Phonological Awareness Skills Test

The Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST) in this book is an informal, diagnostic, individually administered assessment tool to help you determine the point of instruction for your students and monitor progress made from doing the activities you select. Because it is not a normed test, there can be flexibility in its administration. For example, you can reteach the directions as necessary or add your own word for the child to blend, segment, or delete if you want to gather additional information on a particular student.

The materials the administrator of the assessment needs include the assessment itself, a pencil, and counters or chips for the student to use for the segmentation part. If counters are not available, the student can clap the number of segments instead. The assessment is administered orally since PA has to do with the sounds of language.

When Skills Are Typically Mastered

Although children develop their PA skills at different rates, it is helpful to have a general window of when specific skills are typically mastered. The following is a suggested timeline.

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Note: In order to make the test user-friendly and time-efficient, the skills of rhyme completion and phoneme blending of onset and rime are not measured. However, since the skills are sequential, if a student masters rhyme production, he/she should also be able to do rhyme completion. By the same token, if a student masters phoneme blending, he/she should also be able to master blending of onset and rime.
Questions and Answers
How to Get the Most out of the Assessment

QUESTION
At what age do students typically master the specific PA skills on the assessment?

ANSWER
Generally, preschoolers are able to master isolation of spoken word, rhyme recognition (some can do rhyme completion), and syllable blending. Kindergarteners can master those skills plus rhyme completion, rhyme production, syllable segmentation, syllable deletion, and isolation of the initial sound of a word. Many can master isolation of final sounds as well. First-graders can master the above skills plus phoneme blending, phoneme segmentation, and deletion of initial and final sounds of words. Some can do phoneme substitution. Second-graders can master the above skills, along with phoneme deletion of the first sound in a consonant blend and phoneme substitution.

QUESTION
How fast do you say the sentences in the sentence segmentation section?

ANSWER
Talk in a normal conversational speed. If you tend to speak rapidly, slow it down, but speak in a natural, conversational voice.

QUESTION
Do you administer the entire test to every child?

ANSWER
“Best practices” suggests that you should assess every student. However, for those students who do not appear to be struggling, you may not want to administer any of it. Be aware, though, that sometimes a student only appears to be doing OK. Such a child may have a good sight-word vocabulary because early words in books are almost always in a student’s oral vocabulary. But once students reach the latter part of third grade, they begin to encounter many words not in their oral vocabulary, and some students then have difficulty decoding these words due to a lack of PA skills.

Also, consider the grade level of the child when administering portions of the test. You may not want to give sentence segmentation to a second-grader because it is too easy. On the other hand, some of the latter part of
the assessment would go past the frustration level of most kindergarten children. Administer the test until the child reaches a frustration level; typically, if he/she misses three out of six, stop. However, use your judgment. Some children get stuck on rhyme but can do syllable blending without any problem.

Start at the section where they will have a success rate of at least five out of six correct, and go from there. You can use your judgment, based on kid-watching and other school assessments, to make your decision about where to begin administering the test. However, if you are unsure, start at the beginning (concept of spoken word). Erring on the side of “too easy” when choosing where to begin the assessment is a good rule of thumb.

QUESTION
How many questions should a child master on each section of the assessment to be successful?

ANSWER
To be successful, they need to master at least five out of six, but compare the grade level of the child with the grade level at which a skill is typically mastered.

QUESTION
What do you do with the information you get from giving the test?

ANSWER
Look at the first section where the child missed two or more answers and use the activities in this book that relate to that section. You can do those activities with the whole class, with a small group, or individually.

QUESTION
How long does it take to administer the test?

ANSWER
That depends on how much of the test you administer to the student. Typically, it takes 10 to 15 minutes. It can be administered in two separate sittings.

QUESTION
How do I find the time to give this test to my students?

ANSWER
There are several options. Consider having an instructional aide or volunteer work with the rest of the class while you test. Some teachers assess during sustained silent reading, while others do it while students are in flex groups or centers.
QUESTION

When and how often should this assessment be administered?

ANSWER

Consider assessing two to three times a year. The first test, or pretest, can be given in August or September. Some kindergarten teachers prefer to wait until January to give a PA assessment due to the diversity of children's home-language environments. After students experience PA instruction and activities for the first part of the year in kindergarten, it may be easier to tell who is not progressing and therefore requires intervention. Other kindergarten teachers like to get baseline data on their students and prefer to give the pretest in August.

Regardless, after the children experience whole-group and/or small-group activities relating to the assessment, it should be given in January to monitor progress. A final test, or post-test, should be given in April or May. Some teachers copy the tests on different-colored paper to help identify when the assessment was given—for instance, yellow in August, red in December, and green in April.

It is not necessary to repeat the section(s) of the test where the child scored at least five out of six correct. Each time the assessment is given again, start at the point where the child made more than one error out of six questions.
Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST)

Name ___________________________ Date _____________________

Teacher ___________________________ Grade _____________________

Concept of Spoken Word

Tell the student you are going to play a game with words and colored chips. Use the sentence “Joey likes cake” as an example. As you say each word of the sentence, push a colored chip forward—one chip per word. Then ask the child to do it. Once he/she understands the skill, read each sentence to the student and ask him/her to repeat the sentence while pushing up one chip for each word. Put a check in the box to the right of the sentence if the child does it correctly.

1. Tom ran home. (3) □
2. I have two pets. (4) □
3. Did you eat lunch? (4) □
4. What are you doing? (4) □
5. Terry loves to play soccer. (5) □
6. Yesterday it rained. (3) □

Total ______

Rhyme Recognition

Tell the child that two words that sound alike at the end, such as hat and sat, are rhyming words. Ask if sit and bit rhyme. (Yes.) Then ask if chair and boy rhyme. (No.) If the child appears to grasp the skill, do the same for each of the following pairs of words. Put a check in the box to the right of the pair if the child answers correctly.

1. bed – fed (yes) □
2. top – hop (yes) □
3. run – soap (no) □
4. hand – sand (yes) □
5. funny – bunny (yes) □
6. girl – giant (no) □

Total ______
Rhyme Production

Tell the child that you are going to say a word, and he/she is to tell you a word that rhymes with it. The answer can be a real word or a nonsense word. Ask the child to tell you a word that rhymes with sit. Possible answers include bit, fit, mit, pit, dit, and jit. Put a check in the box to the right if the child answers correctly. Write down the child’s answers on the lines provided.

1. pain □ ______________________ 4. see □ ______________________
2. cake □ ______________________ 5. dark □ ______________________
3. hop □ ______________________ 6. candy □ ______________________

Total ____

Syllable Blending

Tell the child you are going to say a word in a funny way. The job of the student is to put the parts together and say the whole word. Give these examples, pausing between syllables: out-side (outside), ro-bot (robot). Have the child say the sample words normally. Then do the following words and put a check in the box to the right if he/she says them correctly.

1. pen - cil □
2. rain - bow □
3. pop - corn □
4. black - board □
5. side - walk □
6. pa - per □

Total ____

Syllable Segmentation

Tell the student that you are going to say a word and then break it into parts, or syllables. First say rainbow normally. Clap out the two parts in rainbow while saying each part. Then push up a chip as you say each syllable. Read each of the following words and ask the child to push up a chip while saying each syllable. It is not necessary to clap the syllables again unless the skill needs to be retaught. Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.

1. sometime (2) □
2. basket (2) □
3. bedroom (2) □
4. fantastic (3) □
5. maybe (2) □
6. helicopter (4) □

Total ____
Syllable Deletion

Tell the student you are going to play a game with words where one part of the word is left out. For example, sunshine without shine is sun. Ask the student to say airline without air. He/she should say line. Using the words below, tell the child the syllable to leave off. Use this sentence structure: "Say (down)town without down." Put a check in the box to the right if the student deletes the correct syllable.

1. (down)town  town  
2. (in)side  side  
3. for(get)  for  
4. bas(ket)  bas  
5. af(ter)  af  
6. (skate)board  board  

Total ______

Phoneme Isolation of Initial Sounds

Tell the child you are going to say a word, and he/she is to tell you the first sound of that word. Ask the child what the first sound is in the word top. The child should say /t/. Do the same with the words below and put a check in the box to the right if the child says the first sound correctly.

1. big  /b/  
2. land  /l/  
3. farm  /f/  
4. apple  /a/  
5. desk  /d/  
6. ship  /ʃ/  

Total ______

Phoneme Isolation of Final Sounds

Tell the child you are going to say a word, and he/she is to tell you the last sound in the word. Ask the child what the last sound is in the word pot. The child should say /t/. Do the same with the words below and put a check in the box to the right if the child says the sound correctly.

1. pick  /k/  
2. ran  /n/  
3. fill  /l/  
4. bug  /g/  
5. same  /m/  
6. tooth  /θ/  

Total ______
Phoneme Blending

Tell the student that you are going to separate all the sounds in a word, and he/she is to say the whole word. Do these examples by segmenting each sound and having the student say the whole word; for example, /s/ /l/ /t/ is sit, and /s/ /l/ /o/ /p/ is stop. Read each word in segmented fashion. Put a check in the box to the right if the student says the whole word correctly.

1. /m/ /e/ me
2. /b/ /e/ /d/ bed
3. /h/ /a/ /t/ hat
4. /m/ /u/ /s/ /t/ must
5. /sh/ /o/ /p/ shop
6. /p/ /l/ /a/ /n/ /t/ plant

Total ______

Phoneme Segmentation

Tell the student that you’re going to play a game with all the sounds in the words below. As an example, show the student the three sounds in dime. Push up a chip for each sound you say—/d/ /i/ /m/. Ask the student to try it with the word hat. Read each of the following words and ask him/her to push up a chip for each sound. Put a check in the box to the right if he/she does it correctly.

1. in (2) □
2. at (2) □
3. name (3) □
4. ship (3) □
5. sock (3) □
6. chin (3) □

Total ______

Phoneme Deletion of Initial Sounds

Tell the child you will be playing a word game where the beginning sound of a word is left off. For example, bed without /b/ is ed. Ask the child to say can without /c/. The answer is an. Read each word below and tell the child the beginning sound to leave off. Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.

1. (s)un un □
2. (p)ig ig □
3. (m)op op □
4. (n)ect eck □
5. (b)at at □
6. (t)ape ape □

Total ______
Phoneme Deletion of Final Sounds

Tell the child that in this word game, the final sound of a word is left off. For example, goat without /t/ is go. Ask the child to say meat without /t/. The answer is me. Read each word and tell the child the ending sound to leave off. Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.

1. ro/s/e  row  
2. tra/i/n/  tray  
3. grou/p/  grew  
4. sea/t/  sea  
5. ba/k/e  bay  
6. in/ch/  in  

Total ______

Phoneme Deletion of First Sound in Consonant Blend

Tell the student to make new words by taking the first sound off a consonant blend. Example: The word crow without /k/ is row. Ask the student to say still without /s/. The answer is still. Do the following words with the student and put a check in the box to the right if he/she does it correctly.

1. Say clap without /k/.  lap  
2. Say stop without /s/.  top  
3. Say trust without /t/.  rust  
4. Say black without /b/.  lack  
5. Say drip without /d/.  rip  
6. Say smile without /s/.  mile  

Total ______

Phoneme Substitution

Tell the child you will be playing a very different game with sounds of words. You are going to ask him/her to take off the first sound of a word and replace it with another sound. Example: Replace the first sound in nail with /m/. The new word is mail. Ask the child to replace the first sound in top with /h/. The answer is hop. Ask the child to do the same with the rest of these words; if he/she answers correctly, put a check in the box on the right.

1. Replace the first sound in man with /k/.  can  
2. Replace the first sound in pig with /d/.  dig  
3. Replace the first sound in sack with /t/.  tack  
4. Replace the first sound in well with /t/.  fell  
5. Replace the first sound in red with /r/.  red  
6. Replace the first sound in shop with /ch/.  chop  

Total ______