Humpty Dumpty sat on a <u>w</u> all		(2)	on
Humpty Dumpty had a <u>g</u> reat fall		(1)	Humpty
All <u>t</u> he king's <u>h</u> orses		(2)	put
And <u>a</u> ll the king's men		(1)	horses
Couldn't <u>p</u> ut Humpty together again		(1)	sat
Score:	Avg	/7	men
			king's
			wall
Pointing Benchmark: 6			had
Word ID Benchmark: 6/7			fall
COW Word List Benchmark: 7/10			/10

Scoring for Pointing

- 0 No left to right directionality established; may go right to left or change directions
- 1 Points left to right but pointing seems vague or random with no consistent units
- 2 Points to a letter for each syllable or rhythmic beat
- 3 Points to words for each rhythmic beat or syllable getting off track
- 4 Points accurately to words but gets off track on two-syllable words
- 5 Points accurately until getting off track on two-syllable words, but self-corrects
- 6 Points accurately

Score each line and then compute an average to record.

Observations: How readily do students identify words in context when you point to them in the rhyme? What strategies do they use when they do not know the word immediately? In the word list identification task do substitutions resemble the word, as in *house* for *horse* or *pig* for *put*?

Concept of Word Assessment

Name _____ Date _____ Teacher _____

	Pointing	Word ID	Word List
Score:	Avg		
Pointing Benchmark: 6			
Word ID Benchmark: 6/7			
COW Word List Benchmark: 7/10			Total

Scoring for Pointing

- 0 No left to right directionality established; may go right to left or change directions
- 1 Points left to right but pointing seems vague or random with no consistent units
- 2 Points to a letter for each syllable or rhythmic beat
- 3 Points to words for each rhythmic beat or syllable getting off track
- 4 Points accurately to words but gets off track on two-syllable words
- 5 Points accurately until getting off track on two-syllable words, but self-corrects
- 6 Points accurately

Score each line and then compute an average to record.

Observations: How readily do students identify words in context when you point to them in the rhyme? What strategies do they use when they do not know the word immediately? In the word list identification task do substitutions resemble the word, as in *house* for *horse* or *pig* for *put*?