Phonological Awareness assessment.

This test measures a student's ability to identify, blend and manipulate the sounds of speech. It is not essential but is the very best measure of progress.

Learning to read and write words is about learning to match the printed word to its spoken counterpart. Students who struggle with recognising, analysing and manipulating the sounds of speech cannot process words as competent students do. When these skills are weak, the student will inevitably struggle, and every older student I have assessed with reading difficulties has found these tasks challenging. The ability to delete, add and substitute components of words allows the student to find the patterns in language, to quickly figure out and remember new words as they are encountered.

This test is a standard measure of phonological awareness. The words are mine; the tasks are standard. It has additional tasks that are appropriate for older students. Other examples of phonological awareness assessments include the **Gough Kastler Roper** test, which is no longer on the internet, although a search in YouTube for 'Gough Kastler Roper' will bring up videos that demonstrate its use. For younger students, I recommend **The Past Test** www.thepasttest.com, freely available on the internet.

The primary goal of any intervention must be to develop and solidify these skills, until completing these tasks is easy, instant and automatic. **The best measure of progress** is growing competency with these skills, a higher test score.

Dyslexic students typically struggle with these tasks. However, do not assume that a low score indicates dyslexia. It is much more likely that the student has simply never developed the skills. If, after plenty of practice, the student continues to struggle, or makes much slower progress than other students, then a full professional assessment may be warranted.

For each of these tasks, ALWAYS use the sound the letter makes, NEVER the letter name. All the way through, give examples of what you expect the student to do. Students should respond within 2 seconds. Allocate a half mark if it takes longer than this. The tasks become progressively more difficult. Stop when the student is clearly struggling.

1. *Blending sounds to make a word*

When I hear m - a – n, I know the word is man. When I hear sh-o-p I know the word is shop. What do you think these words are? (Allow roughly a second between each sound.)

p i g; r oa d ; sh ou t; s t o p; b a n d; s p e n t; f u nn y

2. *Isolating sounds within a word*

Example: When I say cat, I hear c, then a, and then t. What do you hear in these words?

dog seat shed flat hand task stump

3. *Deleting initial sound*

Example: When I say man without the first sound, the m sound, I get an. When I say chip without the ch sound, I get ip. What would we get if we take the first sound away from these words?

bus road bend flop crab dread strip

4. *Deleting final sound*

Example: When I say man without the last sound, the n sound, I get ma. When I say chip without the p sound, I get chi. What would we get if we take the last sound away from these words?

name mess muck trim stop send stamp

5. *Changing initial sound*

Example: If I change the first sound in man to f, I get fan. If I change the first sound in chip to sh, I get ship. What would we get if we changed the first sound in these words?

the d in dog to l; the m in mate to l; the h in head to b; the l in look to t; the sh in shop to ch; the th in thin to w; the c in clop to s

6. *Changing the final sound*

Example: If I change the last sound in man to t, I get mat. If I change the last sound in chip to n, I get chin. What would we get if we changed the first sound in these words?

Note: Students whose working memory is weak may always struggle with the following tasks. These kids can be taught strategies to by-pass their processing difficulties.

The g of dog to t; the n of can to p; the n of mean to t; the s of bus to d; the g of rug the sh; the d of bend to ch; the t of night to s

7. *Changing middle sound*

Example: If I change the middle sound in man to e, I get men. If I change the middle sound in chip to o, I get chop. What would we get if we changed the first sound in these words?

the i of bit to e; the e of bed to u; the u of hut to o; the a of stamp to u; the u of crush to a; the u of truck to i; the a of black to o

8. *Deleting sounds in blends.*

Example: If I take the n out of snake, I get sake. If I take the p out of spent, I am left with sent. What would we get if we took one sound out of these words?

What do I have left if I take the r (sound) out of brand? The t out of stand? The l out of blank?

The m out of clamp? the n out of bent? the n out of sink? the n out of munch?

9. *Changing sounds in blends*

Example: If I change the l in slam to w, I get swam. If I change the n in snake to t, I get stake. What would we get if we changed one sound in these words?

Change the l in gland to a r; the p in Spain to t; the r in frame to l; the p in sped to an l;

the s in best to n; the r in crime to l; the st in bluster to nd

This completes 63 tasks.

Wordchain-for-Web is designed to develop these essential skills, with the many hours of practice most struggling students need.