

# CORE Phonological Segmentation Test

## SKILL ASSESSED

### Phonological Segmentation

#### Grade Level

K-1

#### Language

English

#### Grouping

Individual

#### Approximate Testing Time

5-10 Minutes

#### Materials

- Colored Blocks
- Record Form (p. 51)

#### Author

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► **WHAT** This Grades K-1 phonological segmentation assessment contains three parts: Part A: Sentences into Words; Part B: Words into Syllables; and Part C: Words into Phonemes.

► **WHY** These tasks may help to determine whether deficits in phonemic, or sound, awareness account for the student's reading or spelling delays. According to research, the lack of phonemic awareness is the most powerful determinant of the likelihood of a student's failure to learn to read.

► **HOW** Begin by demonstrating each task using the Practice Items. Proceed to the Test Items only after the student demonstrates understanding of a task. The color of the blocks is not important. However, when demonstrating, use a different colored block for each word segment. Make sure to lay out the blocks in a horizontal line, from left to right. After the student completes an item, put the blocks back in the original pile. Praise the student for even close approximations to a correct response and for how quickly he or she is learning the new task. When administering the Test Items, give only general positive feedback.

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PART A

**Sentences into Words**

Begin this part by administering the following practice item.

**Practice Item**

TEACHER: John, what is something you like to eat?

STUDENT: Pizza.

TEACHER: I am going to use these blocks to show "John likes pizza." (Teacher uses three colored blocks and says each of the words as he or she places each of the blocks on the table.)

TEACHER: (Teacher points to each of the blocks from left to right and asks:) What is this one? (*John*) And this? (*likes*) And this? (*pizza*)

If the student understands the task, ask him or her to do the task independently.

TEACHER: Use these blocks to show me . . .

Record any incorrect segmentations. Splitting a word into syllables is not considered an error. Proceed with testing when the student clearly understands the task. Discontinue testing if the student does not respond correctly to any of the first three items.

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PART B

**Words into Syllables**

Begin this part by administering the following Practice Item.

**Practice Item**

TEACHER: Now we are going to break words into parts. I am going to use the blocks to show the word *cupcake*. (Say the word *cup* and place the first block on the table; say the word *cake* and place the second block to the right of the first one.)

TEACHER: Which one is *cup*?

STUDENT: The first block.

TEACHER: (Point to the second block.) What is this?

STUDENT: *cake*

If the student still does not understand, it may help to clap the syllables. Provide additional practice using words such as *superman*, *doorbell*, *butterfly*. Proceed with testing when the student clearly understands the task. Discontinue assessment after five items, if the student can't segment any of the words into syllables.

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PART C

**Words into Phonemes**

Begin this part by administering the following Practice Items.

**Practice Item 1**

TEACHER: Now we are going to use these blocks to show the sounds in a word. Let's say I wanted to show you the word *time*. That word has three sounds /t/ /ī/ /m/. (Put out one block for each of the sounds as you say them slowly in order.) Can you say the sounds?

STUDENT: /t/ /ī/ /m/

If the student says the names of letters rather than their sound, say:

TEACHER: Yes, that is how it is spelled. Now can you tell me the sound that the letters make?

If the student cannot independently say the sounds, repeat the sounds and ask:

TEACHER: Can you point to the /t/? And which one is /m/? And what is the sound in the middle? (/ī/)

**Practice Item 2**

TEACHER: Now you try one. If you wanted to show the word *shop*, how many sounds is that? Use the blocks to show me.

If the student cannot do the segmentation independently, model the complete segmentation.

TEACHER: The word *shop* has three sounds (lay down a block for each of the sounds as you say them, in left-to-right progression): /sh/ /o/ /p/.

To check the student's understanding, ask:

TEACHER: What are the three sounds?

STUDENT: /sh/ /o/ /p/

TEACHER: Which one is /sh/? Which one is /p/? What is the sound of the block in the middle? (/o/)

If the student puts down four blocks, he or she is probably trying to spell the word. Remind the student to pay attention to the sounds, not the letters. Once the student can at least point to the

block that represents the correct sound, proceed to the Test Items. Record the student's responses. Do not correct any items. If the student cannot completely segment a word, ask for the first sound—and, when appropriate, the last sound, as well.

► **WHAT IT MEANS** While there are no precise norms for this measure, kindergartners are expected to segment sentences into words and words into syllables. By the end of the year kindergartners should be able to isolate at least an initial consonant sound. Students who cannot isolate an initial consonant sound may not be ready for formal phonics instruction. Full segmentation of words into phonemes is usually not expected until first grade. The last two items in Part C are typically appropriate for late first or early second grade.

See also ...

CORE Teaching  
Reading Sourcebook,  
Section III: Sound/Print  
Connection

► **WHAT'S NEXT?** Students who do not meet the general expectations above will benefit from more intensive phonemic awareness instruction. Regular writing instruction will also strengthen their phonemic awareness.

# CORE Phonological Segmentation Test

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

Directions: Have students use different-colored blocks to show the number of words, syllables, or phonemes in the Practice Item for each part of this test. Then administer each part of the test. Mark "+" to indicate a correct response or "-" to indicate an incorrect response. Record students' exact responses on the blank lines.

## Part A: Sentences into Words

Practice Item: John likes pizza.

1. Father called. (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
2. What time is it? (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
3. How much does an apple cost? (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have to go to sleep soon. (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
5. On Sunday I will go swimming. (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_

## Part B: Words into Syllables

Practice Items: cup-cake; su-per-man

6. cowboy (cow-boy) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
7. rabbit (rab-bit) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
8. yesterday (yes-ter-day) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
9. party (par-ty) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
10. helicopter (hel-i-cop-ter) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
11. basketball (bas-ket-ball) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
12. playground (play-ground) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
13. caterpillar (cat-er-pil-lar) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_

## Part C: Words into Phonemes

Practice Items: time (t-ī-m); shop (sh-o-p)

14. keep (k-ē-p) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
15. bag (b-a-g) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
16. thumb (th-u-m) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
17. night (n-ī-t) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
18. rock (r-o-k) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
19. itch (i-tch) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
20. head (h-e-d) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
21. short (sh-or-t) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
22. steak (s-t-ā-k) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_
23. clown (k-l-ou-n) (+) (-) \_\_\_\_\_

Items Correct \_\_\_\_\_