

**Frequently Asked Questions
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
Personal Literacy Plans (PLP)**

Last updated 4/1108

Which students should be assessed with the DRA?

All students in Grades K-3 must be assessed with the DRA K-3 kit once they are reading a Level A book in Guided Reading. Remember, the Grade Level expectation for Kindergarten is Level B by the end of the kindergarten year!

All students in Grades 4 and 5 must be assessed with the DRA 4-8 kit or the DRA 4-8 Bridge Pack (available through the Literacy Trainer). The **ONLY** 4th and 5th grade students who will be tested using the DRA K-3 kit are those reading **BELOW** Level 20 in the DRA.

How high do I assess on the DRA?

In Kindergarten and 1st grade, should I assess a child who has reached or exceeded the trimester benchmark?

How many times should I give the DRA in one trimester?

If a student's instructional level is above his/her grade level, do I get the next grade level material for the student to work on?

NO student should be assessed with the DRA beyond the June grade level expectation for the current grade unless **specifically requested by the parent in writing**.

The DRA is designed to be given ONCE at each sitting. The **ONLY** time a student should be given a second DRA within a trimester is **IF THE STUDENT SCORED LITTLE** comprehension (K-3) or **INTERVENTION** (4-8).

Once a student has reached the end of the year grade level expectation for the current grade, it is no longer necessary to assess with the DRA. The DRA identifies the student's **INDEPENDENT** reading level. Therefore, once a student's **INDEPENDENT** reading level is determined to be above the student's chronological grade, there is **NO NEED** to continue to assess with the DRA at this time.

ONLY assess beyond if a parent or guardian specifically requests in writing such assessment.

Students reading above grade level should certainly use material within their independent and instructional reading levels. Instruction should guide the student to read in a wide variety of genres in books up to and including

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the independent level, For students reading beyond the grade level expectation, teachers should provide a myriad of opportunities for breadth and depth of reading by encouraging the student to read widely, from a variety of genre, including many non-fiction books, magazines, and newspapers, and by a variety of authors. Teachers can provide further instruction and more opportunities for students to participate in analytical and interpretive reading, including a variety of written responses to literature. Introduction to a wide variety of literature at their independent level - genre study, author study, comparative study - is far more productive than having the student read works intended for audience significantly above their chronological age group just because the “can”.

All students should be assessed with CLASSROOM assessments (e.g. running records, reading response journals) on an ongoing basis to ensure progress is being made.

Which DRA Kit do we use for students in Grades 4 and 5 who read below a DRA 40?

Grade 4 and 5 students who are reading below DRA Level 40 may be assessed with the K-3 DRA Kit or the DRA Bridges KIT.

Which DRA Kit do we use for Grade 3 students reading above grade level?

Grade 3 students should be assessed with the K-3 DRA Kit through DRA level 38. If a parent or guardian requests in writing that a student be assessed further, a Grade 3 student could be assessed through an INDEPENDENT level of 44.

Please note: The format of the DRA 4-8 is significantly DIFFERENT from that of the DRA K-3, with the DRA 4-8 requiring a lot of writing in response to reading. Teachers should begin preparing 3rd grade students who scored 38 with Adequate or Very Good comprehension in the DRA K-3 by spending significant instructional time on written responses to reading so that students will not assess lower once in 4th grade simply due to test format.

Is it developmentally appropriate to have to assess reading in Kindergarten?

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The Primary Literacy Standards require Kindergarten students to be on the instructional level of B by the end of the Kindergarten year. In order to achieve that, Kindergarteners must be reading level A by February. While not all Kindergarten students will have an instructional level by November, some will. Those who do should have this reported to their parents/guardians.

Please note: Now that the age of entry to Kindergarten is 5 years old by September 1, many of our Kindergarten students will turn 6 prior to the end of the year. It is developmentally appropriate to expect 6 year olds to read at emergent levels.

If a student is determined to be reading independently above the chronological grade level, and I stop assessing but think s/he can do even more, how do I report the reading levels on the report card?

Why not keep assessing since the DRA score is being used as a grade for report cards, not just as an assessment to drive instruction?

Why should teachers stop assessing when a student reaches end of the year grade level expectations on the DRA?

The DRA is designed to drive instruction. Once a student reaches the end of the year level for the chronological grade, instruction should focus on depth – wide reading of genre and authors, instruction on successful strategies for comprehension, vocabulary development – with books at the end of the year level. Students can choose any “just-right” book (a book they can read without struggling), for independent reading, encouraging reading for pleasure.

Find the correlation of the DRA level to the Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. On the report card, teachers should report the end of the year level as the INDEPENDENT level with an asterisk (*) leading families to the comment section of the report card. In the comments, teachers should reference that the student has met and exceeded the grade level expectations in reading. The next level beyond the end of the year grade level expectation should be reported as the INSTRUCTIONAL level. Grades for each indicator in the reading section of the report card should also indicate that the student reads above the grade level.

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The DRA score is not being used as a grade on the report card, but rather an indication to parents as to where their child reads as compared to the grade level expectations. Reporting the DRA (as correlated to the Fountas and Pinnell levels) on the report card lets parents know where their child stands in relation to the standard.

If a student cannot successfully complete even LEVEL A of the DRA, what is his/her INDEPENDENT level? What is his/her INSTRUCTIONAL level? What do I report on the progress report?

Level A is the lowest level of the DRA. If a student cannot successfully complete Level A, the student is at a PRE-READING stage instructionally and HAS NO INDEPENDENCE for reading.

Both INDEPENDENT and INSTRUCTIONAL level on the report card should receive a (---).

Teachers should further explain the situation (e.g. if the student can identify letters, sounds, letter/sound correspondence, can rhyme, can blend sounds to form words, has any sight words) in the COMMENTS section.

A student in grades 1-5 who cannot successfully complete Level A of the DRA is experiencing significant difficulty learning to read and should have additional support (e.g. TIME teacher, reading specialist, Reading Recovery in Grade 1).

Kindergartners are not expected to achieve Level A until mid-year of the Kindergarten year. The indicators on the Kindergarten report card reflect that.

What is the Bridge Pack?

The DRA Bridge Pack is an extension to the DRA 4-8 kit. It includes a written element similar to the DRA 4-8 kit, but utilizes modified texts from the K-3 alternate kit

What is the purpose of the Bridge Pack? What does the Bridge Pack look like?

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The Bridge Pack provides appropriately leveled materials for middle-childhood (Grades 4-8) students who are reading on second or third grade reading level

It consists of assessment formats that adequately scaffold the reading as well as the responses of these students

The Bridge Pack is similar to the DRA 4-8 kit in that it:

- + Assesses student reading achievement in engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension skills and strategies using appropriately leveled text
- + Consists of texts ranging from level 20 through level 38
- + Includes a writing portion requiring a wide reading survey, a prediction, a scaffolded summary, a short answer section for questions checking for understanding of literal comprehension, interpretation, reflection, and metacognitive awareness

Who would be assessed with the Bridge Kits?

Students in Grades 4-8 who are unable to read a DRA Level 40 or higher

What level of support is appropriate?

Levels 20-28: before the assessment is administered, determine the level of support to provide during the assessment. Some students will dictate all responses, whereas others will dictate some of their responses.

Levels 30-38: after a 5-7 minute student/teacher conference, the student writes all responses in the student booklet (unless an I.E.P. determines that this is not the appropriate way to assess the student)

Should we be grouping “high” and “low” or grouping according to ability? How can you create flexible instruction to suit individual learners?

The premise of Guided Reading is based on Leo Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development – find out where a child is on the learning continuum and teach just a little beyond that point, guiding the child through.

To that end, DRA results allow us to group students in two ways:

- By reading level for comprehension
- By instructional need (particular strategies)

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Should there be uniform testing?

By using the DRA district wide, all teachers have a common language with which to discuss student progress among themselves, with parents, and with district and state administrators.

How does the DRA help determine what reading level to teach?

Students MUST score ADEQUATE (K-3) or INDEPENDENT (4-8) comprehension to be considered INDEPENDENT. Instruction occurs at the NEXT LEVEL UP.

If the student scores SOME comprehension (K-3) or INSTRUCTIONAL (4-8) instruction should occur on THE SAME LEVEL TESTED. Teachers can ASSUME the level immediately below is the independent level.

If the student scores LITTLE comprehension (K-3) or INTERVENTION (4-8) the student should be further assessed with a second DRA on another day.

Please note: If students are consistently scoring LITTLE comprehension (K-3) or INTERVENTION (4-8), the student is most likely being assessed INAPPROPRIATELY. As teachers, be judicious in your choice of assessment level.

If the student makes the same error in oral reading (e.g. *could* for *can*), does the error count as ONE error or does it count as an error EACH time?

Why is *Appeal by Student* not counted as an error if I had to tell the student the word?

If the student makes the same error in oral reading (e.g. *could* for *can*), does the error count as ONE error or does it count as an error EACH time?

A repeated substitution is counted as an error EACH time, except in the case of proper nouns (e.g. *Mary* for *Molly*).

Notice on the *Record of Oral Reading Coding Conventions* that *Appeal by Student* is NOT counted as an error. It is not counted as an error if the student appeals, but then gets the word on his/her own. Once the teacher

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TELLS the word, look to the instructions under *Word Told by Teacher* and
COUNT THE WORD AS AN ERROR.

Do prompts have to be given exactly as stated in the DRA Observation Guide?

How do you score the DRA when you give students these prompts?

No, you do not have to ask the prompts exactly as given. You only need to ask prompts if needed, and you are free to ask any questions that are necessary. There is a space on the Observation Guide labeled Record Any Other Questions Asked for teachers to use for any of their own questions.

The only thing to keep in mind is that the teachers should not ask any questions that provide the student with information. An example for A Giant in the Forest would be: Did the boy put the baby bird back in the nest? Obviously, this would not be a "legal" question.

You score the entire retell- what was given before and after the prompts. The child will be penalized in the last line of the rubric for the number of questions that were asked. Some children, especially those new to DRA and retelling, will need more prompts. The ultimate goal is for children to require no prompts, but sometimes they do need them- especially when DRA is first put into place. If a student doesn't know part of the story, there isn't a legal question in the world that you can ask that will make them know it. All a prompt does is provide support/scaffolding for the student to access the information that is already in his or her head. A child who needs 4 or 5 prompts, but still receives a score of 16 on the rubric is comprehending the story. He or she need lots of support, and I would make retelling a huge priority for that child's reading instruction. The child has the information in his or her head, but needs to be taught an effective way of retrieving it. I would look at the Focus for Instruction for strategies to help in instruction.

Which students need Personal Literacy Plans?

The protocol for determining whether a student needs a PLP can be found in the white binder behind the first orange tab.

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The levels listed on the protocol are what students **MUST** achieve by the benchmark points. If they **MEET** those levels, they **DO NOT** need a PLP. If they are **BELOW** those levels, they need a PLP.

The levels listed on the PLP protocol are **INDEPENDENT** levels (e.g. Grade 2 is supposed to read Level L independently by the end of the year. Level L is DRA 24).

It should be noted that the guidelines listed are still **BELOW** the standard. Students at those levels, while not requiring a PLP, are still working below the expected level and should be carefully and closely monitored. Teachers **MAY** want to complete a PLP for those students as well.

In the secondary school (middle and high), students reading 3 or more years below grade level will need a PLP.

Why write Personal Literacy Plans?

PLPs should be viewed as valuable tools for planning for student achievement. PLPs allow us to focus on specific needs as identified in assessments.

The PLP guideline protocol paper gives very specific details on who gets a PLP based on the DRA score each trimester. Some teachers are writing PLPs based on NECAP scores.

1) Is a teacher required to write a PLP if the student's DRA score is above the scores detailed on the protocol sheet?

2) If a classroom teacher chooses to write a PLP when it's not required under the WED protocol, do other staff members servicing the child need to add to the PLP that wasn't required to be written under the WED protocol?

RIDE's guidance on PLPs states "If a child reads below...". The WED has defined "below" as delineated on the PLP Protocol. However, the legislation that the PLP is designed to address states more specifically that districts are required to review state assessment scores and provide assistance to any student not meeting the standard.

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Given that, classroom teachers and other professional support service staff members in the Woonsocket Education Department:

- Must write a PLP for any child falling within the Woonsocket Education Department PLP Protocol.
- May write a PLP for any child not attaining a 3 on the reading and/or writing NECAP
 - Each professional may make the decision for him/herself (e.g. the classroom teacher may write a PLP, but other service providers may choose not to, or vice versa)
- If a parent requests a PLP for a student who did not attain standard on the reading and/or writing NECAP, all service providers and classroom teachers must write a PLP.
- While the Woonsocket Education Department has developed protocols to help teachers determine which students need a PLP, please remember:
 - A classroom teacher is the best judge of a student's progress. If a classroom teacher is concerned, there should be a written plan in place to address the student's needs even if the student reads above the guideline set in the protocol.
 - Take into account the student's NECAP scores. If the student scored a 1 or a 2 on the NECAP, there is reason to believe that the student is experiencing some difficulties. This is particularly so for a student who scored a 1 or a 2 with a Scaled Score below 335, 435, or 535. Please note that 340, 440, and 540 indicate Proficient performance.

On the top part of the front page of the PLP it lists:

“words #.....letters___/26....sounds___/26”.

Vowels have multiple sounds and so do some consonants. Which 26 letter sounds are children supposed to have?

At least one correct sound for each letter.

What is the role of the reading specialist in developing PLPs?

At the elementary school level, the classroom teacher initiates the PLP.

Each service provider will then complete their own Action Plan for the PLPs.

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The Action Plan will consist of the form entitled *Analysis of Strengths and Instructional Needs* and the *Action Steps* form. The PLPs should be written based on as much assessment data as is available, so the classroom teacher will write his/her action plan based on DRA information, while the reading specialist might write his/her plan based on a running record or other assessment.

At the secondary school level, the reading specialist is responsible for the writing of the PLP.

What are PLP timelines?

PLPs must be written at the beginning of the year (playing off of the previous year's PLP if it exists), at the end of the first trimester, at the end of the second trimester, and at the end of the year (as information for the receiving teacher).

In June, for a child who has a PLP and needs further support during the following school year, what is the current classroom teacher's responsibility in the PLP process?

The current classroom teacher should record the June's DRA score in the *Data Analysis* section, describe the results of the intervention in the *Progress Monitoring and Intervention Results* section, and check off *New PLP* in the last section of this student's current PLP. The current classroom teacher should then complete the first page of a new PLP form for this student. The receiving classroom teacher who will be teaching the student during the next school year, together with any other service providers, will complete the back page (Action Plan) for this student.