

Home Reading Evaluation Downloadable

BRISTOL



STANDARD

Important Background Information for Test Users

Welcome! Teachers use this test to identify letter patterns their students need to learn, but it was designed for parents. Some schools are ahead of others. Student bodies in different schools reach widely varying skill levels by the end of any given grade, so a "grade level" estimate is only a guide. Consult with your child's teacher every 2 months.

You can use this test two ways. First, assess your child's current reading level and use that information to choose your "next steps" on the next page. Because reading is such a hard skill to learn, this test can be used over and over again to measure your child's reading gains. Save and date each test. Keep tabs on your school or your tutors. See instructions for testing and grading.

General Instructions For Testing

- Test your child when he or she is sharp & content (often about 10:00 AM).
- Each grade level has its own color: **K** **1st** **2nd** **3rd**
- Try to do the test in one sitting. It lasts about 12 minutes.
- Regardless of your child's current grade at school, begin with the first page.
- As you go, check off each correctly pronounced word; don't mark errors.
- After reaching a section's time limit, start the next section.
- As your child approaches his grade level, he will slow down and struggle to finish each section before running out of time.
- Watch your child's error rate. If it stays above 50% for two consecutive rows, continue testing to the end of the section or the time limit, then stop. This is roughly your child's grade level.

Grading

- No scoring! A section within which most answers were correct is below your child's level.
- The section with about 50% of the words checked off is your child's rough grade level.
- There should be a fairly clean separation between grade levels. If your child is missing words at every grade level, this indicates a weak foundation that should be reinforced with tutoring.
- This test is a bit hard for several reasons. More precise tests may indicate a slightly higher grade level in comparison to national norms.
- School reading goals and schedules vary a lot, so be sure to consider what your child's teacher is saying: Is your child falling short the school's goals - but doing well, or is your child in the bottom half of the class? A school's goals are going to be optimistic. Sometimes they're just plain fantasy. Falling below the class average is a problem because it makes your child feel like he or she is bad at reading. People avoid practicing things they're bad at, so try to keep your child in the top third of the class. Check with your child's teacher every two months and consider observing reading instruction a few times.

Next Steps

- **If your child is reading above his grade level**, that's great! Talk to his teacher and ask which third of the class he's in. Try to keep your child's reading skills in the top third of his class. In this situation, we recommend "Reading Insurance," a system of quarterly reading checkups. Read about Bristol Standard's Reading Insurance here: <https://bristolstandard.com/readinginsurance>. Read to your child, but try to read books above his reading level (at his or her listening comprehension level). Make regular trips to a library or bookstore.
- **If your child is reading at his grade level**, sign up for Bristol Standard's free 2-session reading evaluation. Then be sure to ask your teacher what reading issues she is seeing and which third of the class he or she is in. Make sure you sign up for Reading Insurance (check-ups). Ask your tutor if your child is ready to begin reading stories. (Story reading is often introduced prematurely, causing a special comprehension problem.) Read to your child nightly, but aim above his or her reading level.
- **If your child is reading below his grade level**, sign up for Bristol Standard's free 2-session reading evaluation. Then be sure to ask your teacher what reading issues she is seeing and which third of the class your child is in. If she agrees your child is behind, get tutoring from a Bristol Standard Certified Tutor.

Quarterly Reading Check-ups

For maximum reading protection, you can sign up for regular reading check-ups. Call 404.955.7245. The insurance fee covers one year and is due in advance. It's either \$88.00 per year (one session per quarter) or 176.00/year (two sessions/quarter). Here is what to expect.

Every 90 days or so from the date of your enrollment, we will...

- Contact you by E-mail, text, or phone to remind to schedule your child's next evaluation(s).
- You will receive a reminder the day before the appointment and about 30 minutes before your child's appointment on the scheduled day.
- Plan on providing 2 or more contact methods (at least: 1 phone number & 1 email address).
Bristol Standard does not sell or share contact information.

Free 2-to-4 Session Evaluation

Your child's reading evaluation begins with session 1 and extends through session 2. Both are free. **Money-back guarantee**: Sessions 3 & 4 are tutoring sessions but also refine the initial evaluation for advanced students. The charge for sessions 3 & 4 is \$22.00 per half hour (\$44.00 total). If you decide not to continue tutoring at the end of the 3rd or 4th session, you are due a full refund, making all four sessions **free**. See our tutoring **outcome guarantee** for parents.

Contact Us

We answer questions (*and the phone*). You can get advice, schedule an online evaluation, or schedule a free program walk-through. You can start quarterly reading check-ups. Contact Bristol Standard, LLC, at 404.955.7245 or GregTuve@BristolStandard.com.

Late Kindergarten (Section 1)

Directions For The Short Vowel Test



Max time: 24 seconds. All vowels are "short:" egg, at, it, odd, ump. These are common letter pairs (not always words). Both letters in each pair must be pronounced correctly (glottal stops okay) to earn a check mark. An unsolicited and prompt self-correction is counted as correct. The blue word is a hint for children with low exposure to short-E sounds. You may supply "eg" (egg) if your child misses this word. Check mark it if it's correct on the first try. Point at each word in turn and check off correct answers.

Set Timer for 24 seconds.

eg et at ot it ut am op if
en an on in un ed od ad

Background Information

Each vowel above has 2-4 common sounds. Because of this and other irregularities, the correct pronunciation of a vowel cannot be determined in isolation. That is, you must know which letters are nearby. As examples: Kat, Kate, addult, call, spa, etc. Even consonants usually have multiple pronunciations: picnic, ice, chore, indict, schism. Good readers don't learn "the" sound of a letter. They learn *which* sound a letter makes in different surroundings.

Grade-level estimates are approximate. Grade level norms are misleading anyway, because a talented child who is taught well at the right age can learn to read in a matter of months. With standard instruction, it takes the "average" child at least three years to learn to read on a late "third-grade" level, but many children of average talent *never* learn to read, while plenty of other average children learn to read with less than 100 hours of efficient instruction.

Children with high reading aptitudes who get efficient reading instruction can reach a "late 3rd grade level" early in first grade (with less than 40 hours of practice/instruction).

Directions For The Consonant Test (B to Z)

Max time: 49 seconds. All vowels are "short:" egg, at, it, odd, ump. We recommend counting glottal stops as errors for reasons that are far too complex to cover here. **Ignore the red numbers;** they're explained below. **Timer = 49 seconds.**

⁸⁹ sot	¹⁶⁹ hun	¹⁷² lod	¹¹⁷ cac	⁷⁶⁶ rem	²⁸ pif
weg	yix	baz	juv	kul	tet
san	hig	doc	yop	vub	rik
waf	jim	zix	nun	bib	pip
did	bid				

Background And Explanation

If the letter collections above are not words, how do you know their pronunciations? It is these hidden pronunciation rules that your child must absorb to be a strong reader. Some reading programs let your child "discover" the hidden rules. Other systems teach the rules explicitly, e.g, "If two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking." Some systems etch these hidden pronunciation rules directly into a child's oral "muscle memory" (found in the motor cortex).

These letter collections are mostly word parts (common letter patterns your child must be able to pronounce in order to read long words like besotted, hundred, and plod (top row, above)). The **red number** above each letter collection in the top row is the count of how many dictionary words contain the same letter collection. You can verify the red numbers by visiting morewords.com and searching for *sot*, *hun*, and *lod*. By excluding defined letter collections (real words) and sight words, we can exclude false results caused by... *memorization without full spelling comprehension.* The approach also prevents successful guesswork. Guesses tend to focus on letter content, while ignoring letter order. Guesses may also be based on: leading letters, prior words, word length, pictures, rhyming schemes, plot, and grammar.

Directions For The Familiar Word Test

Max time: 49 seconds. All vowels are "short:" egg, at, it, odd, ump. We recommend counting glottal stops as errors. **Timer = 49 seconds.**

win	jet	dig	fat	lap	hen	hat
vet	mom	ant	rug	fix	pin	lot
dad	pen	nap	yet	fin	pan	
add	tan	bun	fan	rip	skip	

Background: Low Accuracy? Low Decoding Speed?

Don't worry yet. This list is fairly ambitious, even for the last month of kindergarten. A child who can't read these words by the middle of first grade is probably falling behind, but it depends on school policies, curriculum, and the reading aptitudes of the student body. Talk to a teacher and try getting ahead over the summer.

No Sight Words Above

None of the above words are so-called "sight words." **As a matter of policy, Bristol Standard strongly discourages sight-word "memorization."** If your child can pronounce the words above, he should be able to read "sight words" by relying on the same decoding skills. If he can't read the words above, he can't read similar sight words either. In our controlled study, Reading on Rails kids learned 3.6 times as many sight words as the controls did, even though the Reading on Rails supplement lasted 1/6th as long as the main "reading block."

Setting The Bar Height

During test design, it seemed best to set the bar high, rather than risk giving parents a false sense security with an easy test. While some schools start reading instruction early and take *forever* to finish, others don't start reading instruction until first grade. Frankly, reading instruction probably shouldn't start until second grade: Older children learn faster, so they experience less frustration. Early pride (or frustration) shapes later attitudes towards reading. Many kindergarteners are too young for reading instruction in a number of ways: short attention span, low symbolic reasoning ability, weak speaking & listening skills, difficulty following directions, and/or low knowledge of English speech sounds.

1st Grade (Section 1, Early 1st Grade)

Frustration & Classroom Discomfort Begin



While short vowels are incredibly useful in long words like: evidence, paented, and staus, "long" vowels are also important. When children are exposed to these alternate vowel sounds, **many get stuck** — and never become good readers — because the vowels seem so unpredictable. These alternate vowel sounds are usually introduced in first grade... before many children have finished nailing down *short* vowels.

Batten the hatches: Frustration is rising by second grade as digraphs (th, sh, ch, ea, ir, ar, oa, ai...) and consonant blends (spl, sn, nt, str, lt, nd, ft, sp, spr...) are stirred into the mix just as your child's symbolic reasoning ability is coming on line—together with a useful attention span, both of which, would have been quite helpful in kindergarten. In isolation, consonant blends look completely unpronounceable — even to adults, so here they are in words: split, snug, ant, string. The school implies the growing problem is your frustrated child's fault, but school personnel still expect *your* help. **Take charge:** *We'll help.* Afterwards, bill them for your expertise.

Directions For The Long Vowel Test

Max time: 64 seconds. All vowels are "long:" ate, Pete, site, rote, flute or cute. The word is a hint for children with low exposure to long vowels. You may supply "ate" if your child misses this word. Check-mark it if he gets it right without your help. **Timer = 64 seconds.**

<u>a</u> te	late	rake	page	date	age
ace	fake	bake	dare	gaze	face
line	bike	life	nice	dive	mine
hide	ire	ride	time	nine	lime
poke	fuse	tube	flute	fume	line
smoke	rose	nose	froze	these	

Directions For The Mixed Long & Short Vowels Test (advanced)

Max time: 70 seconds. Most vowels are "long:" ate, Pete, site, rote, flute or cute. The red words are hints. You may supply "ate" and/or "write" if your child misses either one or both. Check off whichever red words your child gets right without help. **Timer = 70 seconds.**



ate	state	stat
write	nite	nit
hite	Clyde	clone
flint	splint	drone
non	ninny	style
prone	prune	dune
plate	fin	plank
fit	trite	rite
plane	fate	lite
explode	inflate	spine
fine	animate	cone
huge	inhabit	mute

2nd Grade (Section 1, Early 2nd Grade)

Directions For The Left-to-Right Test



Max time: 45 seconds.

bib bid did bad dad dab
ten ent net tent stent stents
sin nis sniff fins finish sap
pass span snap snaps pans

Background

By second grade, students are expected to know — by heart — short vowels, long vowels, and common digraphs like *ck, th, sh, ch, er, ea, oa, ai, and ar*. Multisyllable words are becoming common. Blending from left to right consistently (instead of blending back and forth randomly when facing long words) – is still hard for some children. Rare digraphs (ph, ur, ew, ee, ou, ow, etc.) are appearing in stories together with DOZENS of consonant blends, and even "trigraphs," like t-c-h as in catch and i-g-h. Alternate ways of spelling the same sound appear relentlessly. For example, the long-l sound is routinely spelled in any of the following four ways:

Long - l			
Spelling		Examples	Popularity
igh	as seen in:	sigh, thigh, sight, delight	-and 1366 other words
i_e	as seen in:	nine, bike, dime, kite	-and over 10,000 similar words
y	as seen in:	my, try, spy, thy, by	-and about 10 similar words
y_e	as seen in:	style, type, hemocyte	-and over 2,000 similar words

The words "eye" and "I" – are actually just spelling *exceptions*.

By late second grade, the endless complexities of written English make thorough tests painfully long. Grammar is also getting advanced. Rising reading comprehension begins to accelerate vocabulary growth. As second grade ends, many children are teaching themselves how to read by reading for fun. A parent's long term reading goal should be a child who reads... for *fun* — whenever he or she can. This can often be achieved with less than 100 hours of instruction. Most students do not need 3+ *years* of instruction — 1200 hours or more — to become good readers.

Directions For The Test of Common Terminal Consonant Blends

Max time: 45 seconds.

ast	ant	and	ask
amb	uft	und	unt
uvd	ulp	uzd	act
ift	ind	omd	omp
ilt	ild	imb	avd
isp			

Background

Many of the endings above are actually "misspelled." For example, we find the sound train "uzd" in the word *buzzed*. When these terminal consonant blends are combined with *leading* consonant blends (or digraphs), we get complex syllables like, *splashed* (pronounced splasht). In old English, this was probably pronounced as a two syllable word, "Splash•edd." Modern English has three different forms of the simple-past tense:

T - endings: splashed, bequeathed, cracked, snapped, matched...

D - endings: planned, called, hummed, behaved, banged, mired, accused...

Extra syllable *ěd* - endings: hintěd, bonděd, raftěd, rounděd, ratěd...

To minimize confusion, children should learn each ending in a separate time period. D-b confusion can be minimized the same way.

Directions For The Test of Common Digraphs and Trigraphs

Max time: 64 seconds.

wick	thin	tea	sir	show	fill
per	car	hats	law	fare	nay
round	fair	chap	shape	loud	join
forth	boy	core	wood	now	sweet
out	road	root	pur	paid	church
ship	nail	taut	berth		

Background: *Why is it so hard?*

English has 26 letters, but they overlap. For example, K and C make the same sound most of the time. Plus, the letter, "X," can be spelled *eks* or *ecs*, so it's unnecessary. G-E and d-g-e are often used to make the J sounds in *judge* and *age*. This leaves about 24 letters with unique sounds. Unfortunately, English has about 43 speech sounds, so in order to write those, we use letter combinations. That causes other problems. For example, it can be hard to know how to pronounce "dimer:" Is it *dimmer*? Or *dighmer*? Should river be pronounced according to the "long-l, silent-E" rule (rye•ver) or with a short l? – *river*? Plus, we have lots of pointless duplication, like seven ways to spell "awe:" awe, awl, all, haul, dog, bought, & caught. There is also a duplicate symbol set. Every symbol in the extra set — oddly — makes the exact same sounds found in the "lowercase" set. If capital letters make sense, so do capital *numbers*. These could be used for math sentences, like "6 + 4 = 10," and for important constants, like 3.1415 – or in dates: 1††6 (1776). *Capital* 7s look different. On top of those problems, many letters, digraphs, and trigraphs have alternate pronunciations: "Bow before you shoot the bow." And, of course, 'd' gets confused with 'b' and 'q', and 'p'. **The confusion, frustration, & worry add up.**

Directions For The Test of Common Leading Consonant Blends

Max time: 51 seconds. The blue word "cry" helps with the Y ending, but most children won't need it.

2nd
Late 2nd Grade

cry	try	cred	fry	bred
stall	ply	slim	fly	clay
snap	pray	spam	drone	glee
spray	grill	splice	brim	thrill
stay	shrub	blend	scram	twin
dry	small			

Background:

Because there are so many consonant blends in English, it's important to introduce the most common/useful blends as early as possible. Fortunately, this also helps train young children to read from left to right consistently. For example, a child confronted with the series: *est, set, tes, ets, ste...* cannot rely on plot, grammar, rhyming and pictures, to predict the next word. Because every answer in the series contains the same letters, the child must focus on "decoding" from left to right in order to do well. E, S, and T are some of the most common letters in English, so all children need to be able to read these letters in any order— *easily* — as soon as possible.

Directions For The Test of Advanced/Rare Digraphs, Trigraphs, & a Tetragraph

Max time: 90 seconds.

dodge	snip	ripple
law	flew	chimney
right	deer	mere
know	cuddle	hurl
oar	square	quill
quake	poll	roll
shred	frank	thing
agency	drink	gear
coy	cashier	hoist
match	phone	core
care	ought	hour
ringing	huge	gnaw
pure	station	paging
gyro	wrong	board
mumbled	caught	quotes
hear	hire	shrine

2nd grade finally *finished*.

3rd Grade (Section 1, Early 3rd Grade)

Directions For The Simple Multisyllable Word Test



Max time: 34 seconds.

limit	seven	rocket	inject	picnic
elfin	cactus	radish	napkin	insult
sunset	finish	habit	exit	contact
mascot	kitten	landed		

Background

These words are relatively simple because each word in this section contains simple short vowels, few digraphs (ck, sh) and no more than one consonant blend (lf, sh, lt, sc, nd, nt, ct). "Contact" is the lone exception, having two consonant blends.

Some Second Grade Sections May Seem Harder Than This 3rd Grade Section

The second grade test includes nearly every digraph (th, ch, ar, ur), trigraph (oar, our, igh), and consonant blend (st, sp, sk, thr, shr, dr...) in the language. Because most reading programs rely heavily on stories to introduce these odd letter combinations, they get introduced slowly (which is good) and somewhat haphazardly (which is not so good). Most children will not get enough practice with these letter combinations. Therefore, some children will actually find our third-grade test sections easier because they already understand the structure of multisyllable words, but are still learning all the fancy letter combinations.

Directions For The Advanced Multisyllable Word Test

Max time: 34 seconds.



plastic	foolish	problem
swimmer	episodic	filter
understand	finishing	around
internet	painting	success
shampoo	trumpeting	embedded
pumpkin	Saturday	snoring

Background

Advanced readers can:

- 1) cope with syllables of nearly any complexity, and
- 2) string any number of complex syllables together until reaching each word's end.

In the word “squeamishly”, the first syllable, *squeam*, is hard, but *ish* and *ly* are easy. So when a child can decipher the most intricate syllables like *trump*, *round*, and *squeam*, reading gets easy.

The challenge at this stage is simply knowing where the syllable boundaries are. The rule is deceptively simple, but it takes a little practice to learn it because every syllable's length and composition are unpredictable in English. Spanish is supposedly easier, but most reading difficulty comes from the intricate issues of *teaching* reading, not linguistic challenges.

After learning to ID syllable boundaries and pronounce dozens of digraphs (ch), trigraphs (oar), and tetragraphs (tion), the final step is learning a variety of advanced endings like *ian*, *sion*, *ious*, *ial*, and *cian*. Some examples include *corinthian*, *vision*, *curious*, *trivial*, and *magician*. This brings the child up to a high-schoolish decoding level. He or she lacks only a deeper comprehension of grammar and a larger vocabulary. Both of these arise naturally from leisure reading.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking reading skills seriously. Your effort will help us improve schooling across Georgia and reverse a serious curriculum mistake that was made around 1930. Back then, phonics instruction was very weak, and “memorization” appeared to be equally effective, so most schools went with memorization.

If it's not clear that your child is ahead of his peers, see what his teacher says. In order to be proud of his or her reading skill, your child should be in the top third of his or her class: Children are much more likely to practice things they think they're good at.

Whether teacher or parent, you can reach out to us with any reading concern you may have (no charge). We provide free reading evaluations, free advice for worried parents, free demonstrations, and accent reduction for new Americans. For districts, we provide supplementary curriculum, study protocols for curriculum comparisons, and consulting. Our immediate goal is changing how reading is taught throughout Georgia.



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TAKE CHARGE,
we'll help!