

Literacy Collaborative Benchmark Assessment: (Benchmark Assessments for Determining Reading Levels for Grades K-8 developed by the Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University)

The Literacy Collaborative is an informal reading inventory typically administered September, January and May/June. It may be administered more frequently. It is one assessment used to match students with appropriate texts and to determine instructional focuses. We may also use the information to place students in guided reading groups. Other informal assessments and observations are considered vitally important to monitor a student's literacy progress as well.

There are five components to this benchmark assessment:

1. Reading interview: interests/preferences
2. Passage introduction and reading: oral reading (earliest levels)/ oral and silent reading (beyond earliest levels)
3. Written response (beyond level J texts)
4. Comprehension conversation (specific questions at level H and above)
5. Oral reading to assess accuracy and fluency

The Literacy Collaborative can measure the following:

1. **Oral reading (fluency and accuracy)
(student's reading rate --words per minute)**
The student's oral reading provides answers to many questions:
Is the reader's pace appropriate?
Is the student reading too quickly and sacrificing accuracy?
What word solving strategies does the student use?
Do miscues (errors) interfere with meaning?
Is the student self-correcting?
2. **Comprehension- After level H, we can assess literal and inferential questions.**
3. **Written response to a question about the text (above a level J text)**

We determine a student's independent level and an instructional level. In doing so, we use the Fountas/Pinnell Guided Reading leveling system- letters A- Z (see chart below)

When we report assessment data, very often we will report the student's independent level. At and above level J, we have used

nonfiction texts to arrive at this level. Currently, texts at levels A-I are fiction. In order to be independent at a given level (with this particular assessment) – the student must read the text with 95-100% accuracy and answer all six comprehension questions correctly. Specific questions begin at level H. At earlier levels, teachers have a “comprehension conversation” with students.

Independent level=The student can read the text with accuracy (95-100%) and with full understanding

This is the text the student can read independently.

Instructional level= The student can read the text with an accuracy rate of 90-95% and with good understanding. The student can read this text with the strategies he/she currently has, but the text provides opportunities for a small amount of new learning. This is a text that requires some adult support. This is the text the teacher will choose for guided reading instruction. This is a book that parent and child can partner read at home.

Frustration level=

The student reads the text with an accuracy rate less than 90%. This text creates great challenges to the student in terms of comprehension. It is better that this text is read aloud to the student at this time.

** Important to note:

Sometimes a student can read the words with 95-100% accuracy, but he/she has difficulty with comprehension. By contrast, there are also students who struggle to read the words accurately, but can still comprehend the text very well. The first scenario is much more common. In both cases, the instruction will address the specific needs of the student, given appropriate texts.

Levels according to grade (our best approximation)

Based on Fountas/Pinnell guided reading levels

Kindergarten- A-B

First grade – A-I

Second grade- J, K, L, M

Third grade- M, N, O, P

Fourth grade- P, Q, R, S