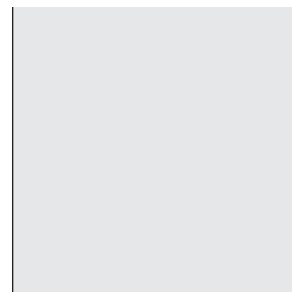


Description of the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory



WHAT IS THE EKWALL/SHANKER READING INVENTORY?

The Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory (ESRI) is a set of test instruments designed for the assessment or diagnosis of individual students' reading abilities. The ESRI may be used by educators for different purposes. Classroom teachers may use the ESRI to quickly assess students' reading performance. This *quick assessment* will enable teachers to group students for instruction and to guide the selection of reading materials for both instructional purposes and students' independent reading. This assessment also helps teachers identify those students who may need more thorough diagnosis or referral to a specialist. Classroom teachers, reading specialists, resource specialists, psychologists, or others with experience administering the ESRI may use the appropriate tests to conduct a *thorough diagnosis* of reading abilities. These tests will reveal each student's performance on all critical reading skills. An analysis of the student's performance on these tests will provide a blueprint for prescriptive instruction to remediate reading difficulties. Pre- and posttesting of oral and silent reading will enable the examiner to measure the student's progress over time.

The ESRI consists of thirty-nine different tests in ten different areas designed to assess the full range of students' reading abilities.

AN INFORMAL READING INVENTORY

Test 1 Graded Word List (GWL) or San Diego Quick Assessment

Test 2 Reading Passages Tests

Oral Reading (2a)

Silent Reading (2b)

Listening Comprehension (2c)

EMERGENT LITERACY

Test 3 Emergent Literacy Tests

Phonemic Awareness Tests (3a)

Rhyme Production (3a1)

Rhyme Recognition (3a2)

Initial Sound Recognition (3a3)

Phoneme Blending (3a4)

Phoneme Segmentation (3a5)

Concepts about Print Test (3b)

Letter Knowledge Test (3c)
Auditory Stimulus (3c1)
Visual Stimulus (3c2)

SIGHT WORDS

Test 4 Basic Sight Vocabulary Tests

Quick Check for Basic Sight Words (4a)
Basic Sight Words (4b)
Basic Sight Word Phrases (4c)

PHONICS

Test 5 Phonics Tests

Application of Phonics Skills in Context (5a)
Initial Consonants (5b)
Initial Blends and Digraphs (5c)
Ending Sounds (5d)
Vowels (5e)
Phonograms (5f)
Blending (5g)
Substitution (5h)
Vowel Pronunciation (5i)

Test 6 El Paso Phonics Survey

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Test 7 Structural Analysis Tests

Application of Structural Analysis Skills in Context (7a)
Lower Level (7a1)
Higher Level (7a2)
Hearing Word Parts (7b)
Inflectional Endings (7c)
Prefixes (7d)
Suffixes (7e)
Compound Words (7f)
Affixes (7g)
Syllabication (7h)

Test 8 Knowledge of Contractions Test

Test 9 Quick Word List Survey

CONTEXT CLUE USE

Test 10 Quick Check of Context Clue Use

READING INTERESTS

Test 11 Reading Interests Survey

Elementary (11a)
Adult (11b)

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TESTS

The main two tests in the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory are the Graded Word List Test (Test 1), also known as the San Diego Quick Assessment, and the Read-

ing Passages Test (Test 2). These two assessments are described first and together comprise an informal reading inventory. The remaining reading assessments in this book complement the inventory. Each of the tests is described in the order it is presented in the book and under the reading skill or ability it is primarily designed to measure.

Informal Reading Inventory

The Graded Word List (Test 1), which is also known as the San Diego Quick Assessment, can be used to obtain a quick estimate of the student's independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels. The Graded Word List is also the first test in the informal reading inventory and is used to determine which level to have a student begin reading the Reading Passages section of the informal reading inventory. It also can provide an initial analysis of the student's ability to recognize basic sight words and apply phonics and structural analysis skills. Because such a word list does not require a student to read words in context, it cannot evaluate a student's ability to use context clues or to comprehend written material. Although the Graded Word List can be a highly useful screening instrument and can aid in a complete diagnosis, by itself it is an inadequate measure of a student's overall reading ability.

Most informal reading inventories include passages to assess oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension. In the ESRI these abilities are evaluated in the Reading Passages Tests 2a, 2b, and 2c, respectively. The ESRI includes a complete set of four equivalent reading passages ranging in difficulty from preprimer through ninth-grade level. These passages are designed to measure students' oral and silent independent, instructional, and frustration reading grade levels. They are also used to determine students' listening comprehension levels. As in the administration of any informal reading inventory, students' use of decoding skills, as well as their ability to comprehend, is taken into consideration in the scoring procedure.

Once you determine your students' various reading levels, you will be able to give them appropriate materials for instruction and for independent reading. This is especially important for students who are having difficulty in reading. In addition, you can analyze your students' performance on the reading passages and the other tests in this battery to determine their reading strengths and weaknesses, enabling you to provide specific instruction that will help your students attain their potential as readers. As previously indicated, the inventory contains four reading passages at each level, as follows:

Preprimer-A	Preprimer-B	Preprimer-C	Preprimer-D
First Grade-A	First Grade-B	First Grade-C	First Grade-D
Second Grade-A	Second Grade-B	Second Grade-C	Second Grade-D
Third Grade-A	Third Grade-B	Third Grade-C	Third Grade-D
Fourth Grade-A	Fourth Grade-B	Fourth Grade-C	Fourth Grade-D
Fifth Grade-A	Fifth Grade-B	Fifth Grade-C	Fifth Grade-D
Sixth Grade-A	Sixth Grade-B	Sixth Grade-C	Sixth Grade-D
Seventh Grade-A	Seventh Grade-B	Seventh Grade-C	Seventh Grade-D
Eighth Grade-A	Eighth Grade-B	Eighth Grade-C	Eighth Grade-D
Ninth Grade-A	Ninth Grade-B	Ninth Grade-C	Ninth Grade-D

The A passages are designed to be read orally by the student on the first administration and the B passages to be read silently. The C and D passages may be

used for a second administration at a later date, or as supplementary passages to confirm the results of the first administration. As with the A and B passages, the C passages are to be read orally and the D passages silently. Any of the passages may be used to determine the student's listening comprehension level. For this we suggest you employ unused A or B passages on a first administration and C or D passages on a second administration at a later date. If you choose instead to use C or D passages to test for listening comprehension on a first administration, these passages will then be unsuitable for use in testing oral or silent reading at a later time.

Emergent Literacy/Prereading Skills

The third test included in the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory is used to assess the prereading skills of Emergent Readers. The concepts and skills measured on the Phonemic Awareness Test (Test 3a), Concepts about Print Test (Test 3b), and Letter Knowledge Test (Test 3c) have been found to correlate highly with later success in learning to read.

Basic Sight Word Knowledge

The Basic Sight Vocabulary Tests (Test 4) measure students' ability to recognize and pronounce the words that appear most often in the English language. The test has three parts. The first part is used to get a quick measure of the student's knowledge of basic sight words, which are words that occur very often in print. The second and third sections are used to determine which of the 220 basic sight words and 143 basic sight word phrases can be recognized and pronounced instantly by the student.

Phonics Skills

The Phonics Test (Test 5) and the El Paso Phonics Survey (Test 6) are both designed to assess a reader's phonics knowledge. The Phonics Test can be used to determine if the student has mastered letter-sound associations at three levels. The Phonics Test is divided into nine subtests. The first test, Application of Phonics Skills in Context, is a unique test that measures a student's ability to apply phonics skills when reading regular one-syllable words in context; it also serves as a screening test. If a student demonstrates mastery on this test, it is not necessary to administer the remaining phonics tests. For students who do not master the first phonics test, other tests measure the specific skills of Initial Consonants, Initial Blends and Digraphs, Ending Sounds, Vowels, Phonograms, Blending, Substitution, and Vowel Pronunciation. The El Paso Phonics Survey can be used to establish if the student has the ability to pronounce and blend ninety phonic elements. An additional assessment for older readers, the Quick Word List Survey (Test 9) can be used to quickly determine the need for further phonics assessment.

Structural Analysis Skills

Three tests are included to assist in determining a student's structural analysis knowledge and ability. The Structural Analysis Tests (Test 7) covers inflectional endings, compound words, prefixes, suffixes, and syllabication. The Structural Analysis Tests measure students' abilities to decode multisyllable words using a format similar to that used in the phonics tests. The first test, Application of Structural Analysis Skills in Context, consists of two different passages (at two

levels of difficulty), which reveal whether a student is able to apply structural analysis skills in the act of reading. If students master the first test, it is unnecessary to administer the remaining structural analysis tests: Hearing Word Parts, Inflectional Endings, Prefixes, Suffixes, Compound Words, Affixes (a test that combines both prefixes and suffixes), and Syllabication. The Knowledge of Contractions Test (Test 8) is designed to assess the student's knowledge of contractions. The Quick Word List Survey (Test 9) can be used with older readers to quickly determine if the student has mastered phonics and structural analysis. It can serve as a pretest to see if further testing is needed in phonics and structural analysis

Ability to Use Context Clues

The Quick Check of Context Clue Use Test (Test 10) provides a means to observe a student's use of context clues. The assessment is very simple and can be used by most students reading at a third-grade level or higher. The test can also serve as a model to develop an assessment that is appropriate for the reading level of your students.

Reading Interests

The Reading Interests Survey (Test 11) consists of two forms, elementary and adult, that can be used to assess students' reading interests, experiences, and habits.

Using the Tests

Each of the tests in the ESRI will be covered in detail in later sections of this manual. For each test, you will be given its purpose, a description, specific directions for administering and scoring, and thorough information on how you can use the data gathered to evaluate the student's reading performance in the area(s) tested.

WHO SHOULD USE THE EKWALL/SHANKER READING INVENTORY?

The ESRI was designed for use by classroom teachers, reading specialists, resource specialists, and psychologists, among others, and for the training of prospective and in-service educators. Most reading experts readily agree that the reading grade level of a student can be determined more accurately by the use of a reading inventory of this nature than by the use of standardized achievement tests or other commonly used methods. Furthermore, while administering an inventory such as this a teacher can gather a great deal of diagnostic information that will serve as a blueprint for instruction. The ESRI is also flexible. In some cases, the examiner will employ only the Graded Word List and the oral reading passages to determine the student's reading levels, so that appropriate placement may be made and guidance given when helping the student select reading materials. In other cases, the examiner may wish to perform a brief diagnosis of the student's reading difficulties based on the use of some, but not all, of the tests in the ESRI. In still other cases, the examiner may wish to perform a comprehensive diagnosis of the student's reading abilities based on the administration of many of the tests in the ESRI.

If you are using the ESRI as part of a college course or staff development training, your instructor will guide you in the selection of tests and procedures to be used. Because these tests cover the full range of reading abilities, from emergent literacy skills through fluent reading with comprehension, under no circumstances should an examiner give all of these tests to any one student.

Levels of Assessment

For a quick screening of students' abilities, give Tests 1 and 2a to students individually. These tests can be administered and scored in as little as ten to fifteen minutes per child. If you desire more specific information about your students' reading abilities, the tests listed in the following table may be given for quick assessment.

A thorough reading diagnosis for a struggling reader may require an hour or more. The specific tests given for diagnostic purposes will vary depending on the reading skills of the student being tested. Typically, however, the tests listed in the following table are given in order to gather data for a comprehensive reading diagnosis.

Quick Assessment		
<i>Student's reading level</i>	<i>Tests</i>	<i>Test description</i>
Prereaders	Tests 3a through 3c	Provides more information on prereading abilities.
Beginning readers ¹	Test 4a Test 5a	Tests basic sight word abilities. Tests phonics abilities.
More able readers ²	Test 7a1 or 7a2	Tests structural analysis abilities.
Diagnostic Testing		
<i>Student's reading level</i>	<i>Tests³</i>	<i>Test description</i>
Prereaders	Test 1 and Tests 3a through 3c	Provides more thorough information on prereading abilities.
Beginning readers ¹	Tests 1, 2a, 2b	Tests reading abilities using graded reading passages.
	Test 2c	Tests listening comprehension abilities.
	Tests 4b and 4c Tests 5a through 5i Test 11a or 11b	Tests basic sight word abilities. Tests phonics abilities. Provides information on reading interests.
More able readers ²	Tests 1, 2a, 2b, 2c	Tests reading abilities using graded reading passages.
	Test 4a	Verifies mastery of basic sight words.
	Test 5a	Verifies mastery of phonics.
	Tests 7a through 7h Test 11a or 11b	Tests structural analysis abilities. Provides information on reading interests.

¹This level may include older remedial readers who are struggling with decoding skills.

²This level may include students who have mastered their beginning reading skills but who may lack fluency and the ability to decode written materials written at a third-grade level or higher.

³Tests 6, 8, 9, and 10 are considered optional and are given only in unusual circumstances or when additional information is desired.

Do not be daunted by the apparent complexity of this inventory. Most of the tests in this battery have been used by tens of thousands of teachers and students in training to become teachers. The only tests that are somewhat difficult to administer are the Reading Passages Tests (Tests 2a, 2b, and 2c), and this manual

contains ample guidance and special tools to assist you in learning to administer them. Once you have given the tests, you will not find it necessary to reread the instructions in the manual. Both your speed and your ability to administer, score, and interpret these reading tests will improve considerably with experience.

READING/LISTENING LEVELS MEASURED BY THE EKWALL/SHANKER READING INVENTORY

The ESRI measures four reading levels, which are reported as grade levels. These include the three reading grade levels: the independent level, the instructional level, and the frustration level. A fourth level, listening ability, is determined by reading passages to the student and then scoring the student's comprehension of that material. This is usually termed the student's listening comprehension level. A description of the independent, instructional, frustration, and listening comprehension levels follows.

Independent Reading Level

The *independent reading level* is the level at which a student should be able to read without help of any kind from the teacher. This is the level at which one would normally expect the student to read a voluntarily selected library or trade book. The student should accurately pronounce or decode at least 99 percent of the words and should comprehend at least 90 percent of the material.

Most teachers are surprised to learn that students must decode 99 percent of the words to be able to read at an independent level. One of the most important reasons for teachers to give the ESRI is to determine students' correct independent levels and thus guide students in selecting appropriate materials for independent reading. Experts know that students must spend large amounts of time engaged in the act of reading to develop their reading skills. This reading practice is most effective when students are reading materials at their independent reading levels.

Instructional Reading Level

The *instructional reading level* is the level at which a student would normally be reading when required to read a social studies or science textbook, a basal reader, or an anthology without having had a chance to read it previously. The student should accurately decode at least 95 percent of the words and should comprehend at least 60 percent of the material. The instructional reading level is always higher than the independent reading level. Material written at the student's instructional reading level will be too difficult for the student to read independently. Therefore, the teacher should discuss the material with the student and build up the student's background of experience to improve both vocabulary and overall comprehension. New words should also be discussed so that the student will be able to use word-attack skills correctly when encountering them.

Frustration Reading Level

The *frustration reading level* is the point at which reading material simply becomes too difficult for the student to read. The student can decode accurately 90 percent or less of the words and can comprehend only 50 percent or less of the material.

Listening Comprehension Level

The *listening comprehension level* is usually considered to be the highest level at which the student can listen to a passage and comprehend 70 to 75 percent of the material. Because there are ten questions on the ESRI, the lower percentage of 70 is used for easy scoring.

To determine the student's listening comprehension level, you will read passages to the student and ask questions about those passages. The purpose for finding a student's listening comprehension level is to determine whether a discrepancy exists between the level at which the student can *read* and comprehend and the level at which the student can *listen* and comprehend. If the student can listen and comprehend at a grade level or several grade levels higher than that same student can read and comprehend, you can conclude that this individual has good potential for improving in reading ability. Once problems with decoding skills are overcome, the student's reading comprehension would be likely to improve.

Comprehension Levels Summary

The scoring criteria for the independent, instructional, frustration, and listening comprehension levels are summarized below:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Word Recognition</i>	<i>Comprehension</i>
Independent level	99% or more	90% or more
Instructional level	95% or more	60% or more ¹
Frustration level	90% or less	50% or less
Listening comprehension level	—	70–75% or more

In determining a student's oral reading level, both word recognition and comprehension are taken into consideration. Because we are unable to determine how many words the student recognizes in silent reading, only the comprehension factor is considered in scoring silent reading passages.

In scoring the ESRI, or any informal reading inventory, the ultimate decision about grade placement is usually based on the percentages previously mentioned. However, Johnson and Kress² have listed certain behavioral characteristics commonly observed in students at their independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels. These related behavioral characteristics are as follows:

Independent and Instructional Levels

- Rhythmical, expressive oral reading
- Accurate observation of punctuation
- Acceptable reading posture
- Silent reading more rapid than oral
- Response to questions in language equivalent to that of author
- No evidence of lip movement, finger pointing, head movement, vocalization, subvocalization, or anxiety about performance

Frustration Reading Level

- Abnormally loud or soft voice
- Arrhythmic or word-by-word oral reading

- Lack of expression in oral reading
- Inaccurate observation of punctuation
- Finger pointing (at margin or every word)
- Lip movements, head movements, subvocalization
- Frequent requests for examiner help
- Noninterest in the selection
- Yawning or obvious fatigue
- Refusal to continue

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EKWALL/SHANKER READING INVENTORY

The Graded Word List (GWL)

The Graded Word List (GWL) used in the ESRI was developed by Margaret La Pray and Ramon Ross at San Diego State University. Since it was published in the *Journal of Reading* in January 1969, this list has been widely used and is likely to place a student at the correct independent, instructional, and frustration reading grade levels based on the student's sight vocabulary, phonics, and structural analysis skills. However, this test evaluates neither the student's ability to use context clues for decoding nor the student's ability to comprehend what is read. Therefore, the examiner should use the GWL as a starting point in administering the oral and silent reading passages and for a quick assessment of basic sight word knowledge and phonic and structural analysis skills.

The Graded Reading Passages

All of the passages in the ESRI were written by Eldon E. Ekwall, who attempted to create passages that, according to research, would be of interest to students. Effort was made to control the subject matter so that questions about the content of each passage could not be answered by students who had not read that passage. All of the passages contain ten sentences, except the preprimer passages. Usually there is one question about each sentence. In most cases, the first question is rather easy and is designed to give students confidence in their ability to answer the rest of the questions.

In all of the passages *above* the second-grade level, one question is designed to test the student's vocabulary. This question can often be answered by the student if he or she makes good use of meaning context. In all passages above the second-grade level, one question is also designed to test the student's ability to make inferences. Most of the answers to the inference questions can be inferred from the passage itself. Any student with a good ability to reason should be able to answer these questions even though the answers may not be directly stated in the passage. We do not believe it is fair to expect a student to answer inference questions based strictly on background experiences, because some students with abundant experience would be likely to have an advantage over those with more meager backgrounds.

The initials F, I, and V appear beside each blank on the comprehension questions on the teacher's scoring sheet. These initials designate the type of questions being asked. The initial F stands for factual, I stands for inference, and V stands for vocabulary.

In some cases, the examiner may feel it would be desirable to have more inference questions. Research in the area of reading comprehension, however, has shown that it is difficult, if not impossible, to design questions accurately except those that sample vocabulary knowledge and factual information. Furthermore, inference questions are less passage-dependent than literal questions. For this reason, students would be unduly penalized if more than 10 percent of the questions were of the inference type.

The grade levels of the reading passages for preprimer through grade 8 were determined by using the Harris-Jacobson Readability Formula.³ Derived from a great deal of research by Albert Harris and Milton Jacobson, the formula is based on the percentage of hard words in the passage (words not on the Harris-Jacobson List) and average sentence length. In writing the passages, the authors adjusted the average sentence length and the percentage of hard words to derive a score that would place the reading difficulty of each passage near the midpoint of each grade level. The grade levels of the reading passages for ninth grade were determined by using the revised version by Powers, Sumner, and Kearsley⁴ of the original Dale-Chall Readability Formula.⁵

After the initial writing of the passages and the questions about them were completed, the inventory was administered to approximately fifty students. These administrations were tape-recorded and later analyzed to determine whether certain questions were consistently missed by nearly all students due to faulty wordings. Following this analysis, adjustments were made. The inventory was then reviewed by four professors of reading education. Based on these reviews, more adjustments were made. Next, the inventory was administered to approximately sixty students of various ages, and further minor revisions were made in the content of the passages and the questions about them until it was determined that the questions and the levels of the passages were satisfactory.

The initial version of the inventory contained primer as well as preprimer and first-grade passages. The authors found that although it is possible to differentiate between preprimer and primer passages using a readability formula, it was not practical to include both preprimer and primer passages in the inventory because there is simply not enough difference between the reading levels of preprimer and primer passages to assess the difference accurately for most students. Therefore, only preprimer and first-grade level passages appear in the ESRI. The preprimer passages represent the lowest level at which a student can be said to read, and the first-grade passages represent a medium to high first-grade level.

Time Factors for the Silent Reading Passages

An important aspect of reading ability is *fluency*. One measure of fluency is speed of reading, or reading rate. For this measure to be meaningful, however, the student must also decode accurately and comprehend what has been read. The ESRI provides a built-in measure of reading fluency. As described in following paragraphs, you can determine the student's reading rate on each silent reading passage. Because criteria have already been established for comprehension, you can determine the student's reading rate on passages read at either the independent or instructional levels.

The ESRI includes time factors for the silent reading passages: *slow*, *medium*, *fast*, *median* (the point at which half the students read slower and the other half read faster), and *mean* (average). These categories were developed by administering the ESRI to approximately 170 students at each grade level. Care was taken

to select students from various socioeconomic levels in three different school districts.

The times listed are for only those students who comprehended at 70 percent or higher. You may note that even at the same grade level the longer passages tend to take a shorter amount of time to read, in terms of words per minute, than the shorter passages. Studies of the reading speeds of children report a great deal of variation. In addition to passage length, other elements influencing reading speed include interest, prior knowledge, and distractions. The times given for the pre-primer level apply to students in the first grade who read the passages during the month of November, and the times given for the first grade and all other grade levels apply to students who read the passages in late February, March, and early April of the school year.

Reliability of the Reading Passages

A preliminary study was conducted in which forty students were administered the A and B forms and C and D forms to determine the reliability of the two forms. Two examiners tested forty students from grades 1 through 9. Half of the students were given the A and B forms first and the other half were given the C and D forms first. All students were given the second set of forms (not previously taken) within a period of one week or less after the administration of the first forms. A product-moment coefficient was calculated between the A and C (oral) forms and found to be .82. The same calculations between the B and D (silent) forms produced a correlation coefficient of .79. One examiner administered forms A and B and forms C and D in grades 1 through 4, while the other examiner administered the same forms in grades 5 through 9. The correlation coefficients of .82 and .79 must, then, be considered as a measure of intrascorer reliability.

Other Tests

The Letter Knowledge Tests, the Basic Sight Words and Basic Sight Phrases Tests, the Phonics Tests, the Structural Analysis Tests, and the Elementary Level Reading Interests Survey were originally developed in the 1970s. They have been refined over more than twenty years and given to thousands of children and adults from diverse backgrounds in urban, rural, and suburban school settings. The Knowledge of Contractions Test, the El Paso Phonics Survey, and the Quick Word List Survey have been a part of the ESRI since its earliest editions.

The Phonemic Awareness Tests and the Concepts about Print Test were created using the most common form of assessment for these abilities. The Adult Level Reading Interests Survey, the Quick Check for Basic Sight Words, and the Quick Check of Context Clue Use were carefully developed and their accuracy verified over many years.