

Diagnostic Spelling Assessment

Preparation, Administration, Correction, and Recording

The purpose of this assessment is to determine which of the kindergarten–fourth grade spelling patterns students have and have not been mastered. The multi-syllabic words prevent students from identifying the words by “sight spellings” and require recognition of the sound-spelling patterns within the context of syllables.

Assessment Formats

Choose the Diagnostic Spelling Assessment format which best suits your needs:

1. Paper Only: Teacher dictates the number of test items assigned to the grade levels, following the written administrative protocol. Students take the test on binder paper. Teacher corrects assessments according to directions and records spelling deficits on the Spelling Patterns Assessment Mastery Matrix.

Resources: [Diagnostic Spelling Assessment](#) teacher administration form; [Spelling Patterns Assessment Mastery Matrix](#).

2. Audio and Paper: Teacher plays the 22:32 “slow speed” Diagnostic Spelling Assessment audio file for grades 4, 5, and 6 students or the 17:26 “fast speed” Diagnostic Spelling Assessment audio file for grades 7 and 8 students. The audio file includes all administrative directions. Students take the test on binder paper. Teacher corrects assessments according to directions and records spelling deficits on the Spelling Patterns Assessment Mastery Matrix.

Resources: [Diagnostic Spelling Assessment 22:38 audio file](#); [Diagnostic Spelling Assessment 17:26 audio file](#); [Spelling Patterns Assessment Matrix](#).

3. Google Forms: Teacher shares either the Diagnostic Spelling Assessment Google Form with the 22:32 “slow speed” for grades 4, 5, and 6 students or the form with the “fast speed” for grades 7 and 8 students. Note that incorrect spellings will be accompanied by the Google red squiggly line indicating a spelling error. Students may be tempted to right click the word and select the correct spelling; however, if the teacher tells the students the purpose of the test and directs them not to self-correct, students will generally follow instructions. Telling students that they will receive the same amount of credit whether the spelling is accurate or not, and using the “fast speed” audio also helps students avoid the temptation of cheating. Teacher uploads the students’ Google Forms to the Spelling Patterns Assessment Mastery Matrix Google Sheets.

Resources: [Diagnostic Spelling Assessment Google Form with the 22:32 “slow speed” audio file](#) for grades 4, 5, and 6 students or the [Diagnostic Spelling Assessment Google Form with the 17:26 “fast speed” audio file](#) for grades 7 and 8 students; [Diagnostic Spelling Assessment Mastery Matrix Google Sheets](#).

Administration

The audio files include the assessment directions. If using the paper format, read the directions, saying—

“This is a test to see if you can accurately spell the words I say out loud. I will first say the spelling word; then repeat it; then use it in a sentence; and then repeat the spelling word once more. Listen carefully because I won’t repeat the words after the test is finished. Please print the spelling words.”

Now dictate the spelling word, the example sentence, and the word again. Don’t elongate the vowel or consonant sounds to emphasize spellings. Keep a consistent pace of about seven seconds per test item. Any longer and students will lose their place or begin daydreaming. Since this is a long test, teachers may elect to take a short stretch break in the middle of the test administration.

Correction

Grade the assessment, marking only the specified sound-spelling pattern for each word. In other words don’t mark the word wrong because of other spelling errors in the word. For example, if the sound-spelling pattern is Long /a/ “__ay” and the word is “payment,” the student spelling of “paiment” would be wrong, but “paymunt” would be right. This selective grading isolates the sound-spelling pattern problem areas for each student.

Recording the Data

Write down the names of your students in alphabetical order on the Diagnostic Spelling Assessment Mastery Matrix. Record a slash (/) for each sound-spelling error. Leave the box blank for each correctly spelled sound-spelling.

Diagnostic Spelling Assessment

1.	bumper	The car bumper had a large dent.	bumper	
2.	foggy	In foggy conditions it is hard to drive.	foggy	
3.	briskly	They walked briskly through the park.	briskly	
4.	medical	His medical condition worsened.	medical	
5.	defiance	The child's defiance created heartache.	defiance	
6.	dreadful	A dreadful sound came out of the trumpet.	dreadful	Short Vowels
7.	provide	She can provide all of the details.	provide	
8.	lately	That happens a lot lately.	lately	
9.	compute	To compute numbers he used a calculator.	compute	
10.	hopeful	I am hopeful that she will visit soon.	hopeful	
11.	attitude	The student had a wonderful attitude.	attitude	
12.	surprise	It could not have been a better surprise.	surprise	
13.	muffle	The headphones muffle the noise.	muffle	
14.	motive	The lawyer found the motive for the crime.	motive	
15.	submarine	A submarine can be very long.	submarine	Silent Final e
16.	eyelashes	Her eyelashes were very long.	eyelashes	
17.	crutches	He had to use crutches because of his ankle.	crutches	
18.	hypothesis	The scientist's hypothesis was tested.	hypothesis	
19.	cartwheel	I could never do a proper cartwheel.	cartwheel	Consonant Digraphs
20.	telegraph	The telegraph was invented in the 1800s.	telegraph	
21.	patriot	A patriot is one who supports his country.	patriot	
22.	payment	I received his payment last July.	payment	
23.	trained	She trained long and hard for the Olympics.	trained	
24.	neighbor	My neighbor wakes up early each morning.	neighbor	Long /a/
25.	maybe	He thought maybe they would agree.	maybe	
26.	seeking	The captain was seeking buried treasure.	seeking	
27.	ceilings	The apartment had very high ceilings.	ceilings	
28.	lobbying	Student Council is lobbying for a game day.	lobbying	
29.	creature	The iguana is a strange-looking creature.	creature	
30.	radius	The radius of the circle was six inches.	radius	Long /e/
31.	bicycle	She got a bicycle for her birthday.	bicycle	
32.	delight	The new neighbor is such a delight.	delight	
33.	supply	A huge supply came in yesterday.	supply	
34.	untie	It took me a long time to untie the knot.	untie	Long /i/
35.	introduce	I would like to introduce my friend.	introduce	
36.	vetoed	The president vetoed the proposed law.	vetoed	
37.	soaking	When you are soaking in a tub, life is fine.	soaking	
38.	fellowship	The hobbit joined the secret fellowship.	fellowship	Long /o/
39.	humor	She had a great sense of humor.	humor	
40.	fewer	There are fewer choices than I had thought.	fewer	
41.	rescued	The dog rescued the child from the river.	rescued	Long /u/

Diagnostic Spelling Assessment

42.	poodle	The black poodle loved to eat ice cream.	poodle	
43.	overdue	Your library book is overdue.	overdue	
44.	duty	Do your duty to your country.	duty	
45.	brewing	The coffee is always brewing at her house.	brewing	Long /oo/
46.	looked	He looked older than he really was.	looked	
47.	butcher	The local butcher was very skilled.	butcher	Short /oo/
48.	crowded	This school is very crowded.	crowded	
49.	counting	She began counting on her fingers.	counting	/ow/ (cow)
50.	poisoned	The chemical poisoned the water.	poisoned	
51.	destroy	He had to destroy the work of art.	destroy	/oi/
52.	awful	The engine made an awful sound.	awful	
53.	auditorium	The band played in the auditorium.	auditorium	
54.	already	My teacher already knows the answer.	already	
55.	falling	The child kept falling down the stairs.	falling	/aw/
56.	curling	She liked curling her hair with her fingers.	curling	
57.	winter	This winter I want to visit the beach.	winter	
58.	firmly	The student held the handle firmly.	firmly	
59.	alarm	A man set off the car alarm.	alarm	
60.	boring	The television show was very boring.	boring	r-controlled
61.	cucumber	He likes cucumber in his salad.	cucumber	
62.	procedure	The guard followed the procedure.	procedure	
63.	agony	His face showed the agony of defeat.	agony	Hard/Soft
64.	strangely	Her cousin behaved very strangely.	strangely	c and g
65.	spicy	The Mexican food was spicy.	spicy	
66.	identify	No one could identify the stranger.	identify	Soft y
67.	forgetting	I keep forgetting where I placed my glasses.	forgetting	Consonant
68.	commitment	The coach questioned his commitment.	commitment	Doubling
69.	dodgeball	The children could not play dodgeball.	dodgeball	
70.	advantage	We had the advantage of playing at home.	advantage	/j/
71.	believe	I will believe it when I see it.	believe	
72.	receive	Did you receive the letter?	receive	“ie”/“ei”
73.	radios	We listened to our radios.	radios	
74.	bushes	They found the child hiding in the bushes.	bushes	
75.	ladies	The ladies softball team won their game.	ladies	
76.	bookshelves	They dusted the bookshelves.	bookshelves	
77.	women	The women volunteered for the carnival.	women	Plurals
78.	guide	Her family trains guide dogs for the blind.	guide	
79.	designed	Her mom designed the new school sign.	designed	Silent Letters
80.	skating	I had my birthday party at the skating rink.	skating	Drop/Keep
81.	wisely	She wisely asked the teacher for help.	wisely	Final e
82.	catcher	The catcher tagged the runner out.	catcher	
83.	touchdown	Our players scored the winning touchdown.	touchdown	/ch/
84.	gigantic	The gigantic boulder blocked the road.	gigantic	
85.	sunken	The pirates searched for sunken treasure.	sunken	/k/

Diagnostic Spelling Assessment

86.	denied	He denied any knowledge of the crime.	denied	Drop/Keep Final y
87.	carrying	We got tired of carrying the baskets.	carrying	
88.	handcuffs	The police officer carried handcuffs.	handcuffs	<i>l, f, s, z</i>
89.	careful	Please be careful with that glass vase.	careful	
90.	rhythm	He could not clap to the rhythm of the song.	rhythm	Greek “rh”/ “ch”
91.	chorus	The chorus of the song was repeated.	chorus	
92.	explosion	A loud explosion followed the car crash.	explosion	<i>/ion/</i>
93.	musician	He made his career as a musician.	musician	
94.	emotional	Her poetry triggered an emotional response.	emotional	Consonant– “le”
95.	bubble	She blew a huge bubble with her gum.	bubble	
96.	miracle	It was just a miracle that she finished.	miracle	Schwa
97.	cousin	She invited her cousin to the party.	cousin	
98.	sympathy	We expressed our sympathy for her loss.	sympathy	“able”/“ible”
99.	laughable	His clumsy response was laughable.	laughable	
100.	eligible	I was now eligible to win the grand prize.	eligible	“ance”/ “ence”
101.	significance	The significance of her research was huge.	significance	
102.	confidence	The teacher earned our highest confidence.	confidence	