



Oral Language

Overview of the Assessment

"Proficiency in oral language is critical to the success of literacy development. Teachers can guide oral language development by listening attentively to and observing children's responses and interactions, by providing models of richer responses to guide children's thinking, and by introducing new vocabulary."

(The Kindergarten Program, 2006)

Expectations

By the end of Kindergarten, children will:
(Language Overall)

- A. Communicate by talking and by listening and speaking to others for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts.

How to Administer the Assessment

Most of these skills will be observed during regular classroom activities throughout the Kindergarten day.

- Mark the score in the space provided (✓) and calculate overall total.
- A minimum score of 30 would indicate that a child's oral language is developing in an age appropriate manner.

Resources

- The Kindergarten Program, 2006
- Kindergarten Teacher's Resource Book by Miriam Trehearne, Chapter 3
- A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading Kindergarten to Grade 3, Chapter 3

About This Assessment

The Oral Language Assessment provides a quick and easy way to determine what structures of oral English students understand and control. This assessment is appropriate for all students in grades K–3. The series of sentences in this assessment reflect *some* of the structures of adult English language that are common to school and classroom settings. The sentences increase in complexity within each set; sentences in Sets 2 and 3 use the identical five language structures as in Set 1, but with increasingly complicated phrases and clauses.



Language development is a prerequisite for flexible, abstract thinking. Therefore, proficiency in oral language is a foundational element of reading comprehension.

What Is Needed

- 1 copy of the Oral Language Assessment (page 24) for each child to be assessed
- A quiet location, out of the hearing of children who will be tested later

This assessment measures a student's *receptive* language. As students repeat sentences of increasing structural complexity, the teacher notes any substitutions, omissions, transpositions, or expansions of words and phrases that occur when the sentences become too difficult. These observations become the basis for intensive oral-language development. They also help teachers tailor the instructional language used when working directly with these students.

The language structures in this assessment are vital for students to understand if they are to understand classroom instructions, discussions, and stories. In general, students whose first language is English should be able to repeat all 15 sentences correctly in every detail by the age of six.

How to Administer

1. Be certain that you have the student's full attention throughout this assessment. If the student loses focus, reestablish focus before continuing.
2. Read each sentence to the student using the phrasing indicated by the italics. Speak clearly, with natural tone and pace.
3. Familiarize the student with the testing procedure. Tell the student, *I am going to read some sentences and I would like you to say them after me. Let's begin.*
 - *Sally is walking to her house.* OK, try this one.
 - *Where are you going?* OK. Say these....
4. Begin at Set 1. Administer the sentences in order from 1 to 5. Record the student's repetition of the sentences directly on the scoring sheet, much as one would record a reading record. Continue to Set 2 and Set 3 in the same way.

Minimum Standards

Grade	Minimum Standard
End K	7
Mid 1	15

ORAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

Name: _____ Age: _____
 Date: _____ Grade: _____

Set 1

1 *My mom did it with.*

2 *Always go to bed with a smile.*

3 *She had her left arm in a cast.*

4 *Her name is Sally.*

5 *It's very hot in my bed.*

Scored

Set 2

1 *She got her hair cut when she was in school.*

2 *She got the car. It was very fast.*

3 *She had a job. Grandma gave her a job.*

4 *She was going to school when she was in school.*

5 *She was going to school when she was in school.*

Scored

Set 3

1 *She got her hair cut when she was in school.*

2 *She got the car. It was very fast.*

3 *She had a job. Grandma gave her a job.*

4 *She was going to school when she was in school.*

5 *She was going to school when she was in school.*

Scored

TOTAL SCORE

ORAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

Name: _____

Age: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

SET 1

Form

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | <i>The puppy's tail is curly.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | <i>Mommy is baking a cake.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | <i>The teacher told them a story.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | <i>There are the children.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | <i>She's eating her lunch slowly.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Subtotal

SET 2

Form

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | <i>That red bike over there used to be my uncle's.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | <i>The girl in the car is waving her hand.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | <i>Over the weekend Jane brought us some cookies.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | <i>Here comes the machine that digs the big holes.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | <i>The bird built a nest high in the tree.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Subtotal

SET 3

Form

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Be ready to come inside when the bell rings.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | <i>The car and the truck were carrying some large boxes.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | <i>The brave fireman showed our class the big red truck.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | <i>There go the men who clean the playground at our school.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | <i>My friend likes to eat ice cream when it's very hot out.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

TOTAL SCORE

Subtotal



Oral Language Assessment

Student Name: _____

1. Willingness to start a conversation

Overall Language Expectation 1

Child almost never begins a conversation with peers or the teacher and never keeps trying if unsuccessful at first.	Child sometimes begins conversations with either peers or the teacher. If initial efforts fail, he or she often gives up quickly.	Child begins conversations with both peers and teacher on occasion. If initial efforts fail, he or she will sometimes keep trying.	Child begins conversations with both peers and teachers. If initial efforts fail, he or she will work hard to be understood.
1	2	3	4

2. Communicates personal experiences

Use of language in various contexts

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 4

To your knowledge, the child does not connect new information to what they already know.	The child rarely offers information that connects what they already know with new experiences.	Child sometimes offers information that connects what they already know with new experiences.	Child freely offers information that connects what they already know with new experiences.
1	2	3	4

3. Asks questions for a variety of purposes

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 7

To your knowledge, the child has never asked an adult a question reflecting curiosity about why things happen or why people do things.	On a few occasions the child has asked adults some questions. The discussion that resulted was brief and limited in depth.	On several occasions the child has asked interesting questions. On occasion these have led to an interesting conversation.	Child often asks adults questions reflecting curiosity. These often lead to interesting, extended conversations.
1	2	3	4

4. Listens and responds to others for a variety of purposes

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 2

Child rarely or never engages in pretend play or else never talks while pretending.	On occasion the child engages in pretending that includes some talk. Talk is brief, may only be used when starting the play, and is of limited importance to the ongoing play activity.	Child engages in pretending often, conversations are sometimes important to the play. On occasion, child engages in some back-and-forth pretend dialogue with another child.	Child often engages in pretending and conversations are relevant to the play. Back-and-forth dialogue with other children continues throughout and is important to play.
1	2	3	4

5. Recognizes and produces rhymes

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 1 and 11

Child cannot ever say if two words rhyme and cannot produce a rhyme when given examples (i.e. rat, cat).	Child occasionally produces or identifies rhymes when given help.	Child spontaneously produces rhymes and can sometimes tell when word pairs rhyme.	Child spontaneously rhymes words of more than one syllable and always identifies whether words rhyme.
1	2	3	4

6. Uses a varied vocabulary

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 6 and 9

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1	2	3	4

7. Uses understandable speech

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1	2	3	4

8. Follows one and two-step oral directions

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 3

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1	2	3	4

9. Understands and uses appropriate body language (e.g., gestures, tone of voice, volume)

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 8

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1	2	3	4

10. Retell stories

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 10

Never is able to retell stories using simple narrative structure of beginning, middle, end.	Rarely is able to retell stories using simple narrative structure of beginning, middle, end.	Sometimes is able to retell stories using simple narrative structure of beginning, middle, end.	Often is able to retell stories using simple narrative structure of beginning, middle, end.
1	2	3	4

11. Metacognition

Specific Expectation: Oral Communication 5

Never uses language to talk about their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems.	Rarely uses language to talk about their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems.	Sometimes uses language to talk about their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems.	Often uses language to talk about their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems.
1	2	3	4

Oral Language Total _____ (out of 44 possible)

