CORE Phonics Survey

WHAT
The CORE Phonics Survey assesses the phonics and phonics-related skills that have a high rate of application in beginning reading. Each survey presents a number of lists of letters and words for the student to identify or decode. Pseudowords, or made-up words, are included since the student must use decoding skills to correctly pronounce these words and cannot have memorized them. These assessments are best used to plan instruction for students in the primary grades and to develop instructional groups. They may be administered every four to six weeks.

WHY
A student’s ability to use knowledge of sound/letter correspondences (phonics) to decode words determines, in large measure, his or her ability to read individual words. A detailed assessment of a student’s phonics skills points to areas in which the student is likely to benefit most from systematic, explicit phonics instruction. Also, knowing the skills that the student does possess will help in selecting reading tasks that offer the most effective reinforcement of those skills.

HOW
Instructions for administering each part of the survey are included on the Record Form. Students read from the Student Material on the pages that follow the Record Form. To focus the student’s attention on the part of the test being given, cover the other parts with a piece of paper. The Record Form shows the same material that appears on the Student Material, in a reduced size, so that you may easily record the student’s responses.

Following administration, score each of the test parts, and transfer the results to the first page of the Record Form under Skills Summary. Retest every 4–6 weeks but only on parts not yet mastered. Be aware of the student’s behavior during testing. If the student is tiring or making many consecutive errors, discontinue testing at that time.

WHAT IT MEANS
This test is a mastery test. It is expected that students will ultimately get all items correct.

- In five-item subtest, a student who misses two or more items would benefit from more direct instruction in the indicated element.

- In ten-item subtests, three or more errors warrant attention.

WHAT’S NEXT?
Use the information to monitor phonics instruction and to design skill groups in direct instruction in the particular element measured. Older students who score poorly on the CVC portion of the survey may need further assessment, such as the CORE Phoneme Segmentation Test.
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1. Letter Names – Uppercase

Say to the student: "Can you tell me the names of these letters?" If the student cannot name three or more consecutive letters, say: "Look at all of the letters and tell me which ones you do know.

D A N S X Z J L H
T Y E C O M R P W
___/ 26 K U G B F Q V I

2. Letter Names – Lowercase

Say to the student: "Can you tell me the names of these letters?" If the student cannot name three or more consecutive letters, say: "Look at all of the letters and tell me which ones you do know.

d a n s x z j l h
t y e c o m r p w
___/ 26 k u g b f q v i

3. Consonant Sounds

Say to the student: "Look at these letters. Can you tell me the sound each letter makes?" If the sound given is correct, do not mark the Record Form. If it is incorrect, write the sound the student gives above each letter. If no sound is given, circle the letter. If the student cannot say the sound for three or more consecutive letters, say: "Look at all of the letters and tell me which sounds you do know.

d l n s x z j
 t y p c h m r
___/ 23 w g b f q v
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4. Vowel Sounds

Ask the student: Can you tell me the sounds of each letter? If the student names the letter, count it as the long vowel sound. Then ask: Can you tell me the other sound for the letter? The student should name the short vowel sound.

e _ _ i _ _ a _ _ o _ _ u _ _

l = long sound  s = short sound

Record l on the first line for the long sound (letter name) and s for the short sound on the second line. If the student makes an error, record the error over the letter.

_____/5 Long vowel sounds (count the number of l’s above)
_____/5 Short vowel sounds (count the number of s’s above)

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5. Reading and Decoding

For items A through G, students must read both real and pseudowords (made-up words). For the first line of real words, tell the student: I want you to read these words. If the student cannot read two or more of the real words, do not administer the line of pseudowords. Go to the next set of items. Before asking the student to read the line of pseudowords, say: Now, I want you to read some made-up words. Do not try to make them sound like real words.

A. Short vowels in CVC words

___/ 5 sip  cat  let  but  hog  (real)
___/ 5 vop  fut  dit  kem  laz  (pseudo)

B. Short vowels, digraphs, and -tch trigraph

___/ 5 when  chop  ring  shut  match  (real)
___/ 5 weech  shom  thax  phitch  chud  (pseudo)

C. Consonant blends with short vowels

___/ 5 stop  trap  quit  spell  plan  (real)
___/ 5 stig  brab  qued  snop  dran  (pseudo)
___/ 5 clip  fast  sank  limp  held  (real)
___/ 5 frep  gast  wunk  kimp  jelt  (pseudo)

D. Long vowel spellings

___/ 5 tape  key  lute  paid  feet  (real)
___/ 5 loe  bine  joad  vay  soat  (pseudo)

E. r- and l-controlled vowels

___/ 5 bark  horn  chirp  term  cold  (real)
___/ 5 ferm  dall  gorf  murd  chal  (pseudo)

F. Variant vowels and diphthongs

___/ 5 few  down  toy  hawk  coin  (real)
___/ 5 voot  rew  fout  zoy  bawk  (pseudo)

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G. Multisyllabic words
Administer this item if the student is able to read most of the single-syllable real and pseudowords in the previous items. **Say to the student:** Now I want you to read down the first column of words. Each of the real words in this column has two syllables. Point to the first column. If the student can read at least 3 out of 8 of the words in this column, **say:** Now I want you to read some made-up words. Do not try to make them sound like real words. Point to the second column. Repeat the same procedure for the third column.

**NOTE:** The following made-up words can be pronounced in two ways: sunop (su-nop or sun-op); wopam (wo-pam or wop-am); potife (po-tife or pot-ife); zuride (zu-ride or zur-ide); and zubo (zu-bo or zub-o).

___/ 3 Closed-closed kidnap pugnad quibrap
___/ 3 Closed silent e compete slifnate prubkine
___/ 3 Open or closed depend sunop wopam
___/ 3 Open or closed zero zubo yodu
___/ 3 Silent e locate potife zuride
___/ 3 Consonant + le stable grickle morkle
___/ 3 R-Controlled further tirper pharbid
___/ 3 Vowel team outlaw doipnoe loymaud

6. Spelling
Give the student a pencil and a sheet of lined paper. Write the student’s responses over the words.

**A. Tell the student:** Listen to each of the words I read and write the **first sound** you hear.
___/ 5 fit map pen kid hand

**B. Tell the student:** Listen to each of the words I read and write the **last sound** you hear.
___/ 5 rub fled leg sell less

**C. Tell the student:** Listen to each of the words I read and write the **whole word**.
___/ 5 fork yam sip shop tub
___/ 5 coin float steep drive spoon