

Non-Word Decoding Test

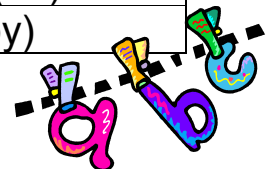
Non-word decoding, or 'word attack' tests are a feature of many reading assessments employed by researchers to determine student's decoding ability and phonic knowledge. Unlike other reading tests that contain real words either in isolation or in context which may be read from the shape of the word, a picture clue or a few salient letters, non-words must be decoded.

The following non-words contain 27 essential letter combinations that students must know. Students require more knowledge than this to read and spell, however, many problems occur with these letter combinations. Items 1,4, and 6 also require the application of the Cve rule, a common problem for beginning readers.

Administer this test as a diagnostic tool to ascertain what you must teach students. It is impossible to read these non-words without applying letter-sound knowledge, so be flexible and accept a range of pronunciations. The typical response for students experiencing difficulties with reading is "I don't know what those letters say...". When this occurs, make a note of the test item and move to the next. Be sure to write everything down the students says, this is far more revealing than marking the items with a tick or a cross.

This test can be given to students midway through Year 1, however some pre-requisite skills are necessary even to attempt the practice items: letter-sound correspondences, the strategy of blending, 27 letter combinations and the Cve rule. This test is best administered as a diagnostic tool to older students (Year 1+).

1. thame (th/a-e)	10. leag (ea)	19. dirp (ir)
2. ferg (er)	11. coop (oo)	20. rurt (ur)
3. kisting (ing)	12. zeem (ee)	21. knest (kn)
4. shube (sh/u-e)	13. kaim (ai)	22. voin (oi)
5. whist (wh)	14. wuch (ch)	23. yawb (aw)
6. quope (qu/o-e)	15. porb (or)	24. phun (ph)
7. dold (ol)	16. vay (ay)	25. wrat (wr)
8. soam (oa)	17. bigh (igh)	26. saut (au)
9. larp (ar)	18. rouf (ou)	27. loy (oy)



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What to say to students: "I would like you to read some words you have never seen before. These words are not real. You must sound them out. You can do this out loud or in your head. Do your best".

Point to the practice items and sound them out with the student. If students cannot read the practice items do not go on with the test. If students try to turn the words into real words, direct them to sound out the words. If, for example, the student asks which 'oo' sound (oo as in good or oo as in food), accept either. This is a positive indication of a student's knowledge about letter-sound combinations.

lop kib hap jex zuf

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