

A young child with a shaved head, wearing a bright yellow long-sleeved shirt, is seen from the side, holding an open book. The book's pages feature colorful illustrations of animals: a white pig and a black pig on the left page, and a green frog on the right page. The background is softly blurred, showing other people in a classroom or library setting.

Reading  
for Meaning

# ASSESSMENT GUIDE

FOR PARENTS

# Reading for Meaning

**Hello story supporter!**

**Welcome to our Reading for Meaning programme where we focus on teaching children at the right level rather than their age or grade.**

**Remember, nurturing and supporting a child is important for their physical, emotional and academic development.**

**ZERO  
DROP/OUT**

**Part of the Zero Dropout campaign working towards halving the rate of school dropout by 2030.**

**Every child has different learning needs and it's not always easy to know what these needs are.**

We suggest that you start by assessing their current reading level so that you have a better understanding of how to support them.

To assess, we use a methodology inspired by TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level).

This method uses four reading levels to determine whether a child is able to fully understand what they're reading:

**LETTER, WORD,  
SENTENCE and STORY.**

# GETTING READY TO DO THE ASSESSMENT

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- 1** Read through this guide carefully **beforehand** so that you understand how to conduct the assessment.
- 2** Ask the child to sit next to you so that you can **both see the screen**.
- 3** **Help the child to feel comfortable** before you begin the reading exercise. You can do this by having a light conversation about why reading is important and why it's fun to read.
- 4** In a reassuring way, explain to the child that you will be doing an exercise to see whether they need a little extra help with their reading. **Let them know that they shouldn't be nervous** because it will be a fun thing to do together.
- 5** Remember to **focus on one level at a time**. You should only move to a higher level once you're done with the first level to avoid confusion.

# DOING THE ASSESSMENT

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Make sure the child is comfortable and can read the screen clearly.

Start at the **LETTER** level.

Ask the child to read these letters aloud ...

LETTER  
LEVEL

**b**

**s**

**o**

**k**

**m**

**y**

**r**

**h**

**t**

**x**

If the child is able  
to read four letters  
clearly without  
making a mistake,  
ask them to move to  
**WORD** level.





WORD  
LEVEL

Ask the child to read the words  
on the next page.

If they are **able to read at least  
four words** correctly you can then  
check for understanding by asking  
them to describe / explain the  
meaning of a word OR to give  
the same word in their Home  
Language.

WORD  
LEVEL

ring

sun

ball

cold

king

clap

foot

fan

girl

crow



If they are unable to read for meaning at **WORD** level, they must move back to **LETTER** level.

If they can explain the meaning of the words, they are ready to move to **SENTENCE** level.



SENTENCE  
LEVEL

Ask the child to read the sentences on the next page.

If they're **able to read two sentences** clearly without making mistakes, check for understanding by asking questions (answers can be given in their Home Language):

**“Is this a small village?”**

(A: no, it's big)

**“Tell me any two things that you would see in this village.”**

(A: houses / shop / bus - any 2)

**SENTENCE  
LEVEL**

**My village is very big.**

**It has many houses.**

**It also has a shop.**

**The bus stops in my  
village.**



If they are  
unable to read  
for meaning at  
**SENTENCE** level,  
they must move back  
to **WORD** level.

If they can  
explain the content  
of the sentences,  
they can move to  
**STORY** level.





**STORY  
LEVEL**

At **STORY** level, ask them to read the story on the next page.

If they're **able to read the story** clearly without making mistakes, check for understanding by asking questions (answers can be given in their Home Language):

**“What happened in this story?”**

OR

**“What did Zoleka play with?”** (A: her doll) **“What happened to her doll?”**

(A: it broke) **“How did that make Zoleka feel?”** (A: very sad/she cried)

**“What made her feel better?”** (A: her mother gave her a new doll)

**STORY  
LEVEL**

**Zoleka is a little girl. She had a pretty doll. She loved playing with her doll. One day the doll fell from her hand to the floor. It broke into many pieces. Zoleka was very sad. She cried a lot. Her mother gave her another doll. Now she is happy again.**



*If they make more than three mistakes they must move back to **SENTENCE** level.*

If they can read the story with understanding then they are at **STORY** level.



Now that you know which level they're on, you will know **which activities to do with them** and how best to help them to improve their reading.

**NB:** Always remember to check for meaning at **WORD**, **SENTENCE** and **STORY** level by asking the questions provided.

# WHAT IS A MISTAKE AND WHAT IS NOT A MISTAKE?

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## WHAT IS NOT A MISTAKE

- Pronunciation: each child will have their **own accent** in English depending on their Home Language, region etc.
- When reading, **a word is replaced with another word with a similar meaning** (e.g. loves instead of likes). If you ask the child to read it again carefully, they will usually read the word correctly.
- When reading, **a word is left out or read wrongly** (e.g. for 'road' the child says 'read'). Again, if you ask the child to read it again carefully, they will get it right. (However, if the child keeps repeating the wrong reading, you will count that as a mistake – see below.)



## WHAT IS A MISTAKE

- In spite of reading the text a few times, the child **repeatedly leaves a word out or reads a word incorrectly**, then this has to be treated as a mistake.
- If the child reads the same word incorrectly more than once, it will be counted as only **one mistake**.
- At **SENTENCE** or **STORY** level, if a child makes **more than 3 mistakes** of this type (leaving a word out or reading a word incorrectly) then they cannot be considered to be at that level.

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