Oral Reading Test (cont.)

Do not use this test for instruction. If a student misses a word, tell that student to “go on.” Do not supply any hints or tell the student the word. If this policy is followed, the same test can be used later to determine progress. When retesting a student, use different colored pencils to underline mistakes. Spaces have been provided for recording the results of the retests. Keep the record sheet for easy reference and for retesting.

The paragraphs are not timed, but excessive rapidity or slowness may be noted to the right of the paragraph as a characteristic of the student’s reading ability. Slow reading means more practice is needed at that level so the student can gain fluency.

There are two paragraphs per grade level for grades one through three. The first paragraph is marked 1-A. This means “easy first grade.” The next is marked 1-B. This means “hard first grade.” There is only one paragraph for each level beyond third.

The last paragraph is marked grade seven, but actually it is indicative of popular adult and non-academic reading or a non-technical secondary reading level. If a student can read it without errors, she or he can do most junior and senior high school reading satisfactorily. For more accurate determination of reading ability for students reading at junior and senior high school levels, a standardized silent reading test is recommended. If the last paragraph is read at the Independent Level, use a silent reading test to determine advanced skills.

Teaching Suggestions

1. To improve general reading ability, see the book How to Teach Reading, which includes many strategies such as easy reading practice, comprehension instruction, phonics, vocabulary improvement, and development of writing skills.

2. Oral reading can be improved by practicing reading aloud from material at the student’s independent or instructional level. See the readability graph on page 79 for determining book difficulty.

3. Use a variety of oral reading experiences such as reading short passages, poems, parts in plays, and announcements.
Oral Reading Test

Purpose
This test quickly determines a student's general reading level.

Answer Key
Mark the examiner's copy and record sheet.
Count one mistake for each word the student is unable to pronounce. If the student immediately makes the correction, this is not counted as a mistake. If a student omits a word, ask the student to read the line again more carefully.

Underline each word the student can't pronounce or needs help in pronouncing. When the student has finished reading a paragraph, count the mistakes and check the appropriate box to the right of each paragraph. For example, if a student begins with paragraph 1-B and reads it without a mistake, or with one or two mistakes, she/he can read at this level independently. Check "Indep." to the right of the paragraph.

The student should then read paragraph 2-A. If the student receives a score of 0-2 mistakes, then the student can handle material at this level independently, too. Check "Indep." The student next reads paragraph 2-B. If she/he makes three to four mistakes, you have found the instructional reading level. Check "Instr." to the right of that paragraph. This is the level at which reading instruction will be most effective for that student. Notice that the number of mistakes for each reading level is shown on the test to the right of the paragraph.

After finding the student's instructional reading level, continue the test until you find the frustration reading level. Check "Frust." to the right of the paragraph. Stop testing when you get to the student's frustration level.

Record the results of the test in the spaces provided on the examiner's copy of the test. Fill in the highest grade level of material that the student can handle independently. Then record the grade level of material that should be used for instruction.