

Running records passages

A running record is a method of diagnostic assessment which helps:

- ◆ assess a child's fluency and accuracy
- ◆ identify what reading strategies a child is already using
- ◆ establish what help he needs to improve.

The running record is a method which allows you to analyze and record progress as part of the time you normally spend reading with children. At first, you may wish to do this somewhere quiet while you get used to taking the record. It will also tell you if the book the child is reading is suitable for his level of reading development. The sheets provided enable you to make and keep four running records.

Making a running record

The child reads a passage to you from his storybook while you mark the 'miscues'. These errors are called 'miscues' because they tell us about the reading strategy which has misled the child. You can mark the miscues and correctly read words on a copy of the passage or on a separate piece of paper. The percentage accuracy rate can then be calculated and the sort of miscues a child has made examined in detail. You should talk to the child about the passage, asking him to tell you what happened in it to assess his understanding.

You may wish to use running records to assess a child's reading at key points (for instance, when you think a child is ready to move on to the next stage) or on a regular basis. The passages on pages 188–191 are for you to use with children at Stage 5. They include one passage from *The Magic Key* and one from *Village in the Snow*. They are each approximately 50 words long so that the percentage error rate may be easily calculated. Of course, if you wish to make running records for other passages or books you can do so by simply making the record on a blank sheet of paper using the same symbols (see page 41) but writing in the correct text as well as the child's response when he makes an error.

Procedure for using a running record

Using a running record

- 1 Tell the child you are going to talk about his reading.
 - 2 Ask the child to read the chosen passage.
 - 3 Talk to the child about the passage, asking questions.
 - 4 Calculate the percentage accuracy rate.
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1 Tell the child you are going to talk about how he is getting on with his reading and work on it together.

When you carry out a running record you should try to ensure the child is reading at the 'instructional' level, that is the level at which he is making some mistakes but understands most of what he reads (see page 42). It is at this level that the child is most likely to benefit from this type of teaching and intervention.

2 Ask the child to read the passage you have chosen (or one of those provided in this guide) from his storybook.

Record how he reads each word using the marks below or your own adapted version of them. It is important that the child reads as much as

possible without prompting. Encourage the child to attempt unknown words but tell him a word if he asks for help, or when a miscue or omission would alter the sense of the passage. Do not intervene if he shows signs of becoming distressed.

Marks to use when making a reading record

correct	✓	✓ 'Oh no!' said Kipper.
omission	O or circle word	O 'Oh no!' said Kipper.
word told to child	T	T 'Oh no!' said Kipper.
wrong response	write what the child says	^{dear} 'Oh no!' said Kipper.
self-correction	write what the child says and (sc)	^{dear} (sc) 'Oh no!' said Kipper.
word inserted	/	'Oh no!' said ^{the} / Kipper.

3 Talk to the child about the passage, asking the questions included in this guide. Try to talk about the passage in such a way that the questions arise naturally and unobtrusively so that the child does not become intimidated or ill-at-ease. Try to encourage expanded answers rather than just 'yes' or 'no'. Discussion of the questions should help you judge other aspects of the child's development (for example, his breadth of vocabulary, ability to report, reason and predict).

4 Calculate the percentage accuracy rate after the reading session using the method below. Compare the accuracy rate with the guide to levels of reading to ensure that the child is reading at the correct level. Analyze the types of miscue the child has made to identify the reading strategies he is already using.

Calculating the percentage accuracy rate
To score the percentage accuracy rate, count the number of words read accurately (42, in the example on page 43) then calculate this as a percentage of the number of words in the passage.

In these examples: $\frac{42}{49} \times 100 = 86\%$ accuracy (rounded up)
(90% accuracy if self-corrections are treated as correctly read words.)

Levels of reading

The following reading levels can be used as a guide to match readers and books.

Independent level: A 96-100% accuracy rate. The child should have very good comprehension of the passage.

Instructional level: A 90–95% accuracy rate. The child reads some words inaccurately, but not so many that he fails to understand the passage. He can give a satisfactory answer to most questions used to test his comprehension.

Frustration level: A less than 90% accuracy rate. He may show signs of anxiety and reading aloud is laborious. He should be reading at a lower stage.

Analyzing the types of miscue a child has made

To analyze the miscues a child has made and what strategies he is using you should ask yourself the following questions about every miscue.

In decoding a word incorrectly, is the child using:

- ◆ the sense/meaning of the passage or sentence to decode a word (so it makes sense in context, for example, “ ‘Oh dear!’ said Kipper.” for “ ‘Oh no!’ said Kipper.”)?
- ◆ a knowledge of grammar or syntax to decode a word (for example, substituting an incorrect noun for a correct noun, “ ‘It was Mum!’ said Kipper.” for “ ‘It was Biff!’ said Kipper.”)?
- ◆ visual clues such as word shape (for example, ‘telling’ for ‘talking’)?
- ◆ phonic knowledge – trying to ‘sound out’ the word?

You can record what proportion of miscues were caused by which strategy in the space provided on the sheet. This will enable you to assess with what strategies the child needs help.

On the next page are two examples of running records, the first marked on the passage itself, the second marked on a separate sheet.

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Biff and Chip got smaller and

✓ ✓ ✓
smaller and smaller.

✓ dear ✓ ✓

'Oh help!' said Biff.

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

'It's magic!' said Chip.

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ bed (sc)

Biff and Chip looked at the room.

✓
T
Everything looked big.

✓ ✓ ✓ ○ ✓ ✓ ✓

'Look at my big slippers,' said Biff.

✓ is ✓

'Everything looks big.'

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ pen (sc)

Chip picked up a pencil.

✓ ✓ ✓ ○ ✓ ✓ ✓

'Look at this big pencil,' he said.

49 words (42 words read accurately)

Name: Martin Brown

Book: The Magic Key, pages 8–12

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

✓ ✓ ✓

✓ dear ✓ ✓

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ bed (sc)

T ✓ ✓

✓ ✓ ✓ ○ ✓ ✓ ✓

✓ is ✓

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ pen (sc)

✓ ✓ ✓ ○ ✓ ✓ ✓

49 words (42 words read accurately)