

The “Pets” Fluency Assessment

Teacher Notes

The fluency assessment is the only assessment in the *Teaching Reading Strategies* that needs to be administered individually. As a critical component of reading diagnosis, teachers need to hear their students read. This assessment allows the teacher to assess reading ability and provides a baseline fluency rate. Additionally, the results will help the teacher narrow down the reading level of students to inform selection of books for independent reading practice.

The “Pets” fluency passage is leveled in a unique pyramid design: the first paragraph is at the first grade (*Fleish-Kincaid*) reading level; the second paragraph is at the second grade level; the third paragraph is at the third grade level; the fourth paragraph is at the fourth grade level; the fifth paragraph is at the fifth grade level; the sixth paragraph is at the sixth grade level; and the seventh paragraph is at the seventh grade level. Thus, the reader begins practice at an easier level that builds confidence and then moves to more difficult academic language through successive approximation. As the student reads the fluency passage, the teacher will be able to note the reading levels at which the student has a high degree of accuracy and automaticity. Automaticity refers to the ability of the reader to read effortlessly without stumbling or sounding-out words.

- The reading level in which the student has 95–100% accuracy with a high degree of automaticity indicates an independent level of reading. In other words, this reading level is appropriate for students to read on their own. Help students to choose books at this level for independent reading practice.
- The reading level in which the student has 85–94% accuracy with a medium degree of automaticity indicates an instructional level of reading. In other words, this reading level is appropriate for students to read with teacher or parent assistance. Help students to choose books at this level for instructional reading practice.
- The reading level in which the student has less than 85% accuracy with a low degree of automaticity indicates a frustrational level of reading. In other words, this reading level is inappropriate for effective reading practice.

Materials/Instructional Setting/Organization

Laminate one copy of the “Pets” fluency assessment for students. Run off enough copies of the same assessment for each student. Use a stopwatch to ensure that the two-minute timings will be accurate. Set aside a table or two desks in a corner of the room or just outside the door, if practical. Have desks or chairs facing each other.

Announce to the class that you will have students quietly read to you for two-minute reading fluency timings. Say, “Please don’t interrupt the fluency timings, unless there is an emergency. We want to complete these timings quickly, so this is how we will organize things: I will pick one student to read. The first to read will be _____. Please sit here. When _____ has finished, she will use the stopwatch to time the next reader, who will be _____. From now on, the student who does the timing will quietly go get the next reader. Any questions?”

Fluency Assessment Directions/Grading/Recording

1. Say—"I'm going to have you read out loud for two minutes. Read quickly, but say the words correctly. The title of this article is 'Pets.' Point to the first word of the article on the student's copy and say 'Ready, begin.'"
2. As the student reads, mark a slash on the teacher's copy for mispronounced words, omitted words, added words, and words not correctly pronounced within three seconds. Say the word for the student after three seconds of silence or attempted pronunciation and then say "Next," if the student does not continue to read. Be consistent in test administration regarding marking (or not marking) dialect differences, word repetitions, pre-practice of difficult words, reversals, and self-corrections.
3. Mark a bracket after the last word the student reads correctly when two minutes have elapsed. Say, "Stop." Record the total number of words read, less errors at the bottom left of the page and the name of the student. Say, "Thank you. Now, you will be the timer. When I say 'begin,' push this button. After two minutes, say 'stop,' and push the button again. After the timing has been completed, say "Please go tell _____ that he or she is 'on deck.'"

Once the assessments have been completed, the = Total Number of Words should be recorded in the Fluency Words Pre-test column on the **Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Sight Words, and Fluency Mastery Matrix** for each student as a diagnostic baseline.

Subsequent Fluency Assessments

Once per quarter, re-assess individual student fluency, using the same article and procedures. Mark the error slashes, ending bracket, total words and errors in another color. Analyze not only net reading rate, but percentage of errors, and miscue patterns.

"Pets" Fluency Assessment

Name _____

11	Pets are nice. Pets live with us. They can be good		
21	friends. Pets make people happy. They can be very fun.		
32	Some pets are very smart. Many can be trained to do		
44	what people say. Pets may come to us when we call. Some		
57	can do special tricks. Some even seem to talk to us with a		
63	"bark," a "meow," or a "chirp."		
74	Many people enjoy life more with pets. Pets can be good		
86	company. Pets can help people feel less lonely. Some pets help us		
96	feel better. Pets can even help us get more exercise.		
109	Not all animals make good pets. Most wild animals are afraid of people.		
125	Others could be dangerous, like large cats or bears. It would be too hard to care		
141	for some animals. They might need a special place to live or special food to eat.		
154	Pets and owners must make a good match. People need to think carefully		
170	about some things before getting a pet. A pet owner needs to have a good place		
188	for a pet to live. A small apartment may be perfect for a fish or hamster, but not		
205	for a large dog or cat. Also, some pets cost more to keep than others. Large pets		
219	eat more than small ones, and their cost of medical care can be expensive.		
234	People need to consider how much time they will be able to spend with their		
244	pets. Pets need plenty of human attention to stay happy.		
259	The most popular pets worldwide are dogs and cats. There are slightly more cats than		
275	dogs. Birds, hamsters, turtles, snakes, lizards, and fish are also the pets of choice for many		
290	people. In the last few years pets have become more "exotic." Many people are now keeping		
303	ferrets and monkeys as pets. Most local governments have laws restricting which pets are		
309	acceptable in their communities.		
325	Pet owners need to be responsible with their pets. Adult pets need to be spayed or		
338	neutered to prevent unplanned litters. According to the Humane Society, over three million		
354	unwanted pets are put to sleep each year. Also, mixed breed cats and dogs can make		
371	wonderful pets. In fact, some of the best pets can be adopted from local animal shelters at		
383	little cost. Pets are valuable friends and need our very best care.		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	