



Assessment: Placement and Grouping

Introduction

This guide explains how to assess students for placement in *Words Their Way™: Word Study in Action*. It describes how to administer, score, and analyze the results of spelling inventories. This guide also discusses how to group students to monitor their growth within the program.

Assessment for Placement

The authors of the program believe that all effective instruction begins with assessment that tells us what students know, what they're missing, or what they're using incorrectly. In order to maximize their growth, students must be assessed so they can be properly placed. In *Words Their Way: Word Study in Action*, there are two options for placement. Students can be placed according to the spelling developmental stages or by specific grade level. The best option for the classroom is based on personal preference or district guidelines.

Developmental Placement

The professional development book *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction* provides three generally leveled assessments, or spelling inventories, to help determine each student's developmental spelling stage. Knowledge of each student's stage will help with instructional planning and proper student placement.

Spelling Inventories

Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction has spelling inventories for primary, elementary, and upper-level grades. They are found in Appendix A of this professional development text. These spelling inventories are used to help group students by spelling developmental stage. They contain lists of words that were chosen to represent a variety of spelling features at increasing levels of difficulty. These features might include consonants, digraphs, blends, short vowels, and so forth. They relate directly to the stages of spelling development. The words in the spelling inventories are designed to demonstrate students' knowledge of these key spelling features at the different stages of spelling development.

APPENDIX A

Assessment Materials

General Directions for Administering the Inventories

Students should not study the words in advance of testing. Assure students that they will not be graded on this activity, and that they will be helping you plan for their needs. Following is a possible introduction to the assessment.

I am going to ask you to spell some words. Spell them the best you can. Some of the words may be easy to spell; some may be difficult. When you do not know how to spell a word, spell it the best you can.

Ask students to number their paper (or prepare a numbered paper for kindergarten or early first grade). Call each word aloud and repeat it. Say each word naturally, without emphasizing phonemes or syllables. Use it in a sentence, if necessary, to be sure students know the exact word. Sample sentences are provided along with the words. After administering the inventory, use a Feature Guide, Class Composite Form, and, if desired, a Spelling-by-Stage Classroom Organization Chart to complete your assessment. An Error Guide form is available on the Assessment CD-ROM.

Scoring the Inventory Using the Feature Guides

1. Make a copy of the appropriate Feature Guide (PSI p. 267, ESI p. 271, USI p. 274) for each student. Draw a line under the last word called if you called fewer than the total number and adjust the possible total points at the bottom of each feature column.
2. Score the words by checking off the features spelled correctly that are listed in the cells to the left of each word. For example, if a student spells *bed* as *bad*, he gets a check in the initial *b* cell and the final *d* cell, but not for the short vowel. Write in the vowel used (*a*, in this case), but do not give any points for it. If a student spells *train* as *trane*, she gets a check in the initial *tr* cell and the final *n* cell, but not for the long vowel pattern. Write in the vowel pattern used (*a-e* in this case), but do not give any points for it. Put a check in the "Correct" column if the word is spelled correctly. Do not count reversed letters as errors but note them in the cells. If unnecessary letters are added, give the speller credit for what is correct (e.g., if *bed* is spelled *bedr*, the student still gets credit for representing the short vowel), but do not check "Correct" spelling.
3. Add the number of checks under each feature and across each word, double-checking the total score recorded in the last cell. Modify the ratios in the last row depending on the number of words called aloud.

Interpreting the Results of the Spelling Inventory

1. Look down each feature column to determine instructional needs. Students who miss only one (or two, if the features sample 8 to 10 words) can go on to other

Primary Spelling Inventory (PSI)

1. fan	I could use a fan on a hot day. <i>fan</i>
2. pet	I have a pet cat who likes to play. <i>pet</i>
3. dig	He will dig a hole in the sand. <i>dig</i>
4. rob	A raccoon will rob a bird's nest for eggs. <i>rob</i>
5. hope	I hope you will do well on this test. <i>hope</i>
6. wait	You will need to wait for the letter. <i>wait</i>
7. gum	I stepped on some bubble gum. <i>gum</i>
8. sled	The dog sled was pulled by huskies. <i>sled</i>
9. stick	I used a stick to poke in the hole. <i>stick</i>
10. shine	He rubbed the coin to make it shine. <i>shine</i>
11. dream	I had a funny dream last night. <i>dream</i>
12. blade	The blade of the knife was very sharp. <i>blade</i>
13. coach	The coach called the team off the field. <i>coach</i>
14. fright	She was a fright in her Halloween costume. <i>fright</i>
15. chewed	The dog chewed on the bone until it was gone. <i>chewed</i>
16. crawl	You will get dirty if you crawl under the bed. <i>crawl</i>
17. wishes	In fairy tales wishes often come true. <i>wishes</i>
18. thorn	The thorn from the rosebush stuck me. <i>thorn</i>
19. shouted	They shouted at the barking dog. <i>shouted</i>
20. spoil	The food will spoil if it sits out too long. <i>spoil</i>
21. growl	The dog will growl if you bother him. <i>growl</i>
22. third	I was the third person in line. <i>third</i>
23. camped	We camped down by the river last weekend. <i>camped</i>
24. tries	He tries hard every day to finish his work. <i>tries</i>
25. clapping	The audience was clapping after the program. <i>clapping</i>
26. riding	They are riding their bikes to the park today. <i>riding</i>

The Primary Spelling Inventory, or PSI, can be used in kindergarten through third grade. The Upper-Level Spelling Inventory, or USI, can be used in upper elementary, middle school, high school, and postsecondary classrooms. If a school system wants to use the same inventory across all elementary grades, they can use the Elementary Spelling Inventory, or ESI. This surveys a range of spelling features throughout the elementary grades, specifically first through sixth grade.

Administering Spelling Inventories

These inventories are administered like traditional spelling tests, but there are some significant differences. Unlike traditional spelling tests, students should not study the words before the assessment. They should also be reassured that they are not graded on the activity.

To begin a spelling inventory, students are asked to number their paper. If students are in kindergarten or early first grade, teachers can prepare a numbered paper for students.

Each word is called aloud and repeated once. The words are spoken naturally, without emphasis on phonemes or syllables. If necessary, teachers can also use a sentence with the word in it to make sure the students know the exact word.

If students struggle with the inventory, teachers can administer a lower-level inventory. The inventory can be given to students as a whole group or in small groups. The results of the inventory can be used to get a general picture of each student's spelling development.

Word	Student Spelling	Word Correct
1 bed	bed	✓
2 ship	ship	✓
3 when	when	✓
4 lump	lump	✓
5 float	float	✓
6 train	train	✓
7 place	place	✓
8 drive	drive	✓
9 bright	bright	✓
10 throat	throat	✓
11 spoil	spoil	✓
12 serving	serving	✓
13 chewed	chewed	✓
14 carries	carries	✓
15 marched	marched	✓
16 shower	shour	
17 bottle	bottle	✓
18 favor	faver	
19 ripen	ripen	
20 cellar	sellar	
21 pleasure	pleseure	
22 fortunate	fortunade	
23 confident	confedent	
24 civilize	civilise	
25 opposition	oposition	

Scoring and Analyzing Results

Once the appropriate inventory has been administered, teachers need to set aside time to complete the feature guide for each student. These guides are found in Appendix A of *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction*. The feature guide helps analyze and classify student errors, confirm the developmental stages, and pinpoint specific areas for instruction.

Words Their Way Elementary Spelling Inventory Feature Guide															
Student's Name _____			Teacher _____			Grade _____			Date _____						
Words Spelled Correctly: ___ / 25			Feature Points: ___ / 62			Total: ___ / 87			Spelling Stage: _____						
SPELLING STAGES →	EMERGENT		LETTER NAME-ALPHABETIC			WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES AND AFFIXES			DERIVATIONAL RELATIONS			Words Spelled Correctly
	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	Feature points		
Features →	Consonants Initial	Consonants Final	Short Vowels	Digraphs	Blends	Long Vowels	Other Vowels	Inflected Endings	Syllable Junctures	Unaccented Final Syllables	Harder Suffixes	Bases or Roots	Feature points	Words Spelled Correctly	
1. bed	b	d	e												
2. ship		p	i	sh											
3. when			e	wh											
4. lump	l		u		mp										
5. float		t			fl	oa									
6. train		n			tr	ai									
7. place					pl	a-e									
8. drive		v			dr	i-e									
9. bright					br	igh i-e									
10. shopping			o	sh				pping							
11. spoil					sp		oi oy								
12. serving							er	ving							
13. chewed				ch			ew oo	ed							
14. carries							ar	ies	rr						
15. marched				ch			ar	ed							

- 16. shower
- 17. bottle
- 18. favor
- 19. ripen
- 20. cellar
- 21. pleasure
- 22. fortunate
- 23. confident
- 24. civilize
- 25. opposition
- Totals

Words Their Way Elementary Spelling Inventory Feature Guide															
Student's Name <u>Jake Fisher</u>			Teacher <u>T. Atkinson</u>			Grade <u>5</u>			Date <u>September</u>						
Words Spelled Correctly: <u>9</u> / 25			Feature Points: <u>43</u> / 62			Total: <u>52</u> / 87			Spelling Stage: <u>Late Within Word Pattern</u>						
SPELLING STAGES →	EMERGENT		LETTER NAME-ALPHABETIC			WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES AND AFFIXES			DERIVATIONAL RELATIONS			Words Spelled Correctly
	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	Feature points		
Features →	Consonants Initial	Consonants Final	Short Vowels	Digraphs	Blends	Long Vowels	Other Vowels	Inflected Endings	Syllable Junctures	Unaccented Final Syllables	Harder Suffixes	Bases or Roots	Feature points	Words Spelled Correctly	
1. bed	b ✓	d ✓	e ✓										3	1	
2. ship		p ✓	i ✓	sh ✓									3	1	
3. when			e ✓	wh ✓									2	1	
4. lump	l ✓		u ✓		mp ✓								3	1	
5. float		t ✓			fl ✓	oa ✓							3	1	
6. train		n ✓			tr ✓	ai ✓							3	1	
7. place					pl ✓	a-e ✓							2	1	
8. drive		v ✓			dr ✓	i-e ✓							3	1	
9. bright					br ✓	igh i-e							1		
10. shopping			o ✓	sh ✓				pping					2		
11. spoil					sp ✓		oi oy						1		
12. serving							er ✓	ving ✓					2	1	
13. chewed				ch ✓			ew oo	ed ✓					2		
14. carries							ar ✓	ies	rr				1		
15. marched				ch ✓			ar ✓	ed ✓					3		
16. shower				sh ✓			ow ✓				er ✓		3		
17. bottle									tt ✓	le			1		
18. favor									v ✓	or			1		
19. ripen									p	en					
20. cellar									ll	ar ✓			1		
21. pleasure											ure	pleas ✓	1		
22. fortunate							or ✓				ate ✓	fortun	2		
23. confident											ent	confid			
24. civilize											ize	civil			
25. opposition											tion	pos			
Totals			7/17	5/15	6/16	7/17	4/15	5/17	3/15	2/15	2/15	1/15	1/15	43	9

For detailed instructions to help complete the feature guide, teachers should refer to Chapter 2, Getting Started: The Assessment of Orthographic Development in the professional development text *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction*.

Forming Groups

Students can be grouped for instruction according to the spelling developmental stages or by specific grade level. Student groups can be further differentiated by the three additional stages within each developmental stage or grade level. These stages are early, middle, and late. The chart found in the Teacher Resource Guide in Levels K through C can help decide where to place each child in each grade level.

	Early	Middle	Late
Level K (On-level Grade K)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawing and scribbling for writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters, numbers, and letter-like forms Writing may wrap from right to left at the end of a line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substitutions of letters that sound, feel, and look alike: <i>Bp, Db</i>
Level A (On-level Grade 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters based on point of articulation: J, JRF for <i>drive</i> Often long vowels by letter name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substitutions of letter name closest in point of articulation for short vowels Some consonant blends and digraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substitutions of common patterns for low frequency short vowels: COT for <i>caught</i>
Level B (On-level Grade 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long vowel markers: SNAIK for <i>snake</i>, FELE for <i>feel</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long vowel markers: NITE for <i>night</i> Consonant patterns: SMOCK for <i>smoke</i> Inventive substitutions in frequent, unstressed syllable patterns: TEACHAUR for <i>teacher</i> -ed and other common inflections: MARCHT for <i>marched</i>, BATID for <i>batted</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low frequency long vowel words: HIEGHT for <i>height</i> -ed and other common inflections Common Latin suffixes are spelled phonetically: ATTENSHUN for <i>attention</i>
Level C (On-level Grade 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consonant doubling: HOPING for <i>hopping</i> Long vowel patterns in accented syllable: PERAIDING or PERADDING for <i>parading</i> Reduced vowel in unaccented syllable: CIRCUL for <i>circle</i> Doubling and e drop: AMAZZING for <i>amazing</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some silent letters: EMFASIZE for <i>emphasize</i>, INDITEMENT for <i>indictment</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some suffixes and prefixes: ATTENSION for <i>attention</i>, PERTEND for <i>pretend</i> Vowel alternation in derivationally related pairs: COMPOSITION for <i>composition</i> Consonant alternations in derivationally related pairs: SPACIAL for <i>spatial</i>

Monitoring Student Growth

Groups in the program should be fluid and flexible, and student progress should be monitored regularly. Weekly assessments and Spell Checks are provided in each level of the program to monitor student progress. The Spell Checks are found in the back of the Word Study Notebook. Teachers can use the results of the Spell Checks to plan for individual or small-group instruction.

 Say the name of each picture. Write the capital and lowercase letter that stands for the beginning sound.

SPELL CHECK 1

1.  _____ _____ _____	2.  _____ _____ _____	3.  _____ _____ _____	4.  _____ _____ _____
5.  _____ _____ _____	6.  _____ _____ _____	7.  _____ _____ _____	8.  _____ _____ _____
9.  _____ _____ _____	10.  _____ _____ _____	11.  _____ _____ _____	12.  _____ _____ _____
13.  _____ _____ _____	14.  _____ _____ _____	15.  _____ _____ _____	16.  _____ _____ _____
17.  _____ _____ _____	18.  _____ _____ _____	19.  _____ _____ _____	20.  _____ _____ _____

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Spell Check 1: Beginning Consonants (155)

Review

This guide explained how to assess students for placement in *Words Their Way: Word Study in Action*. It described how to administer, score, and analyze the results of spelling inventories. The guide also discussed how to group students to monitor their growth within the program.

For more information on *Words Their Way: Word Study in Action*, please look for the other tutorials on myPearsonTraining.com.