

Directions for Using the Assessment Summary Chart for Transitional Readers

Columns 1 & 2: Name and Instructional Level. Write the student's name in the first column and record the instructional text level determined by the running record assessment. If you have used both fiction and nonfiction texts for assessment, record the instructional level for both. It is common for students to have a higher instructional level for fiction than nonfiction. The instructional level is the level at which the student reads with at least 90% accuracy and has some comprehension. If the student accurately reads a text but has no recall, the instructional level will be lower. If a student fluently reads the text with at least 95% accuracy and has a strong understanding of the story, then the text is considered to be at an independent level. You should then give the student a more challenging text to determine the instructional level.

Column 3: Monitors for Meaning (M). Put a plus (+) if the student consistently stops and tries to fix the error when meaning breaks down. Put a check (✓) in this column if the student sometimes monitors for meaning. Put a minus (–) if the student consistently ignores errors that change the meaning of the passage.

Column 4: Decodes. Good decoders break words into parts and attend to all inflectional endings. Put a plus (+) if the student uses word parts (chunks) to solve unfamiliar words. A chunk may be a syllable or a known part in a one-syllable word, such as *all* in *small*. Put a check (✓) if the student attends to some word parts but frequently ignores medial chunks and endings. Put minus (–) if the student uses some beginning parts but does not look through the word. Some transitional readers may have strong retell but struggle with decoding due to visual processing problems.

Column 5: Fluency. Readers at the transitional stage may still require fluency instruction. Use the following rubric to evaluate fluency:

1. Reading is very slow, mostly word by word.
2. Reading is choppy, mostly two-word phrases.
3. Reading is mostly phrased, but lacks some aspects of fluency such as speed, intonation, expression, or attention to punctuation.

You can also time the student's reading and compare the reading rate (word count per minute, or WCPM) to grade-level standards. Reading speed is not the goal, but it will tell whether fluency needs to be a focus strategy for your lessons.

Column 6: Retell. Ask the student to retell what he or she read. You should not prompt for specific details, but you can ask the student if he or she remembers anything else. Record the student's basic understanding of the text by rating the retell at complete (+), partial (✓) or weak (–).

Put a plus (+) if the child gives a complete and detailed retelling.

- * **Fiction (F):** The retelling includes the characters, problem, solution, and important details. The major plot elements are retold completely, accurately and in order. Student shows evidence of inference skills.
- * **Nonfiction (NF):** Includes every main idea, each supported by at least one or two details. Organization follows the scheme of the book (e.g., chronological, explanatory). The student uses vocabulary in context.

Put a check (✓) if the child gives a partial retelling.

- * **Fiction (F):** The retelling includes the plot and most major characters. Minor characters and setting may be absent. Student may not show evidence of inference skills.
- * **Nonfiction (NF):** The retelling includes most of the main ideas. Details may be fragmentary or missing. Vocabulary is included but may not be used correctly. Organization is not as tight, but essential sequences remain in order.

Put a minus (–) if the child gives a limited retelling.

- * **Fiction (F):** The retelling has major holes: central characters left out, incorrect identification of the problem, inability to relate sequence, and/or essential plot points missing.
- * **Nonfiction (NF):** Retelling may include the subject but misses the main ideas. Details are sketchy or not linked with the idea they support. Organization is loose and random, and mistakes occur in essential sequences. Student tells facts incorrectly.

Column 7: Needs Word Study. Use anecdotal notes, running records, writing samples, and the Word Study Inventory to identify phonics skills that need attention. The skills commonly taught at the transitional level include short vowels, digraphs, blends, vowel combinations, silent *e* feature, and endings. Not all transitional readers will require word study, especially if they are fluent decoders and only need to improve in the area of retell. Transitional readers in grades three and above who are weak decoders need word study.