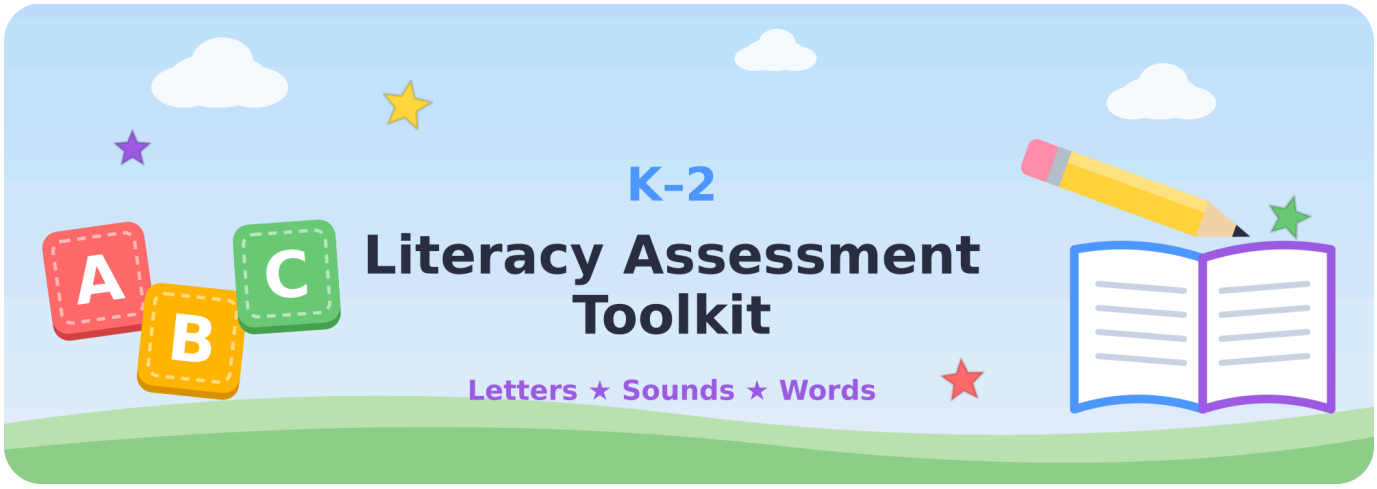


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Literacy & numeracy resources for special education teachers

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How to Use This Toolkit

These three informal, criterion-referenced assessments help K–2 teachers see which foundational literacy skills a student has mastered and where instruction should start. Each one is given one-on-one, takes about 5–15 minutes, and can be repeated every 6–8 weeks to monitor progress.

Assessment	Grades	Skills measured	Time
1. Letter Land Letter Name & Letter Sound Inventory	K–1	Uppercase and lowercase letter names, letter sounds	5–8 min
2. Sound Detectives Phonological Awareness Screener	K–1 (and older struggling readers)	Rhyme, syllables, first sounds, blending, segmenting	8–10 min
3. Word Explorers Phonics & Decoding Survey	1–2 (and older struggling readers)	Real and nonsense words by phonics pattern, high-frequency words	10–15 min

General administration tips

- Work in a quiet spot, sitting beside the student. Place the student page in front of them; keep the teacher record for yourself.
- Mark **+** for correct and **–** for incorrect. For errors, write what the student said (for example, *b* → *d* or *ship* → *sip*). That's where the useful information is.
- Don't signal right or wrong during test items. Praise effort instead: "You're working hard."

- A self-correction within about 3 seconds counts as correct; mark it **SC**. No response after 3–5 seconds: mark **NR** and move on.
- Stop if the student is tired or frustrated and finish another day.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

- **Visual:** enlarge student pages, use high contrast, and use an index card or window card to show one row or item at a time.
- **Attention:** give one subtest per sitting if needed, use a first–then card or a visual checklist of subtests, and allow movement breaks.
- **Response mode:** students with limited speech can point to the target letter or picture in a field of 3–4 choices, use their AAC device, or type. Record this as *receptive*; it measures recognition, not production.
- **Processing:** extend wait time (up to 10 seconds) and note it.
- **Hearing and speech:** face the student and check that devices are on. On sound tasks, score the intended sound, not a consistent articulation error (for example, a student who always says /w/ for /r/).
- **Don't read words aloud on Assessment 3.** That changes what the assessment measures.
- Write every accommodation in the Notes so results can be compared fairly over time.

> These are informal screening and diagnostic tools, not standardized or norm-referenced tests. Use them alongside your school or district benchmarks and other data. They are not meant for eligibility decisions on their own.

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Letter Land

ASSESSMENT 1 · LETTER NAMES & SOUNDS · K-1

Assessment 1 · Letter Land: Letter Name & Letter Sound Inventory (K–1)

Purpose: find out which letters a student can name (uppercase and lowercase) and which letter sounds they know, so instruction can target the exact letters still missing.

Materials: student pages (uppercase, lowercase), teacher record, pencil, index card.

Directions

1. **Uppercase names.** Point to each letter, row by row, left to right. Say: *"Tell me the name of this letter."*
2. **Lowercase names.** Same directions on the lowercase page.
3. **Letter sounds.** Use the lowercase page again. Say: *"Now tell me the sound this letter makes."* If needed, model once: *"This is m. It says /mmm/."*

Accepting sounds: for vowels, the short sound is the target; accept the long sound but write "L" in Notes. Accept /k/ or /s/ for **c**, /g/ or /j/ for **g**, /ks/ for **x**, /kw/ for **q**, and /y/ for **y**. For consonants, a letter name is not a sound (for example, "bee" for b is incorrect).

Scoring and interpretation

Score (per column)	Suggested level	What it means
24–26	Secure	Review briefly; move on to blending and word reading.
18–23	Developing	Teach the missing letters directly in daily small-group practice.
0–17	Needs targeted instruction	Teach 2–3 new letters at a time, mixed with known letters, with lots of review.

Patterns to look for: reversals (b/d, p/q), short vowel confusions (e/i, o/u), knowing names but not sounds (or the opposite), and letters from the student's own name known first. Retest only the unknown letters for quick progress checks.

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Student Page · Uppercase Letters

S	D	M	A	T
F	P	H	B	K
O	R	C	L	W
N	E	G	I	J
U	Y	Q	V	X
Z				

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Student Page · Lowercase Letters

m	s	a	t	d
p	f	o	h	b
r	c	n	k	l
e	w	g	i	u
j	y	v	q	z
x				

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Letter Land · Teacher Record

Student: _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____

Accommodations: _____

Letter	Uppercase name	Lowercase name	Sound	Notes / errors
A a				
B b				
C c				
D d				
E e				
F f				
G g				
H h				
I i				
J j				
K k				
L l				
M m				
N n				
O o				
P p				
Q q				
R r				
S s				
T t				
U u				
V v				
W w				
X x				
Y y				
Z z				
Total	___ / 26	___ / 26	___ / 26	

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Sound Detectives

ASSESSMENT 2 · PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS · K-1

Assessment 2 · Sound Detectives: Phonological Awareness Screener (K–1)

Purpose: check a student's ability to hear and work with the sounds in spoken words. This is an **oral-only** assessment: no letters or print. Subtests go from easier to harder.

Directions

- Do the practice item for each subtest. Give corrective feedback on the practice item only, then begin.
- Say each item clearly once. You may repeat it once if the student asks.
- Slashes mean say the **sound**, not the letter name: /m/ is "mmm."
- **Discontinue rule:** stop a subtest after 3 errors in a row and go to the next subtest. If the student scores 0–1 on two subtests in a row, stop the screener.

Student: _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____

Accommodations: _____

Subtest A: Rhyme Recognition

Say: *"I'll say two words. Tell me if they rhyme, like cat and hat."* **Practice: cat–hat (yes)**

#	Words	Answer	+ / –
1	sun – fun	yes	
2	big – dog	no	
3	cake – lake	yes	
4	bed – bus	no	
5	ring – sing	yes	
Score			**___ / 5**

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Subtest B: Rhyme Production

Say: *"Tell me a word that rhymes with ___. It can be a real word or a silly word."*
Practice: man (can, fan, zan)

#	Word	Sample answers	Student said	+ / –
1	hop	top, mop, pop		
2	bell	tell, well, fell		
3	sit	hit, bit, fit		
4	ball	tall, wall, fall		
5	bug	rug, hug, mug		
Score				**___ / 5**

Subtest C: Syllable Segmenting

Say: *"Clap the parts you hear in this word. Pen-cil (clap, clap). Pencil has 2 parts."* **Practice: pencil (2)**

#	Word	Syllables	+ / –
1	dog	1	
2	rainbow	2	
3	apple	2	
4	butterfly	3	
5	elephant	3	
Score			**___ / 5**

Subtest D: First Sound Isolation

Say: *"What's the first sound in map? /m/. Now you try."* **Practice: map (/m/)**

#	Word	Answer	Student said	+ / –
1	sat	/s/		
2	fish	/f/		
3	lid	/l/		
4	top	/t/		
5	rug	/r/		
Score				**___ / 5**

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Subtest E: Phoneme Blending

Say: *"I'll say some sounds slowly. You put them together to make a word. /m/ /a/ /p/ … map!"*

Practice: /m/ /a/ /p/ (map) · about one second between sounds

#	Sounds	Word	+ / –
1	/s/ /i/ /t/	sit	
2	/h/ /a/ /t/	hat	
3	/b/ /e/ /d/	bed	
4	/s/ /t/ /o/ /p/	stop	
5	/f/ /l/ /a/ /g/	flag	
Score			**___ / 5**

Subtest F: Phoneme Segmenting

Say: *"Tell me each sound you hear in up: /u/ /p/. Now you try."*

Practice: up (/u/ /p/) · students may tap or push a counter for each sound

#	Word	Sounds	Student said	+ / –
1	at	/a/ /t/ (2)		
2	mop	/m/ /o/ /p/ (3)		
3	sun	/s/ /u/ /n/ (3)		
4	ship	/sh/ /i/ /p/ (3)		
5	frog	/f/ /r/ /o/ /g/ (4)		
Score				**___ / 5**

Score an item correct only if every sound is produced in order. Note partial answers (for example, *"/m/ … op"* shows onset–rime awareness but not full segmenting).

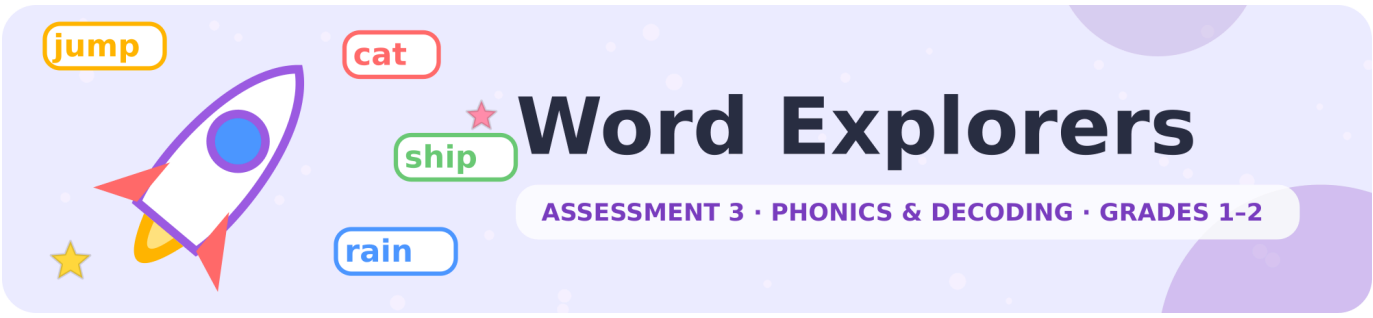
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Score Summary

Subtest	Score	Level
A. Rhyme recognition	___ / 5	
B. Rhyme production	___ / 5	
C. Syllable segmenting	___ / 5	
D. First sound isolation	___ / 5	
E. Phoneme blending	___ / 5	
F. Phoneme segmenting	___ / 5	
Total	**___ / 30**	

Suggested levels for each subtest: 5 = Mastered 3–4 = Developing 0–2 = Needs instruction
Start instruction at the **first** subtest that isn't mastered. Blending and segmenting (E and F) matter most for learning to read and spell, so prioritize them once the earlier skills are in place.

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Assessment 3 · Word Explorers: Phonics & Decoding Survey (Grades 1–2)

Purpose: find the phonics patterns a student can decode and the first pattern that breaks down. That pattern is where instruction should start. Each pattern has 5 real words and 5 nonsense words. Nonsense words show whether the student is truly decoding rather than recognizing words from memory.

Directions

- Say: *"Read these words to me. Some are real words. Some are silly made-up words, so you can't know them already. Just sound them out the best you can."*
- **Where to start:** Grade 1 (fall) at Pattern 1. Grade 1 (spring) and Grade 2 at Pattern 2; if they miss 2 or more real words there, go back to Pattern 1.
- **Discontinue rule:** stop when a student scores 2 or fewer on both the real and nonsense rows of a pattern.
- A word is correct if read accurately within about 3 seconds, including after sounding it out ("/f/ /a/ /n/ ... fan" = correct). Sounding out without blending into a word is incorrect; note it as **SNB** (sounded, not blended).
- For nonsense words, accept any reasonable pronunciation that follows the pattern.

Reading the results

A pattern is mastered at 4 or 5 correct on **both** rows. If real words are strong but nonsense words are weak, the student is likely relying on memory or guessing, so teach that pattern explicitly with decodable text. The first pattern not mastered is the instructional starting point.

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Student Page · Word Explorers

★ Pattern 1

Real	fan	pet	hid	log	cup
Silly	zat	keb	mip	fot	dut

★ Pattern 2

Real	ship	chop	then	whip	duck
Silly	shom	chet	thib	whup	gock

★ Pattern 3

Real	stop	flag	crib	nest	jump
Silly	plim	drob	smet	lusk	gamp

★ Pattern 4

Real	cake	bike	hope	cute	these
Silly	lape	mide	rofe	tume	zepe

★ Pattern 5

Real	rain	play	feet	boat	snow
Silly	vaim	glay	reep	doak	goach

★ Pattern 6

Real	car	her	bird	fork	turn
Silly	marn	verm	dirp	gorb	lurt

★ Pattern 7

Real	coin	boy	out	cow	moon
Silly	hoip	voy	mout	zow	kloom

★ Pattern 8

Real	napkin	sunset	basket	picnic	magnet
Silly	lomtip	bandet	fipcom	rizbet	mubnog

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Word Explorers · Teacher Record

Student: _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____

Accommodations: _____

Pattern	Real words	Nonsense words	Errors (write what the student said)	Mastered? (4+ on both)
1. Short vowels	___ / 5	___ / 5		Y / N
2. Digraphs	___ / 5	___ / 5		Y / N
3. Consonant blends	___ / 5	___ / 5		Y / N
4. Silent e	___ / 5	___ / 5		Y / N
5. Vowel teams	___ / 5	___ / 5		Y / N
6. R-controlled vowels	___ / 5	___ / 5		Y / N
7. Other vowel sounds	___ / 5	___ / 5		Y / N
8. Two-syllable words	___ / 5	___ / 5		Y / N

High-Frequency Words · Teacher Record

Say: *"These are words we see a lot. Read them to me."* Count a word correct only if it's read within about 3 seconds (automatic). Stop after 5 errors in a row.

Word	+ / –	Word	+ / –	Word	+ / –	Word	+ / –
the		said		come		could	
and		they		where		does	
is		of		there		friend	
you		have		what		again	
was		to		because		people	

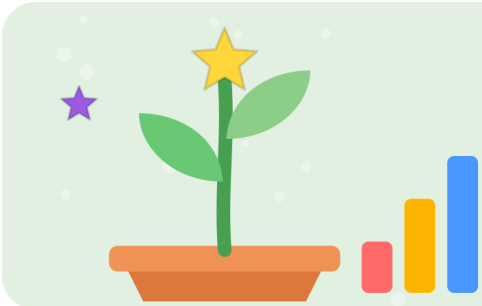
Score: ___ / 20. Missed words become a short practice set. Teach the regular parts by sound (for example, the *s* and *d* in *said*) and the irregular part as the "heart" part to remember.

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Student Page · Words We See a Lot

the	and	is	you
was	said	they	of
have	to	come	where
there	what	because	could
does	friend	again	people

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Growth Tracker

STUDENT SUMMARY PROFILE & NEXT STEPS

Growth Tracker: Student Summary Profile & Next Steps

Use one profile per student to track growth across the year and share results with families or the IEP team.

Student: _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____ Teacher: _____

Skill	Fall	Winter	Spring
Uppercase letter names (/26)			
Lowercase letter names (/26)			
Letter sounds (/26)			
Phonological awareness total (/30)			
First PA subtest not mastered			
First phonics pattern not mastered			
High-frequency words (/20)			
Accommodations used			

From results to instruction

If the data show…	Start instruction with…
Letter sounds below 24/26	Daily letter-sound practice for the unknown letters only: multisensory (say it, trace it, write it), with picture cues.
Rhyme or syllables not mastered (Subtests A–C)	Short daily oral games: rhyming songs, clapping names, sorting picture cards by rhyme.
First sounds, blending, or segmenting not mastered (Subtests D–F)	Oral blending and segmenting with Elkonin (sound) boxes, counters, or tapping, then add letters as soon as sounds are known.

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If the data show…	Start instruction with…
Real words strong, nonsense words weak	Explicit decoding of that pattern with word chains (cat → cap → cop) and decodable text; discourage guessing from pictures.
First phonics pattern not mastered	Teach that pattern: introduce it, practice reading and spelling words with it, then read it in decodable text. Retest that pattern every 2–3 weeks.
High-frequency words below 15/20	A small set (3–5 words) at a time, mapped sound by sound, practiced daily until read automatically.

Grouping tip: group students by the first skill or pattern they haven't mastered, not by total score. Two students with the same total can need very different instruction.

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