

CORE Reading Maze Comprehension Test

SKILL ASSESSED

Reading
Comprehension

Grade Level

2-10

Language

English

Grouping

Individual/Group

Approximate Testing Time

3 Minutes

Materials

- a copy of the appropriate passage
- a stopwatch
- pencils

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► **WHAT** A maze reading assessment is a task that measures how well students understand text they read silently. The maze task differs from traditional comprehension in that it is based completely on the text. After the first sentence, every seventh word in the passage is replaced with the correct word and two distracters. Students choose the word from among the three choices that fits best with the rest of the passage.

► **WHY** Capable readers understand the syntax of what they read and the meanings of the words as they are used in the text. Some students with reading difficulties can't comprehend what they read well enough to choose words based on semantic and syntactic accuracy. A maze reading assessment can identify these students and measure changes in their reading behaviors as the result of instruction or practice.

► **HOW** Students read one passage that has been modified in a specific way. The first sentence of the passage is left intact to provide a meaningful start to the reading. For the rest of the passage, every seventh word is replaced with parentheses in which are found the correct word from the passage and two distracters arranged randomly. The student circles one word within the parentheses that makes sense with the rest of the passage.

Neither of the distracters maintains the meaning of the passage. One is a near distracter that is the same part of speech or otherwise resembles the correct word. The other is a far distracter that is chosen randomly from a pool of words that are comparable to the words in the passage.

The length of the passages varies from around 150 to 400 words; the passage is chosen depending on the grade placement or reading

ability of the student. The student has three minutes to complete the task (reading the passage). The student's score is the number of correct words circled in three minutes. The grade levels and titles of the passages are shown below. For each grade, two equivalent passages (A and B) are provided; these may be used for pre- / post-testing and/or progress monitoring. Passages are provided starting on page 158.

A Teaching Passage is also provided (on page 156) to use with students who may not understand the task initially; you may use that passage (and that passage only) to teach the task if necessary.

Administration instructions to be used with the teaching passage are on page 155.

List of Passages at each Grade Level		
Grade	A	B
2	A City Walk	Rabbits in the Garden
3	Their First Train Ride	The Fish Kite
4	Playing the Game	The Best Picture
5	The Big Move	A Great Day
6	Not So Boring	The Morning News
7	The People at the Top of the Hill	The Islanders
8	Basketball Saturday	The Perfect Trip
9	A Circle of Friends	A Strange Place to Practice
10	Their First Century	College Girl

Give each student a copy of the appropriate maze passage. Be sure each student has a pencil. Have the students write their names and the date on the page. Ask the students to put the passage face-down on the desk. Read the directions below to the students.

Say: For this activity, you will read a special kind of story. Some of the words in the story have been replaced with a group of three words. You are to decide which word in each group fits best in the story. You will circle the word you think is best.

Be sure the students understand the task. (You may restate the directions, if necessary).

Say: *When I tell you to begin, read the story to yourself. When you come to each group of three words, circle the word that fits best with the rest of the story. Work quickly, but not so fast that you make mistakes. Think about the word in each group that is correct. Circle this word and continue working. If you see the words GO ON at the bottom of a page, go on to the next page.*

You will have three minutes. After three minutes, I will say "Stop working." If you finish before the three minutes are up, you can check your work. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions the students have.) Turn your papers over. You may begin.

Start timing and allow three minutes. Check the students as they work to be sure the students understand the task, but do not help them choose any answers. For passages that are more than one page long, remind the students to go on to the next page when they see the words "GO ON".

When three minutes have elapsed, say: *Stop working now. Thank you for completing the activity.*

Collect the completed maze assessments.

Compare the student's responses to the answer key (provided on pages 176-180) for the passage. Count any correct answer that is circled, underlined, or otherwise indicated. Put a check beside each correct response and a line through each incorrect response. Record the number of correct responses and number of errors on the corresponding lines at the bottom of the page.

For ninth and tenth grade students, use eighth grade scoring.

An example of a scored passage is provided on page 157.

Scoring the Maze Reading Assessment

Grade	Performance	Fall	Winter	Spring
2	Benchmark	4	10	13
	Strategic	2	6	9
	Intensive	1	3	5
3	Benchmark	11	13	15
	Strategic	8	9	10
	Intensive	5	6	7
4	Benchmark	13	16	19
	Strategic	10	12	14
	Intensive	5	8	9
5	Benchmark	15	17	20
	Strategic	12	15	18
	Intensive	8	10	12
6	Benchmark	16	18	21
	Strategic	10	13	14
	Intensive	7	9	10
7	Benchmark	17	19	22
	Strategic	13	14	15
	Intensive	9	10	12
8	Benchmark	18	20	22
	Strategic	14	15	17
	Intensive	10	11	13

▶ WHAT IT MEANS The results of the maze assessment are reported as the number of correct replacements. This measure is consistent across assessment passages and grades, so a student's understanding of the text can be compared to prior or subsequent assessments and with other students in the same grade. A student with few correct responses may be experiencing reading difficulties, so the measure can be used for screening. Over time, the number of correct responses should increase as the student is able to read more text in the same period of time and understand it better.

The scoring table on p.153 shows typical grade-level expectations for the number of correct replacements in a maze assessment. If the assessment is used for screening purposes, a reasonable guideline is that students whose score is significantly lower than expected (about half of the values shown in the table), will probably be having reading difficulties. If scores fall between those shown on the scoring table, teachers should take into account other sources of information in order to make instructional decisions.

For progress monitoring purposes, the maze assessment may be used more than once if the students receive no feedback about their responses. Goal setting can be accomplished using the information in the table. Typical students will show a score increase from the beginning to the end of the school year.

► **WHAT'S NEXT?** A useful strategy to improve students' understanding of text is to pair reading with comprehension checks through peer questions, summarization, or retelling. Another good strategy is to create practice maze passages or have the students create the passages. Have the students collaborate to read the passages and choose the correct words. Ask the students to explain to one another why the correct answer fits best with the rest of the selection. If capable cross-age or adult readers are available, they can discuss why certain words don't fit because they are the wrong part of speech and why others don't match the meaning of the text.

**Teaching Passage
Administration
(Optional)**

Use this passage to teach the task to some younger students or older students with reading difficulties who may need a practice (teaching) activity before attempting the maze assessment. For these students, duplicate the teaching passage on page 156 and distribute it to the student/s. Be sure each student has a pencil. The directions are below.

Say: For this activity, you will read a special kind of story. Some of the words in the story have been replaced with a group of three words. You are to decide which word in each group fits best in the story. You will circle the word you think is best.

We will begin with the practice story I gave you. Read the first sentence to yourself while I read it out loud.

The bird landed on the ground.

Now read the second sentence.

It picked up a piece of (book, grass, tired) in its bill.

The word grass fits best with the rest of the story. Draw a circle around the word grass. (Check to be sure the students have circled the correct word.)

Let's read the next sentence.

The bird flew (back, when, shirt) to its nest.

Which word fits best in the sentence? (Encourage a volunteer to choose the correct answer.) Yes, the word back is correct. Draw a circle around the word back.

For the last sentence, I want you to read it to yourself and circle the word that fits best in the sentence. Work quickly, but not so fast that you make mistakes. Now read the sentence and circle the word. (Allow time for the students to read the sentence and circle the word.)

The third word, the, is correct. If you circled another word, cross out your answer and circle the now.

Check to be sure the students have circled the correct answer. It may be helpful to read the passage aloud with the correct words in place to ensure that the students understand the task.

Teaching Passage

The bird landed on the ground.

It picked up a piece of (book, grass, tired) in its bill.

The bird flew (back, when, shirt) to its nest with the grass.

(Rug, So, The) nest was in a tall pine tree.



Example of a
Scored Passage

A City Walk

The light changed to green, and Ted and his mother walked across the street. They were on their way to (for, the met) food store.

Ted liked walking to (and, is, the) store. The city was a busy (place, hat, want). He saw lots of different things. (Them, He, Say) also saw many of the people (bad, fat, who) worked near his house.

“Hello Ted, (once, hello, you) Mrs. Gomez,” said Mr. Hill. He (grow, happy, was) standing outside his store. He sold (books, name, stay). On rainy days after school, Ted (bark, would, cold) visit the store. Mr. Hill would (show, ride, frog) him books that he thought Ted (got, glad, would) like.

A little bit later, the (mat, two, soon) of them reached the food store. (Mrs., How, Noise) King ran the store, and she (but, truck, always) had a special treat for Ted. (Today, Little, Paint), she gave him some fresh grapes. (day, be, Ted) thanked her and shared the grapes (out, with, fish) his mother. She said they were (just, the, chair) best grapes she had ever tasted. (Ted, Girl, See) thought they were really good, too. (Let, Cry, Then) Ted and his mother got a (duck, cart, late) and started their shopping.

Number Correct 11 Number of Errors 3