

Phoneme Segmentation Test

WHAT

This Grades 2–8 measure assesses the student’s ability to break a word into its component phonemes, or sounds. For example, the word *sat* has three phonemes: /s/ /a/ /t/. The word *shoe*, although it has four letters, has only two phonemes: /sh/ /oo/. Use this assessment with students in Grades 2–5, and with older students who are experiencing delays in reading and spelling that cannot be attributed to limited English or limited exposure to instruction. Administer this measure only after giving tests of comprehension, fluency, and phonics.

WHY

Many older students who are significantly behind in reading or spelling may have underdeveloped phonemic awareness. Use this test to determine whether deficits in sound awareness may account for serious delays in reading or spelling.

HOW

Proceed to the Test Items only after the student demonstrates understanding of the Practice Item tasks. When administering the Test Items, give only general positive feedback. Praise the student for even close approximations to a correct response. Record the student’s exact response on the blank line. Then after administering the test, go back and circle whether the response was correct or incorrect. Ask for the “sound” if the student says the letter name. If the student cannot segment the entire word correctly, ask just for the first and last sound. Discontinue testing if the student misses five items in a row.

Practice Item 1:

Lay out on the table about eight blocks of assorted colors. Make sure to lay out the blocks in a horizontal line, from left to right. The color of the blocks is not important. However, to demonstrate, use a different colored block for each of the different sounds in the word. After the student completes an item, put the blocks back in the pile.

TEACHER: We are going to use these blocks to show the sounds in a word. Let’s say I wanted to show you *sit*. That word has three sounds /s/ /i/ /t/. (Put out one block for each of the sounds as you say them slowly in order). Can you point to the /s/? Which one is the /t/? What is the sound in this block (the middle /i/)?

STUDENT: /i/

TEACHER: Now, tell me the three sounds.

Skills Assessed:	Phoneme Segmentation
Grade Level:	2–8
Language:	English
Grouping:	Individual
Approximate Testing Time:	5–10 minutes
Materials:	Colored Blocks Record Form
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Teacher Resource

Phoneme Segmentation Test (*continued*)

STUDENT: /s/ /i/ /t/

TEACHER: Very good! You got that the first time!

If the student gives the names of letters, rather than their sounds, say:

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

Practice Item 2:

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

If the student cannot do the segmentation independently, demonstrate 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 attend to sounds, rather than letters. Once the student can at least point to the block that represents the correct sound, proceed to the test items.

WHAT IT MEANS

By the end of second grade a student should be able to accurately segment words into phonemes. Students who cannot complete the entire test accurately may not have the phonemic awareness skills needed to facilitate the learning and application of phonetic principles in reading and spelling. Proficient readers can usually complete the entire test accurately by the end of second or third grade.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Older students who have difficulty with this test will benefit from intensive intervention. Encouraging these students to write regularly will help improve their phonemic awareness.

Teacher Resource

Phoneme Segmentation Test *(continued)*

Name _____

Grade _____ Date _____

Directions: Have students use different colored blocks to show the number of phonemes in each of the Practice Items. Then administer the test. Mark “+” to indicate a correct response or “-” to indicate an incorrect response. Record students’ exact responses on the blank lines.

Practice Items:

1. sit (s-i-t)
2. shop (sh-o-p)

Test Items:

1. thumb (th-u-m) (+)(-) _____
2. skate (s-k-ā-t) (+)(-) _____
3. shriek (sh-r-ē-k) (+)(-) _____
4. large (l-ar-j) (+)(-) _____
5. drop (d-r-o-p) (+)(-) _____
6. flew (f-l-oo) (+)(-) _____
7. chalk (ch-au-k) (+)(-) _____
8. germ (j-er-m) (+)(-) _____
9. spread (s-p-r-e-d) (+)(-) _____
10. train (t-r-ā-n) (+)(-) _____
11. stork (s-t-or-k) (+)(-) _____
12. bolt (b-o-l-t) (+)(-) _____
13. glare (g-l-air) (+)(-) _____
14. crowd (k-r-ou-d) (+)(-) _____
15. point (p-oi-n-t) (+)(-) _____

Items Correct _____