

Giving the Nonsense Word Test: Quick Guide

You need two copies of the test (yours to mark, a clean one for the student), a pencil, a folder to hide your copy, and a timer. Test in a quiet corner.

- **Never say whether a word is right or wrong.** No “good,” no nods. Say “OK” or “Keep going” and point to the next word.
- **Mark an X over a missed word.** If the student fixes it on their own, write **S/C** (self-correct). It counts as right.
- **Didn’t hear it?** Put your finger under the word and say, “Can you read that one to me again?”
- **Lost their place?** Put your finger under the word they should read next.

Nonsense Word Test

Say	“These are made-up words. Sound out each one and read it as well as you can.”
Timing	Use one version (A, B, or C) of 25 words. Time the whole list. Use a different version for the after test.
Score	Accuracy % = number correct $\times$ 4. WPM = $1500 \div$ seconds (or use the chart on the test).
Goals	Age 12 to adult: 100 WPM, 100%. Age 11: 95 WPM, 100%. Age 10: 90 WPM, 100%. Age 9: 80 WPM, 95%. Age 8: 70 WPM, 90%. Age 7: 60 WPM, 90%. Age 6: 40 WPM, 85%.

Nonsense Word Test

Testing nonsense word accuracy and fluency will help you figure out if the Syllables Spell Success program, followed by nonsense word training, is likely to improve reading speed and accuracy.

Every word on this test is made up. None is a real English word, but each one follows a real English spelling pattern, so a student who knows the patterns can sound it out.

Goals

Age	Words per minute	Accuracy
12 to adult	100	100%
11	95	100%
10	90	100%
9	80	95%
8	70	90%
7	60	90%
6	40	85%

Anyone reading below the goal for their age should benefit from the syllables program and nonsense word training.

Scoring

Each version has 25 words. Time how long the student takes to read the whole list, in seconds, and count the words missed.

Accuracy: multiply the number correct by 4. For example, 20 correct is 80%, and 24 correct is 96%.

Words per minute (WPM) = words read $\times$ 60 $\div$ time in seconds. Since each version has 25 words:

$$\text{WPM} = 1500 \div \text{time in seconds}$$

Or use the chart on the next page.

Words per Minute Chart

Find the time in seconds to get the WPM. For example, 1 minute 20 seconds = 60 + 20 = 80 seconds, which is 19 WPM.

Seconds	WPM	Seconds	WPM	Seconds	WPM	Seconds	WPM
11	136	25	60	39-40	38	62-63	24
12	125	26	58	41	37	64-66	23
13	115	27	56	42	36	67-69	22
14	107	28	54	43	35	70-73	21
15	100	29	52	44	34	74-76	20
16	94	30	50	45-46	33	77-81	19
17	88	31	48	47	32	82-85	18
18	83	32	47	48-49	31	86-90	17
19	79	33	45	50	30	91-96	16
20	75	34	44	51-52	29	97-103	15
21	71	35	43	53-54	28	104-111	14
22	68	36	42	55-56	27	112-120	13
23	65	37	41	57-58	26	121-130	12
24	63	38	39	59-61	25		

The words are on the next page. Use one version for a test. There are 3 versions, so you can use one before teaching and a different one after.

For more testing, use 40L's extra nonsense words document. It has 20 pages of the same type of nonsense words in groups of 25.

Version A

cloat	phreb	brigh	greep	vop
clude	clake	phrike	blettle	ept
yeem	freep	blisk	gleep	yuff
thrune	slen	theed	phroast	crice
geb	jash	brettle	plice	blar

Version B

zupt	thund	vuff	threep	frool
clun	ift	sict	phlype	brist
gresk	therb	stee	drute	swoak
puct	jeft	crell	jad	thrane
teft	yeeb	zusk	shrusp	praw

Version C

glail	swoke	froan	therk	clor
trab	splact	bloist	prain	tizzle
druke	sprin	drept	phlape	smeep
zerm	yint	droat	vack	yube
onk	vash	ulk	sprid	ruct