

# Where-to-Start Word Test

**Description** Students read a leveled word list.

- You Need**
- ▶ The Where-to-Start Word List
  - ▶ The Where-to-Start Chart to determine the level at which to start Benchmark Assessment
  - ▶ Where-to-Start Individual Record form

**Why Use It** If you do not have or are not confident about reading performance information about a child, this quick assessment will give you a broad notion of the level at which to begin Benchmark Assessment.

- How to Use It**
- ▶ Ask the student to read the list for the level below his/her grade level (e.g., kindergarteners and first graders should begin with the **Beginning** list, second graders with the **Level 1** list, fourth graders with the **Level 3** list, etc.).
  - ▶ *"I want you to read some words. When you come to a hard word, try it. If you cannot read it, go on to the next word. I'll be making notes while you read. Start here."*
  - ▶ Place a card under the first word in the appropriate word list. Have the child move the card down the list as he reads. If the student spends too much time on a word (more than 5 seconds), say *"Read the next one."*
  - ▶ As the student reads, score and record word reading on a copy of the list:
    1. Check each word read accurately, including correct guesses, self-corrected readings, and accepted local variations in pronunciation.
    2. Write incorrect responses next to each word. If word not attempted, leave the space blank.
    3. Score as errors words that the student
      - cannot read
      - substitutes with another word or other sounds
      - says several different ways and is uncertain of the correct pronunciation
      - reads incompletely (*bed* instead of *beds*) or adds sounds to (*plays* instead of *play*)
    4. Do not prompt, coach, or ask the student to repeat a word (unless you could not hear it).
    5. Record the number of words read accurately at the bottom of each list.

If the child reads 16 to 20 words on a list correctly, then go to the next level. If a child reads less than 16 words correctly, then stop and begin the text reading at the appropriate level shown on the chart below.

## Where-to-Start Chart

List Read					
Number Correct	Beginning	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
0–5	A	A	E	I	M
6–10	A	B	F	J	M
11–15	A	C	G	K	N
16–20	B	D	H	L	N

## Where-to-Start Word Test—Individual Record

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning		Level 1		Level 2	
me		jump		want	
I		here		friend	
can		little		puppy	
to		went		basket	
my		has		could	
we		girl		dark	
in		will		down	
like		have		road	
it		ball		plant	
up		make		away	
mom		play		morning	
the		was		three	
and		bike		cool	
he		with		drop	
look		they		grass	
is		this		when	
see		bed		first	
come		feet		train	
get		one		queen	
at		said		scream	
	/20		/20		/20

## Where-to-Start Word Test—Individual Record

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Level 3		Level 4	
plate		silence	
year		serious	
noise		nature	
under		station	
twisted		graceful	
giant		heavy	
knives		against	
what		excuse	
around		traffic	
because		reward	
forest		plastic	
once		ocean	
scramble		perform	
again		delicious	
careful		pebble	
breakfast		understood	
batter		destiny	
suddenly		future	
badge		anger	
village		honey	
	/20		/20

## Beginning Word List

me

mom

I

the

can

and

to

he

my

look

we

is

in

see

like

come

it

get

up

at

## Level 1 Word List

jump

play

here

was

little

bike

went

with

has

they

girl

this

will

bed

have

feet

ball

one

make

said

## Level 2 Word List

want

morning

friend

three

puppy

cool

basket

drop

could

grass

dark

when

down

first

road

train

plant

queen

away

scream

## Level 3 Word List

plate

forest

year

once

noise

scramble

under

again

twisted

careful

giant

breakfast

knives

batter

what

suddenly

around

badge

because

village

## Level 4 Word List

silence

plastic

serious

ocean

nature

perform

station

delicious

graceful

pebble

heavy

understood

against

destiny

excuse

future

traffic

anger

reward

honey