

How to Assess Elementary Reading

It is important that a teacher include three aspects of evaluation to form a legitimate reading grade: oral reading, comprehension based on written work, and comprehension from discussion based on silent reading.

Reading: Oral Evaluation

Evaluation of the oral reading may be done using page 3 or 5. Page 3 provides a detailed evaluation, and page 5 gives a more general evaluation. I recommend that a five-point evaluation be used on page 5, as it is on page 3.

Comprehension: Written Work

Written comprehension grades come from the reading worktext pages that you select to evaluate or from pages that you compose. These grades may be recorded in your grade book or on the form on page 4.

Comprehension: Discussion

Evaluation of comprehension from discussion may best be recorded by using page 2 or 5. These pages are designed for a teacher to put the names for one entire reading group on the same form. The recording may be done with a check or a minus. Personally, I recommend using a number system. It could be a three-point system or a five-point system. If you use a five-point system, it converts easily to percentage grades. For example:

- 5 = a complete, well-stated answer based on the initial question
- 4 = a good answer needing a little clarification
- 3 = an answer that required a little help or scaffolding (asking another question to lead up to it)
- 2 = an answer that required more than one help
- 1 = an inaccurate answer even with help

It is *not* recommended that you record every answer given by every child. You want to maintain a smoothly flowing conversation during the story discussion. However, it is good to record several answers during each reading group. The grid will show whether you are balancing your evaluations. Literal and appreciative questions are easy to identify and balance. The interpretive and critical questions are not as easily delineated. Toward the end of completing the page, you may choose to mark the interpretive and critical categories interchangeably in order to complete the grid. If you are using the form on page 2, we recommend two to three pages per marking period. The form on page 5 would require four to six completed pages.

After you have compiled the individual evaluation forms, it is necessary to average them. Pages 6–8 give three different percentages for compiling the total reading grade. I recommend using the even percentages for grades 1 and 2. The silent and written comprehension will begin to outweigh the oral reading as the students progress through elementary school. For grades 3 and 4, it would be better to use page 7. For grades 5 and 6, you might choose between pages 7 and 8. These forms reflect our philosophy for teaching and evaluating reading. Students coming through the BJU Press program usually do very well in middle school and high school with understanding literature.

I trust that this information will be helpful to you. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact dbuckley@bju.edu or call 1.800.845.5731, ext. 4334 or 4315.