

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.

<b>Reading Level</b>	<b>Level 1 Needs Support</b>  <b><u>May indicate that the reader should be in easier texts, and/or needs fluency support– see p. 2</u></b>	<b>Level 2 Approaches Standards</b>  <b><u>Fluency instruction needed – see page 2 of this packet</u></b>	<b>Level 3 Meets Standards</b>	<b>Level 4 Exceeds Standards</b>
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.