



Quick Check: Developmental Stages of Reading

Use this checklist to assess what stage of reading development a student has achieved based upon the skills they presently possess. This assessment can assist you in identifying what they should work on in order to advance to the next stage.

Name:	Skill Check Date:
STAGE 1 – Visual Cue Word Recognition	
This critical stage is the pre-reading stage, where children play with oral language, learn about the world around them and develop skills that they will later apply to learning to read.	
	Pretends to read books
	Labels objects in books
	Comments on characters in books
	Listens to stories
	Recognizes print in the environment (for example, company logos)
	Knows that it is the print that is read in stories, and not the pictures
	Understands and follows oral directions
	Is sensitive to some sequences of events in stories
	May begin to attend to rhyming words
	May identify a few letters, especially those from their own name
	May begin to attend to beginning sounds of words
STAGE 2 – Phonetic Cue Word Recognition	
Children learn to generate rhyming words and sentences with alliteration, are able to separate the beginning sound of a small word from the rest of the word, and begin to use letter and sound relationships to recognize words.	
	Knows the parts of a book and their functions
	Begins to track print when listening to text being read
	Recognizes and can name all uppercase and lowercase letters
	Understands the relationship between the sounds in a spoken word and the sequence of letters in the word when it is written down
	Learns most one-to-one letter sound correspondences
	Recognizes some words by sight, especially very common ones (a, the, I, my, you, is, are)
	Notices when simple sentences fail to make sense
	Makes predictions based on illustrations
	Can hear a word and separate it into the distinct sounds (mat = /m/-/a/-/t/)
	Given spoken words like “dan, dan, den” can identify the first two as being the same and the third as different
	Given spoken sets like “dak, pat, sen” can identify the first two as sharing the same middle sound
	Can merge spoken word parts into whole words (cow – boy = cowboy)
	Given a spoken word, can produce a rhyming word
STAGE 3 – Controlled Word Recognition	
During the Controlled Word Recognition stage, children acquire accurate word-recognition skills, meaning they are able to make use of all the letter information in a word.	
	Reads aloud with accuracy and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for their level
	Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text
	Recognizes common sight words (have, said, where, two)
	Monitors own reading and self-corrects when an incorrectly identified word does not fit with the surrounding the words



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Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction that is appropriately designed for grade level	
Discusses similarities in characters and events across grade appropriate stories	
Reads and understands simple written instructions	
Predicts and justifies what will happen next in stories	
Discusses prior knowledge of topics in expository texts designed to inform or instruct the reader	
Describes new information gained from texts in own words	
STAGE 4 – Automatic Word Recognition	
As an Automatic Word reader, children can recognize words not only accurately but also with relatively little effort. This stage is all about the reader gaining control of reading processes.	
Reads aloud with fluency any text that is appropriately designed for grade level	
Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction text that is appropriately designed for grade level	
Uses letter-sounds correspondence knowledge and structural analysis to decode unknown words	
Reads longer selections and beginning chapter books independently	
Can point to or clearly identify specific words or wordings that are causing comprehension difficulties	
Summarizes major points from text	
Distinguishes cause and effect, fact and opinion, main idea and supporting details	
Asks how, why, and what-if questions in interpreting nonfiction texts	
Uses prior knowledge and contextual cues to aid comprehension rather than word recognition	
Begins to learn from independent reading	
Listening comprehension is still stronger than reading comprehension	
Recognizes most words that are in their spoken vocabularies	
STAGE 5 – Strategic Reading	
In the Strategic Reading stage word recognition skills are automatic and children routinely use reading comprehension strategies, including a number of basic “fix up” strategies when they fail to understand something they read.	
Automatic word recognition and fluent reading	
Reads aloud with fluency any text that is appropriately designed for grade level	
Regularly uses strategies to aid comprehension	
Selects the appropriate strategy to fit the need	
Responds to increased demands of text	
Reading comprehension is generally better than listening comprehension	
Reads a wide variety of texts	
Understands more than one point of view	
Deals with more than one set of facts and theories, though integration may still be at a beginning level	
STAGE 6 – Proficient Adult Reading	
The defining feature of the Proficient Adult Reading stage involves highly developed comprehension abilities, which depend on highly skilled word recognition. At this stage readers are insightful, analytical and reflective.	
Highly skilled word-recognition abilities	
Highly developed comprehension abilities	
Can make higher-order connections within and across texts	
Integrates knowledge from a wide variety of sources	
Selects text to match need	
Constructs new ideas and knowledge from reading	
Difficult text can be grappled with successfully	





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Name:	Skill Check Date:
Handles increasingly complex vocabulary	
High level comprehension is often domain or subject specific	
Overall Comments:	

