## Teachers College Reading and Writing Project

## Benchmarks for Oral Reading Rate - Words per Minute

Our assessment for Oral Reading Rate is one that assumes fluency, as in, we are checking the rate at which a reader reads with accuracy, intonation and meaningful phrasing. The reader should be in an appropriate level text, therefore.

| Reading Level | Level 1 Needs Support <br> May indicate that the reader should be in easier texts, and/or needs fluency support-see p. 2 | $\underline{\text { Level 2 }}$ Approaches Standards $\frac{\text { Fluency instruction }}{\text { needed - see page 2 of }}$ $\underline{\text { this packet }}$ | $\frac{\text { Level 3 }}{\text { Meets Standards }}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Level 4 } \\ \text { Exceeds Standards } \end{gathered}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| J | 44 wpm or less | 45-54 wpm | 55-85 wpm | 86 wpm or more |
| K | 54 wpm or less | 55-64 wpm | 65-95 wpm | 96 wpm or more |
| L | 59 wpm or less | 60-69 wpm | 70-100 wpm | 101 wpm or more |
| M | 64 wpm or less | 65-74 wpm | 75-105 wpm | 106 wpm or more |
| N | 64 wpm or less | 65-79 wpm | 80-110 wpm | 111 wpm or more |
| O | 64 wpm or less | 65-79 wpm | 80-115 wpm | 116 wpm or more |
| P | 69 wpm or less | 70-89 wpm | 90-125 wpm | 126 wpm or more |
| Q | 74 wpm or less | 75-104 wpm | 105-140 wpm | 141 wpm or more |
| R | 74 wpm or less | 75-104 wpm | 105-145 wpm | 146 wpm or more |
| S | 79 wpm or less | 80-109 wpm | 110-145 wpm | 146 wpm or more |
| T | 84 wpm or less | 85-114 wpm | 115-150 wpm | 151 wpm or more |
| U | 84 wpm or less | 85-114 wpm | 115-150 wpm | 151 wpm or more |
| V | 84 wpm or less | 85-114 wpm | 115-150 wpm | 151 wpm or more |
| W | 89 wpm or less | 90-124 wpm | 125-160 wpm | 161 wpm or more |
| X | 89 wpm or less | 90-124 wpm | 125-160 wpm | 161 wpm or more |
| Y | 89 wpm or less | 90-124 wpm | 125-160 wpm | 161 wpm or more |
| Z | 99 wpm or less | 100-129 wpm | 130-165 wpm | 166 wpm or more |

Source: These oral fluency numbers are based upon "Oral Reading Rates" found in the DRA2 Teacher Guide K-3 and 4-8 (Developmental Reading Assessment) by Joetta M. Beaver and Mark A. Carter, Ph.D., 2006, Pearson Education, Inc.

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## Why Oral Reading Rate matters:

Oral reading rate, when it assesses fluent reading, is a measure of word recognition automaticity (the ability to recognize words automatically). It is an indicator of potential reading volume and a predictor of comprehension.

## If a student performs at Level 1 in Oral Reading Rate:

Almost by definition the reader cannot in fact read this text with accuracy, comprehension and fluency and needs to be reading a just right text.

When students read very slowly, it is an indicator of compromised fluency, accuracy, and/or comprehension and probably the student is not well-matched to the level of book he or she is reading. The first step for most students scoring at Level 1 would be to reassess the reading level. You could look again at notes from your assessment of the student's independent reading level. Does the running record indicate that the student is reading with $96 \%$ to $100 \%$ accuracy or better? Does the retell of the passage indicate a strong understanding of the passage? Was the student able to answer three of the four comprehension questions correctly? Was the passage read with features of level three or four fluency as noted in the fluency scoring guide?

If the child did, indeed, read with high comprehension and accuracy, and the intonation for fluency was appropriate, but he or she reads aloud very slowly, then you could work on the automaticity work we recommend for Level 2 range readers. You might also compare the student's oral and silent reading rates, while checking comprehension. It is possible that some English Language Learners may be reading silently with comprehension, but when they read aloud to you, their fluency and oral rate are low. These children probably need to hold two levels of books then - see below.

## If a student performs in the Level 2 range of Oral Reading Rate:

This student needs support in reading with automaticity. One recommendation is that the student has two books going simultaneously. One book is the independent reading book; the other book is a book for fluency practice.

The fluency practice book is at a level in which the student scores in the level 3 range for oral reading rate. This is the book in which the student will practice strategies for fluent reading. For example: a student might have a level K book for independent reading and a level J book for practicing fluency. In short - the independent book is at the independent reading level and the fluency practice book is at a level in which the student scores in the level 3 range on the oral reading rate scale.

