



South Australian Spelling Test

Appendix 3

South Australian Spelling Test (SAST) (revised)

The South Australian Spelling Test (SAST) is a standardised test of spelling achievement for students in the age range 6 years to 16 years. The test is available in two forms, A and B. Both forms were standardised together on a sample of over 10,000 South Australian children in November 2004. Forms A and B can be used interchangeably for assessment purposes, **but care must be taken to ensure that the correct norm tables are consulted when interpreting the scores from each form.** Table 1 and Table 2 are for Form A; Table 3 and Table 4 are for Form B.

The SAST can be administered orally to an individual student, to a group, or to a whole class. A written response is required from the student and the results are scored as either correct or incorrect. A student's raw score (total of items correct) can be evaluated against the range of scores typical for students of that particular age level (see Table 1 for Form A). The raw score can also be converted into an approximate spelling age for that student (see Table 2 for Form A). If SAST Form B has been used, Table 3 and Table 4 must be used for the same purpose. Detailed instructions for administration, scoring and interpretation are presented below.

The main purpose of SAST is to provide a quick screening instrument, enabling teachers to determine the spread of spelling ability in their classes and to identify students who may require additional help. Used in this way SAST can provide a quantitative measure of a student's current standing within the age group. The SAST should not be used too frequently because children can become overly familiar with the content. If used once a year, SAST can give an indication of the progress in spelling development made by students over a period of time. The SAST measurement can accompany the more descriptive or qualitative assessments based on students' written work samples and the *English Profiles*.

SAST can also be used before and after any spelling intervention program (of reasonable duration) to detect improvements. Teachers are reminded, however, that standardised tests are not particularly sensitive to very short-term gains from brief intervention programs (see Chapter 6).

Close inspection of the errors a student makes in SAST can also yield some *limited* diagnostic information, although that is not its prime purpose. For example, it is possible to note the individual's ability to spell phonetically, to use syllabification, to spell some irregular words, and to produce certain orthographic units correctly. Used together with other sources of information, performance on the test may help a teacher determine the developmental stage a child has reached in the acquisition of spelling skills. Teachers wishing for more detailed information are referred to Ganske's (1999) *Developmental Spelling Analysis*.

Technical details

SAST Form A is a modified version of the graded word list (1970) compiled in Britain by Dr Margaret Peters of Cambridge University. Most of the words she used were derived from Schonell's earlier standardised spelling tests S1 and S2 (Schonell, 1958; 1960). The

SAST Form B is a new alternative test covering the same age range as Form A. The words in Form B were selected by Westwood and Bissaker for this specific purpose.

The original Form A was standardised on children in England. Later, in 1978, Australian norms were obtained by testing a large representative sample of South Australian children. The Australian norms were checked and updated in 1993, and again in 2004. Tables 1 to 4 in this book provide norms based on the testing of 10,692 South Australian children in November 2004.

- **Reliability:** The test-retest reliability of the South Australian Spelling Test is .96 at most year levels. The correlation between scores in Form A and Form B varies from .89 to .94 according to age level. The modal value of the correlation between the two forms is .91 across the age range 6 years to 16 years.
- **Standard error of measurement:** The standard error of measurement is approximately ± 2 marks on raw score.
- **Normal range of performance:** The normal range of scores for each age level is based on the spread of scores reflecting the performance of 50 per cent of the age group. This was calculated on $\pm .68$ standard deviation. These scores have been rounded to the nearest whole number in Table 1 and Table 3.
- **Critically low score:** The critically low score has been calculated on the basis that 10 per cent of the age group would fall 1.29 standard deviations below the mean. The scores have been rounded to the nearest whole number in Table 1 and Table 3.
- **Sequence and grading of test items:** The sequence of the words in SAST Form A corresponds fairly closely to the order used in the original test developed in Britain (with some very minor changes). The sequence of words in SAST Form B is based on the item difficulty index for each word, calculated from the performance of a sample of 60 students in the age range 6 to 13+ years. In determining the final sequence of items, reference was also made to Spencer's (2002) analysis of word difficulty and to the word-frequency indicators provided by Leech, Rayson and Wilson (2001). Spencer (2002) suggests that word difficulty depends not only on word length but also on how often the word is seen and used (frequency factor), and phoneticity (how regularly and predictably the graphemes represent the phonemes in the word).
- **Gender differences:** Using the 2004 sample of students, gender differences in spelling performance were investigated at each year level using 't' test. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores obtained by boys and by girls. Separate norms tables for male and female students are therefore not required.

Instructions for administration

SAST Forms A and B

1. Students should be seated in a position where copying from others is not possible.
2. Each student requires a sheet of paper and pen or pencil.
3. Students should number each item before writing the response.
4. The method of administration is to say the number of the item. Then say the word clearly. Embed the word in a sentence. Then repeat the word, saying for example: (Form B) 'Number 19: COST. How much will the ticket COST? Write COST.'
5. If any of the sentences suggested here appear inappropriate for the age or ability level being tested the tester can change the sentence, provided that the sense of the word is retained.

South Australian Spelling Test Form A

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 1. ON | Please put your shoe ON. Write ON. |
| 2. HOT | The water in the bath is HOT. Write HOT. |
| 3. CUP | I drink from a CUP. Write CUP. |
| 4. VAN | The lady can drive the VAN. Write VAN. |
| 5. JAM | I like JAM on my bread. Write JAM. |
| 6. MUD | I got MUD on my shoes when it rained. Write MUD. |
| 7. SIT | Please SIT on this chair. Write SIT. |
| 8. BEG | I taught my dog to BEG for a biscuit. Write BEG. |
| 9. ME | This present is not for ME. Write ME. |
| 10. GO | I will GO to the shops after school. Write GO. |
| 11. DO | What will you DO next? Write DO. |
| 12. OF | I am not sure OF your name. Write OF. |
| 13. THE | Is this THE toy you want? Write THE. |
| 14. SO | You did that job SO quickly. Write SO. |
| 15. PLAN | I used a PLAN to make this model. Write PLAN. |
| 16. SHIP | A SHIP is on the sea. Write SHIP. |
| 17. CHOP | The butcher will CHOP the meat. Write CHOP. |
| 18. FROM | Our new teacher comes FROM Sydney. Write FROM. |
| 19. THIN | The THIN cat squeezed under the fence. Write THIN. |
| 20. LOST | I LOST my key. Write LOST. |
| 21. DART | I threw a DART at the dartboard. Write DART. |
| 22. SEEM | The shop did not SEEM to be open. Write SEEM. |
| 23. FOOD | We must take FOOD to the picnic. Write FOOD. |
| 24. FOR | Is this letter FOR me? Write FOR. |
| 25. ARE | Animals ARE in the field. Write ARE. |
| 26. WHO | WHO was that knocking at the door? Write WHO. |
| 27. HERE | Put the box over HERE. Write HERE. |
| 28. FIRE | We need dry sticks to start the FIRE. Write FIRE. |
| 29. DATE | What is the DATE today? Write DATE. |
| 30. LOUD | Your voice is too LOUD. Write LOUD. |
| 31. EYE | Please shut one EYE and look at this. Write EYE. |
| 32. FIGHT | I saw two dogs FIGHT in the park. Write FIGHT. |
| 33. FRIEND | She is my best FRIEND. Write FRIEND. |
| 34. DONE | What have you DONE with your book? Write DONE. |
| 35. ANY | Are there ANY cakes left? Write ANY. |

36. GREAT	I was chased by a GREAT big dog. Write GREAT.
37. SURE	I am not SURE how to spell this. Write SURE.
38. WOMEN	Two WOMEN went for a swim. Write WOMEN.
39. ANSWER	Please ANSWER my question. Write ANSWER.
40. BEAUTIFUL	The flowers in the garden look BEAUTIFUL.
41. ORCHESTRA	I play the piano in the ORCHESTRA.
42. EQUALLY	They shared the money EQUALLY.
43. APPRECIATE	Thank you. I APPRECIATE your help.
44. FAMILIAR	His face seemed FAMILIAR. Had we met before?
45. ENTHUSIASTIC	The student was an ENTHUSIASTIC player.
46. SIGNATURE	She wrote her SIGNATURE on the paper.
47. BREATHE	Fresh air is good to BREATHE.
48. PERMANENT	Will that sign be taken away or is it PERMANENT?
49. SUFFICIENT	We have SUFFICIENT food to last for the weekend.
50. SURPLUS	We will sell the SURPLUS apples. We have too many.
51. CUSTOMARY	It is CUSTOMARY to shake hands.
52. ESPECIALLY	This gift is ESPECIALLY for you.
53. MATERIALLY	This story is not MATERIALLY different from the one in your book.
54. CEMETERY	The funeral took place at the CEMETERY.
55. LEISURE	She spent her LEISURE time in the garden.
56. FRATERNALLY	FRATERNALLY means the same as brotherly.
57. SUCCESSFUL	The fund-raising was very SUCCESSFUL.
58. DEFINITE	I agreed on a DEFINITE time to meet her.
59. EXHIBITION	There is an art EXHIBITION at the gallery.
60. APPARATUS	We use this APPARATUS in the science lab.
61. MORTGAGE	I bought the house by taking a MORTGAGE.
62. EQUIPPED	The campers were EQUIPPED with new tents.
63. SUBTERRANEAN	SUBTERRANEAN means under the ground.
64. POLITICIAN	Did you vote for that POLITICIAN?
65. MISCELLANEOUS	Mixing different items together makes a MISCELLANEOUS set.
66. EXAGGERATE	The fish wasn't that big! Don't EXAGGERATE.
67. GUARANTEE	My washing machine has a two-year GUARANTEE.
68. EMBARRASSING	I find it EMBARRASSING to give a speech.
69. CONSCIENTIOUS	Students who work hard are said to be CONSCIENTIOUS.
70. SEISMOGRAPH	A SEISMOGRAPH is an instrument to measure the strength of earthquakes.

Table 1: Ages, average scores, normal ranges and critically low scores

Students' Age (yrs/mths)	Average Score	Normal Range	Critically Low Score	Students' Age (yrs/mths)	Average Score	Normal Range	Critically Low Score	Students' Age (yrs/mths)	Average Score	Normal Range	Critically Low Score
6.0	13	7-19	2	9.5	35	30-40	24	12.10	47	41-53	36
6.1	14	8-20	3	9.6	36	31-41	25	12.11	48	42-54	37
6.2	15	9-21	4	9.7	36	31-41	25	13.0	48	42-54	37
6.3	16	10-22	5	9.8	36	31-41	25	13.1	48	42-54	37
6.4	17	11-23	6	9.9	36	31-41	25	13.2	48	42-54	37
6.5	18	12-24	7	9.10	36	31-42	25	13.3	49	43-55	38
6.6	19	13-25	8	9.11	37	31-43	26	13.4	49	43-55	38
6.7	20	14-26	9	10.0	37	31-43	26	13.5	49	43-55	38
6.8	21	15-27	10	10.1	37	31-43	26	13.6	49	43-55	38
6.9	21	15-28	10	10.2	38	32-44	27	13.7	49	43-55	38
6.10	22	16-28	11	10.3	38	32-44	27	13.8	49	43-55	38
6.11	23	17-29	12	10.4	39	33-45	28	13.9	50	44-56	39
7.0	23	17-29	12	10.5	39	33-45	28	13.10	50	44-56	39
7.1	24	18-30	13	10.6	39	33-45	28	13.11	50	44-56	39
7.2	25	20-30	14	10.7	40	34-46	29	14.0	50	44-56	39
7.3	26	21-31	15	10.8	40	34-46	29	14.1	50	44-56	39
7.4	26	21-31	15	10.9	40	34-46	29	14.2	50	44-56	39
7.5	27	21-33	16	10.10	41	35-47	30	14.3	51	44-58	40
7.6	27	21-33	16	10.11	41	35-47	30	14.4	51	44-58	40
7.7	27	22-33	16	11.0	41	35-47	30	14.5	51	44-58	40
7.8	28	22-34	17	11.1	42	36-48	31	14.6	51	44-58	40
7.9	28	22-34	17	11.2	42	36-48	31	14.7	51	44-58	40
7.10	28	22-34	17	11.3	42	36-48	31	14.8	51	44-58	40
7.11	29	24-34	18	11.4	43	37-49	32	14.9	52	45-59	41
8.0	29	24-34	18	11.5	43	37-49	32	14.10	52	45-59	41
8.1	30	24-36	19	11.6	43	37-49	32	14.11	52	45-59	41
8.2	30	24-36	19	11.7	43	37-49	32	15.0	52	45-59	41
8.3	30	24-36	19	11.8	43	37-49	32	15.1	52	45-59	41
8.4	31	26-36	20	11.9	44	38-50	33	15.2	52	45-59	41
8.5	31	26-36	20	11.10	44	38-50	33	15.3	52	45-59	41
8.6	32	27-37	21	11.11	44	38-50	33	15.4	52	45-59	41
8.7	32	27-37	21	12.0	44	38-50	33	15.5	52	45-59	41
8.8	32	27-37	21	12.1	45	39-51	34	15.6	53	46-60	42
8.9	33	27-39	22	12.2	45	39-51	34	15.7	53	46-60	42
8.10	33	27-39	22	12.3	45	39-51	34	15.8	53	46-60	42
8.11	33	27-39	22	12.4	45	39-51	34	15.9	53	46-60	42
9.0	33	28-39	22	12.5	46	40-52	35	15.10	53	46-60	42
9.1	34	28-40	23	12.6	46	40-52	35	15.11	53	46-60	42
9.2	34	28-40	23	12.7	46	40-52	35	16.0	54	48-61	43
9.3	34	28-40	23	12.8	47	41-53	36				
9.4	35	30-40	24	12.9	47	41-53	36				

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Table 2: Approximate spelling ages

Raw Score	Approx. Spelling Age (yrs/mths)	Raw Score	Approx. Spelling Age (yrs/mths)
12	Below 6.0	33	8.10
13	6.0	34	9.1
14	6.1	35	9.4
15	6.2	36	9.6
16	6.3	37	9.11
17	6.4	38	10.2
18	6.5	39	10.5
19	6.6	40	10.8
20	6.7	41	10.11
21	6.8	42	11.2
22	6.10	43	11.5
23	6.11	44	11.10
24	7.1	45	12.2
25	7.2	46	12.5
26	7.4	47	12.8
27	7.6	48	13.0
28	7.8	49	13.5
29	7.11	50	13.10
30	8.1	51	14.4
31	8.4	52	14.11
32	8.7	53	15.7
		54	16+

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Using Table 2

Apply the Standard Error of Measurement + 2 and – 2 points on raw score.

Example: Child spells 22 words correctly.

- Subtract 2 from 22 = 20.
- Add 2 to 22 = 24.
- Enter Table 2 at raw score 20 and at 24.
- Child's spelling age is thus within the range 6 years 7 months and 7 years 1 month.

South Australian Spelling Test Form B

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1. IN | Come IN to the classroom. Write IN. |
| 2. TOP | Touch the TOP of your head. Write TOP. |
| 3. CAN | CAN you help me, please? Write CAN. |
| 4. PET | This dog is my PET. Write PET. |
| 5. BUS | I take the number 79 BUS to school. Write BUS. |
| 6. DIG | I can DIG a hole in the sand. Write DIG. |
| 7. FED | We FED the animals at the zoo. Write FED. |
| 8. MEN | The MEN are painting the house. Write MEN. |
| 9. BE | You can BE the next leader. Write BE. |
| 10. TO | I must send this letter TO my friend. Write TO. |
| 11. BY | Please come home BY five o'clock. Write BY. |
| 12. NO | NO, you may not stay out late. Write NO. |
| 13. WAS | I WAS home early today. Write WAS. |
| 14. SON | This mother gave her SON a present. Write SON. |
| 15. FLAG | The FLAG was blowing in the wind. Write FLAG. |
| 16. TRIP | Don't TRIP over the books on the floor. Write TRIP. |
| 17. STOP | The car must STOP at the red light. Write STOP. |
| 18. SKIN | Our bodies are covered by SKIN. Write SKIN. |
| 19. COST | How much will the ticket COST? Write COST. |
| 20. THANK | THANK you. That was a good answer. Write THANK. |
| 21. NEED | I NEED more time to finish this work. Write NEED. |
| 22. HOOK | My fishing line has new HOOK. Write HOOK. |
| 23. PART | I will walk with you PART of the way home. Write PART. |
| 24. FOUR | We will catch the bus at FOUR o'clock. Write FOUR. |
| 25. OUR | This will be OUR last chance to win. Write OUR. |
| 26. THEY | THEY are not going to beat us. Write THEY. |
| 27. HEAR. | Can you HEAR the noise of the traffic? Write HEAR. |
| 28. FARE | How much is the bus FARE to your home? Write FARE. |
| 29. GATE | Please close the GATE when you go out. Write GATE. |
| 30. CLOUD | There is a dark CLOUD in the sky. Write CLOUD. |
| 31. AIR | Let us go outside and get some fresh AIR. Write AIR. |
| 32. TIGHT | I can't put on this belt; it is too TIGHT. Write TIGHT. |
| 33. CRIED | The film was so sad, I almost CRIED. Write CRIED. |
| 34. NONE | NONE of you are likely to fail any tests. Write NONE. |
| 35. ASK | We must ASK permission to do this. Write ASK. |

36. TREAT	The party was arranged as a special TREAT. Write TREAT.
37. SURF	There is no SURF today; the sea is calm. Write SURF.
38. WORLD	Here is a map of the WORLD. Write WORLD.
39. DANCER	My sister is a good ballet DANCER. DANCER.
40. UNUSUAL	Your shoes are an UNUSUAL colour. UNUSUAL.
41. QUALITY	The photocopier needs high QUALITY paper. QUALITY.
42. FURNITURE	I don't like modern style FURNITURE. FURNITURE.
43. RELIABLE	You can trust her, she is very RELIABLE. RELIABLE.
44. FASHION	The model wore a dress of the latest FASHION. FASHION.
45. LAUGHTER	The sound of LAUGHTER makes me happy. LAUGHTER.
46. THOUGHTFUL	It was THOUGHTFUL of you to help. THOUGHTFUL.
47. ENCOURAGE	Good marks will ENCOURAGE you. ENCOURAGE.
48. EFFICIENT	The cleaner is hardworking and EFFICIENT.
49. PURPOSE	What is the PURPOSE of the visit?
50. CURIOUS	I was CURIOUS to know the reason.
51. ACCEPTABLE	Your gift is very ACCEPTABLE.
52. EQUIPMENT	The builders moved their EQUIPMENT.
53. CHOIR	I was chosen to sing in the school CHOIR.
54. CHEMICALLY	The two substances were analysed CHEMICALLY.
55. NEIGHBOUR	I often smile and speak to my NEIGHBOUR.
56. NOCTURNAL	A NOCTURNAL animal comes out at night.
57. ASSESSMENT	We use examinations as one form of ASSESSMENT.
58. ADOLESCENCE	ADOLESCENCE is the period between age 13 to adulthood.
59. CASUALTY	The driver of the wrecked car was the only CASUALTY.
60. CATALOGUE	You can check the price and details in the CATALOGUE.
61. BOULDER	A large BOULDER and some smaller rocks blocked their path.
62. EXEMPLARY	She gave an EXEMPLARY performance in the debate.
63. MAGNIFICENT	The queen looked MAGNIFICENT in her robes.
64. SUBSTITUTE	The team decided to use the SUBSTITUTE player.
65. MAINTENANCE	A motorcycle needs regular MAINTENANCE.
66. DISGUISE	He did not want to be recognised so he put on a DISGUISE.
67. PROPRIETOR	The owner of a business is called the PROPRIETOR.
68. VACCINATION	To prevent catching this disease you need a VACCINATION.
69. EXCRUCIATING	The injury to her knee caused EXCRUCIATING pain.
70. KALEIDOSCOPE	A KALEIDOSCOPE is an instrument or toy that makes patterns of light with coloured glass..

Table 3: Ages, average scores, normal ranges and critically low scores

Students' Age (yrs/mths)	Average Score	Normal Range	Critically Low Score	Students' Age (yrs/mths)	Average Score	Normal Range	Critically Low Score	Students' Age (yrs/mths)	Average Score	Normal Range	Critically Low Score
6.0	12	7-17	2	9.5	37	30-44	28	12.10	52	45-59	40
6.1	13	8-18	3	9.6	38	31-45	24	12.11	52	45-59	40
6.2	14	9-19	4	9.7	38	31-45	24	13.0	52	45-59	40
6.3	15	10-20	5	9.8	38	31-45	24	13.1	52	45-59	40
6.4	16	10-22	6	9.9	39	31-47	24	13.2	53	46-60	40
6.5	16	10-22	6	9.10	39	31-47	24	13.3	53	46-60	40
6.6	17	11-23	6	9.11	39	31-47	24	13.4	53	46-60	41
6.7	18	12-24	7	10.0	40	32-48	25	13.5	53	46-60	41
6.8	18	12-24	7	10.1	40	32-48	25	13.6	53	46-60	41
6.9	19	13-25	8	10.2	40	32-48	25	13.7	54	47-61	42
6.10	20	14-26	8	10.3	41	33-49	26	13.8	54	47-61	42
6.11	20	14-26	8	10.4	41	33-49	26	13.9	54	47-61	42
7.0	21	16-27	9	10.5	42	34-50	27	13.10	54	47-61	42
7.1	22	16-28	10	10.6	42	34-50	27	13.11	54	47-61	42
7.2	23	17-29	11	10.7	42	34-50	27	14.0	54	47-61	42
7.3	23	17-29	11	10.8	43	35-51	28	14.1	54	47-61	42
7.4	24	17-31	11	10.9	43	35-51	28	14.2	54	47-61	42
7.5	25	18-32	12	10.10	44	36-52	29	14.3	54	47-61	42
7.6	26	19-33	13	10.11	44	36-52	29	14.4	54	47-61	42
7.7	26	19-33	13	11.0	45	37-53	30	14.5	55	48-62	43
7.8	27	20-34	14	11.1	45	37-53	30	14.6	55	48-62	43
7.9	27	20-34	14	11.2	46	38-54	31	14.7	55	48-62	43
7.10	28	21-35	15	11.3	46	38-54	31	14.8	55	48-62	43
7.11	28	21-35	15	11.4	47	40-54	33	14.9	55	48-62	43
8.0	28	21-35	15	11.5	47	40-54	33	14.10	55	48-62	43
8.1	29	22-36	16	11.6	47	40-54	33	14.11	55	48-62	43
8.2	30	23-37	17	11.7	48	41-55	34	15.0	56	49-63	44
8.3	30	23-37	17	11.8	48	41-55	34	15.1	56	49-63	44
8.4	31	24-38	18	11.9	48	41-55	34	15.2	56	49-63	44
8.5	31	24-38	18	11.10	48	41-55	35	15.3	56	49-63	45
8.6	32	25-39	19	11.11	49	42-56	36	15.4	56	49-63	45
8.7	32	25-39	19	12.0	49	42-56	36	15.5	56	49-63	45
8.8	33	26-40	20	12.1	49	42-56	36	15.6	57	50-64	46
8.9	33	26-40	20	12.2	49	42-56	36	15.7	57	50-64	46
8.10	34	27-41	20	12.3	50	43-57	36	15.8	57	50-64	46
8.11	34	27-41	20	12.4	50	43-57	37	15.9	57	50-64	46
9.0	34	27-41	20	12.5	50	43-57	37	15.10	57	50-64	46
9.1	35	28-42	21	12.6	51	44-58	38	15.11	57	50-64	46
9.2	35	28-42	21	12.7	51	44-58	38	16.0	58	53-64	48
9.3	36	29-43	21	12.8	51	44-58	38				
9.4	36	29-43	22	12.9	51	44-58	38				

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Table 4. Approximate spelling ages

Raw Score	Approx. Spelling Age (yrs/mths)	Raw Score	Approx. Spelling Age (yrs/mths)
12	6.0	35	9.1
13	6.1	36	9.3
14	6.2	37	9.5
15	6.3	38	9.6
16	6.4	39	9.9
17	6.6	40	10.0
18	6.7	41	10.3
19	6.9	42	10.5
20	6.10	43	10.8
21	7.0	44	10.10
22	7.1	45	11.0
23	7.2	46	11.2
24	7.4	47	11.4
25	7.5	48	11.7
26	7.6	49	11.11
27	7.8	50	12.3
28	7.10	51	12.6
29	8.1	52	12.10
30	8.2	53	13.2
31	8.4	54	13.8
32	8.6	55	14.5
33	8.8	56	15.2
34	8.11	57	15.9
		58	16.0

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Using Table 4

Apply the Standard Error of Measurement + 2 and - 2 points on raw score.

Example: Child spells 28 words correctly.

- Subtract 2 from 28 = 26.
- Add 2 to 28 = 30.
- Enter Table 2 at raw score 26 and at 30.
- Child's spelling age is thus within the range 7 years 6 months to 8 years 2 months.

Appendix 4

Diagnostic tests

Diagnostic test A: some predictable spelling patterns

The words in the list below may be used for a quick assessment of a student's ability to spell dictated words that are reasonably regular in terms of letter- (or letter cluster)-to-sound correspondences. The test also provides an opportunity to examine the student's grasp of a selection of consonant blends and digraphs used in the initial and final position. The final two words in each column require knowledge of syllable units.

Any student who performs poorly on the first thirty words should be checked for basic phonological awareness and phonic knowledge (see Diagnostic test D).

at	if	on	up	wet
bag	rod	fin	bus	men
chop	plot	ship	trap	step
flag	swim	glad	drop	slug
must	risk	silk	send	lamp
fact	help	sift	luck	song
scrap	string	split	think	shack
winter	person	driving	action	beside
freedom	latest	project	chapter	remember

Diagnostic test B: some less predictable words

With this test it is important to observe how the student goes about the task of attempting to spell these words. Are the errors mainly phonetic?

the	ask	are	any	does
said	sure	was	they	come
tough	work	master	half	lawn
laugh	wander	glove	women	where

Diagnostic test C: core list of hard-to-spell words

These words (or some of them) can be given as a test. Students who cannot spell any of these words should write the correct spelling on a personal reference card, and use this card when proofreading.

an	of	all	it's	off
saw	too	two	was	came
come	hour	into	kept	knew
know	said	then	they	want
went	were	when	again	could
heard	might	right	still	that's
their	there	tried	until	where
always	bought	caught	friend	houses
inside	myself	opened	people	played
police	school	turned	another	decided
outside	running	started	stopped	thought
through	because	suddenly	sometimes	

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Diagnostic test D: test of basic phonic knowledge

In the case of very young children, or older students with learning problems, it is often useful to check that they know the most common letter-to-sound correspondences. Any gaps detected in their basic phonic knowledge can then be identified easily and remedied.

Present each of the following letters (capital and lower case) on separate cards and ask the child to say the letter name and letter sound. The activity can be played as a game.

B	H	F	K	P	W	A	O	J	U	C	Y	M
Q	Z	L	N	S	T	R	I	G	E	V	D	X
f	k	w	p	z	a	g	h	b	j	u	c	y
q	l	i	m	d	n	s	t	r	v	e	o	x

If students know the most common sounds associated with single letters, card material or a checklist can be used to determine their ability to recognise and blend two sounds and to recognise common digraphs, trigraphs, and consonant blends.

ab	ad	ag	am	an	ap	at	ed	eg
en	et	ib	id	ig	in	ip	it	ob
od	og	op	ot	ub	ug	um	un	up
ut	ch	sh	th	ph	wh	ck	wr	bl
br	cl	or	dr	fl	gl	gr	st	sp
sw	pl	pr	tr	sm	sl	fr	sn	sk
sc	tw	str	scr	spr	thr	spl	shr	squ

If a student has clearly developed beyond the basic phonic stages represented above, he or she can be checked for recognition of common letter strings such as those listed below. As well as being able to say the sound unit represented by the letter group, the student can be asked to think of some words containing that unit and to write the words.

amp	ump	and	end	ast	est	lst
ust	ank	ink	all	ill	ull	ang
ant	ent	int	unt	old	alk	ilk
elt	ilt	atch	lch	unch	uch	act
ift	ong	orm	orn	ulk	umb	oss
ar	ay	ea	ey	ure	er	ow
dge	tch	eer	igh			