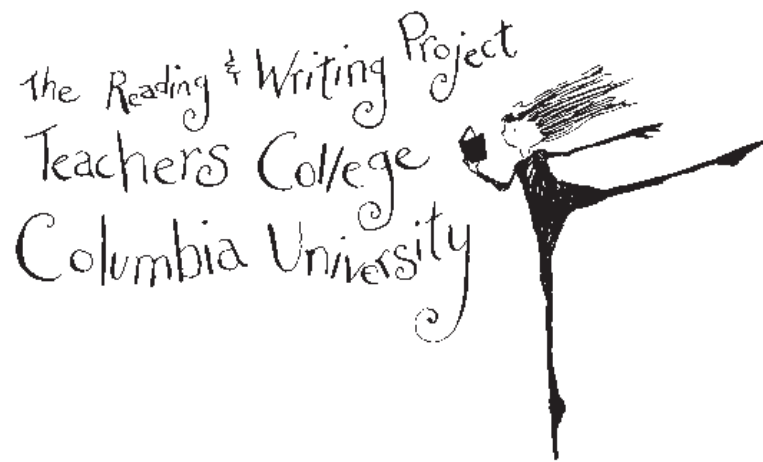


**Levels A-K**  
**Reading Assessments**



Teachers College Reading and Writing Project  
Levels A-K Reading Assessments

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**Special thanks to:**

Jackie Allen-Joseph, Literacy Coach PS 230  
Kristin Beers, PS 29  
Susan Beshel, PS 183  
Karen Bracken, PS 24  
Linda Chen, PS 165  
Maureen Farah, PS 503  
Lauren Fontana, Principal, PS 6  
Glenda M. Francis, PS 24  
Leah Grossman, Literacy Coach, Secondary School for Research  
Alison Hass, The Children's School (PS 372)  
Elizabeth Heisner, PS 321  
Kelly Holt, PS 116 or Kelly Holt, PS 183  
Danielle Iacoviello, PS 503  
Jeanne Jahr, PS 321  
Teresa Keeler, PS 503  
Megan Lawless, Teachers College  
Laurie Lebowitz, Literacy Coach, Brooklyn School for Global Studies  
Theresa Luongo, Literacy Coach, Central Park East (PS 964)  
Erica Malloy, PS 503  
Artie Mattia, Principal, PS 372  
Theresa Pastoriza, PS 372  
Liz Phillips, Principal, PS 321  
Barbara Pinto, Literacy Coach, PS 6  
Barbara Rosenblum, Literacy Coach, PS 6  
Cathy Sarno, Assistant Principal, The Children's School (PS 372)  
Lisa Schwartz, MS 51  
Sophia Soto, PS 29  
Jack Spatola, Principal, PS 172  
Cheryl Tyler, Principal, PS 277  
Kim VanDuzer, PS 29  
Melanie Woods, Principal, PS 29

Lucy Calkins, Founding Director at TCRWP  
Mary Ann Colbert, Senior Assessment Specialist at TCRWP  
Joann Dubiel, Staff Developer at TCRWP  
Mary Ehrenworth, Deputy Director for Middle Schools at TCRWP  
Kara Gufstafson, Staff Developer at TCRWP  
Timothy Lopez, Media Technology Specialist at TCRWP  
Julia Mooney, Writer in Residence at TCRWP  
Beth Moore, Staff Developer at TCRWP  
Beth Neville, Associate Director at TCRWP  
Sarah Picard Taylor, Staff Developer at TCRWP  
Janet Steinberg, Staff Developer at TCRWP  
Kathleen Tolan, Deputy Director of Reading at TCRWP  
Joe Yukish, Senior Reading Specialist at TCRWP

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## What Is A Running Record?

Johnston (2000) states that running records of oral reading are basically a vehicle for error analysis. He says the teacher must engage in the imaginative challenge of figuring out the logic of error. For teachers, the most useful aspect of errors is that people do not make them randomly. There is always a reason for them. If you can figure out the reason, then you know where best to use your instructional expertise and how to avoid confusing the student (p. 1).

The following pages explain the four steps in taking, analyzing, and using a running record to inform instruction.

### Step 1. Recording the child’s oral reading using a set of conventions to provide data that will allow the teacher to evaluate reading accuracy, comprehension, and, beyond level I, fluency.

Set of Conventions for Coding Reading Errors	
Behavior	Convention shown with error
Substitution	<u>walked</u> Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">Scored as an error.</span>
More than one Substitution	<u>was</u>   <u>weren't</u>   <u>want</u> Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">Scored as ONE error.</span>
Self-correction	<u>walked</u>   <u>ISC</u> Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">Scored as a self-correction.</span>
Repetition	↔ Today I went to my <b>R</b> new school. <span style="float: right;">NOT scored as an error, but should be noted.</span>
Repetition with self-correction	<u>walked</u>   <u>RISC</u> Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">Scored as a self-correction.</span>
Omission	- Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">Scored as an error.</span>
Insertion	<u>see</u> Today I went to ^ my new school. <span style="float: right;">Scored as an error.</span>
Sounding out	<u>w-e-n-t</u>   √ Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">NOT scored as an error.</span>
Spelling Word	<u>W-A-N-T</u>   √ Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">NOT scored as an error.</span>
Appeal for word.	<u>A</u> Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">NOT scored as an error.</span>
Long Pause	# Today I went to my new school. <span style="float: right;">NOT scored as an error.</span>
Told	_____ Today I went   <b>T</b> to my new school. <span style="float: right;">Scored as an error.</span>

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**Scoring Guide for Reading Assessments**

Three factors should be checked when assessing a reader:

1. Accuracy and self corrections
2. Comprehension
3. Fluency

**Accuracy:**

96%-100% -- Easy (Independent Reading Level)

90%-95% -- Scaffolded Instruction Level (Books for small group work)

Below 90% --TOO DIFFICULT (Frustration Level)

Scoring accuracy:

(Number of words – errors) ÷ number of words = percentage of accuracy

*Number of words minus errors divided by number of words equals percentage of accuracy*

Example: 120 words – 9 errors = 111 words correct

111 words correct ÷ 120 words = .925 = 92%

The accuracy rates for 96% - 100% (independent level) have been calculated for you on each running record form. You will just need to count the errors and circle the accuracy rate. If you want to see how far below 96% your student is reading use the formula above.

**Self-correction Rate:**

Self-corrections tell us if a child is monitoring errors and re-sampling text to self-correct errors. This is one indication of comprehension and monitoring “book language.” Count the number of self corrections and write in next to accuracy rate. If you would like to calculate Self-correction ratio, use the directions below.

A good self-correction rate is: 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4, 1:5. The ratio 1:3 is read as follows:  
“The reader corrected one error in every three errors.”

Scoring Self-Corrections:

Errors + Self-corrections ÷ Self-corrections = Self-Correction Ratio

*(Errors plus self-corrections divided by self-corrections equals Self-Correction Ratio)*

Example: 9 errors + 8 self-corrections ÷ 8 self-corrections = 1:2 Self-Correction Ratio

The ratio is read as follows: “The reader corrected one error in every two errors.”

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### **Comprehension:**

In order to judge comprehension, students are asked to retell the text and then answer comprehension questions. Students need to give a strong retelling or answer three of the four comprehension questions correctly in order to read independently at that level. *Students may use the text to help them retell and teachers should take note if the student needs this. Don't prompt a student to refer to the text.* . If the student's retelling does not answer the comprehension questions, the teacher asks the comprehension questions that were not answered until the student answers at least three of them correctly. Prompts and possible answers are provided for each of the books or passages a student reads. You may also wish to use the Rubrics for Assessing Retelling found in this manual.

### **Fluency:**

Guidelines to assess fluency are listed in a text box at the bottom of each running record form. Notice that we do not use oral reading fluency as a means of determining independent level until level J, but the characteristics of fluent reading that should be taught before level J are listed in the side bar on each running records (e.g. quick recognition of high frequency words, beginning to read in phrases instead of word-by-word, and responding to punctuation with expression or tonal variation in voice). We assess phrasing, intonation, expression and attention to punctuation at early reading levels because these contribute to oral reading fluency at higher levels of text.

### **How do I arrive at the final level?**

If a student can do the following s/he can read a text level independently:

- Read a text with 96% accuracy
- Read with comprehension
- Read with appropriate fluency behaviors for that level of text.

Suppose a student reads a level E text independently, meeting all of the criteria above. Try the level F text and if the accuracy rate is 96%, continue and assess comprehension. If both of these are acceptable, s/he will read the level F text independently. If you try the Level G text and the accuracy rate is 95% or lower, or if the comprehension is not sufficient, s/he will not read independently at level G. In the end, teachers want to find the highest level that a student can read independently. That is, the reader has an accuracy rate of 96% or higher and comprehension (either a strong retelling or at least three correct comprehension questions).





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E	SC	E			SC		
		M	S	V	M	S	V
		√	√	√			

This student is using M, S, and V. The teacher would put checks in all three columns on the running record form. She would, however, note that the student used only the first sound in the word. (Notice that the student used the /w/ sound to predict the word “wiggly,” and may have also used the end sound of the long /y/, but did not monitor the middle part of the word to check the letters “av”)

If the student would have read: “Then we cut a water line along the outside edges.” Reading water/wavy is a pure visual miscue. It doesn’t make sense to say they cut a water line... And, up to the point of error one could not make up an acceptable sentence (using the word water) that makes sense and sounds like it would in a book.

E	SC	E			SC		
		M	S	V	M	S	V
				√			

This teacher would leave the M and S columns blank, checking only the V column. The teacher would also note that this student needs practice attending to and using the internal parts of words.

### How Do I Analyze a Self-Correction Using MSV?

Self-corrections are a reading behavior to CELEBRATE! They show us that our teaching has been successful; they show us the student is becoming independent; and, self-corrections document that the student is beginning to self-monitor his/her reading. Remember, a self-correction is always first an error! The student notices the error, cross-checks with sources of information, and self-corrects the error.

First, we must consider what source/s of information the student was using when s/he made the error. The sources of information used are check marked in the error column just as was demonstrated earlier with errors.

On page 6 in the Bebob book I’m Heading to the Rodeo a student reads as follows:

combing | br- | SC  
I’m brushing my hair until it flies away.

√ combing | br- | SC  
brushing √ √ √ √ √ √

E	SC	E			SC		
		M	S	V	M	S	V
		√	√				√

When the student read “combing” for brushing, she was using meaning, probably from the illustration. She did choose a verb for a verb, so she was using structure. There is no visual match between combing and brushing, so V is not checked in the error column.

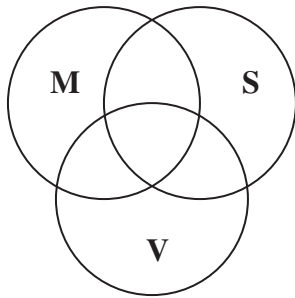
Then the student cross-checked with visual information, noticing the “c” in combing did not match the “br” in brushing. She says, “br” then self-corrects, changing the word that describes fixing her hair from combing to brushing. (Notice that only the V is checked in the self-correction MSV column. The student was already attending to M and S. What she added to make the self-correction was V, so it is checked.) Yes, brushing does demonstrate the use of M, S, and V, but we are looking for patterns of the sources of information used by the reader. Initially she used M and S, ignoring V. But, by cross-checking V she was able to SC.

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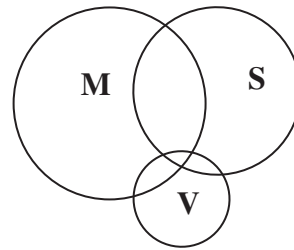
**Step 3. Assess the student's use of M, S, and V as sources of information while reading.**

After coding each miscue with an M, S, or V, the teacher analyzes this information in order to understand which sources of information the student relies on while reading. We want students to use just enough of each source of information M, S, and V to interpret the author's message. If we count the numbers of M, S, and V, in each column, we'll get a global picture of what information the student is using while reading. For example, if the check marks in the error column communicate that Jenna used 17 M's, 15 S's and 5 V's (remember this is a total of the number of checks in each column of the error MSV section of the Running Record form that tells what the student was using when s/he made an error), then Jenna is focusing too much attention to meaning and structure while ignoring graphophonic/visual sources of information. Our teaching will focus on getting her to attend to graphophonic/visual sources of information while maintaining her strength in searching for and using meaning and structure.

Remember, an effective reader's MSV processing looks like the circles below.



When making errors, Jenna used 17M, 15S, 5V, so her M, S, V processing looks like the circles below:



The global picture you get of Jenna's use of the reading process is that she over emphasizes meaning and structure when making predictions about what she is reading.

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**4. The last step involves making teaching decisions based upon the reader's needs as determined by the analysis in 2 and 3 above.**

The illustration above shows quite dramatically that Jenna is over using Meaning and Structure, predicting what the text might say, paying little attention to the visual/graphophonic features of the text. We would celebrate the fact that Jenna is substituting words that make sense and sound like they would in a book, but we will need to teach her to cross check with graphophonic/visual information to get the author's total message.

While Jenna's substitutions may not be interfering with the meaning of a text right now, as a student reading H-L moves into more difficult text, more and more words that are difficult to decode are going to appear in one sentence. Often, in more difficult text, the reader will encounter so many unknown words he/she will be unable to glean enough meaning and syntax to assist in making good predictions.

Jenna must be taught some strategies for integrating meaning, structure and VISUAL/graphophonics.

Johnston, P. (2000). Running Records: A Self-Tutoring Guide. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.