

Placement Test

Preparation: You will need a copy of the novel *The Boxcar Children: The Copycat Mystery*. Students being tested should read from the actual novel not from the Placement Test Scoring Sheet. Underline the difficult words from the Placement Test Scoring Sheet in the copy of the novel that students will read from. You will need 1 copy of the Placement Test Scoring Sheet for each student you will be testing.
You will need a timer.

Instructions for Recording Student Responses and Scoring:

As students read the passage use the following procedure to record errors.

Word read incorrectly: Write what the student said above the word. Count as 1 error.

Added word: Write a caret with the word above it where the word was inserted. Count as 1 error.

Unknown word: Give the student 3 seconds to say the word and then tell him or her the word. Write a T above the told word. Count as 1 error.

Deleted words: Draw a line through any words that are left out. Do not count deleted words when counting the total words read per minute.

Repeated words: Draw a wavy line under the word(s) that were repeated.

Self-correct: Put a check mark above the word.

Repeated words and self-corrected words do not count as errors. Students are already penalized for time with these types of errors.

Record words read per minute (wrpm) and errors on the top part of the Placement Test Scoring Sheet. To calculate the accuracy percentage, use the following formula: Subtract the number of errors from the wrpm. Divide this number by the wrpm. Multiply by 100. Example: $97 \text{ (wrpm)} - 4 \text{ (errors)} = 93$ divided by $97 = .958$ x 100 = 96% accuracy.

Students reading at least 80 wrpm with 90% accuracy can be placed in this novel study. Remember, this is the student's instructional level not his or her independent reading level.

Instructions for Administering the Placement Test

1. Fill in student information on the top portion of the Placement Test Scoring Sheet.

Setting the Scene

2. (*Note: This part of the test can be done individually, with a small group of students, or with a whole class. Hold up a copy of the novel for students to see.) **This book is called *The Copy Cat Mystery*. Later, each of you will read part of a page from this novel aloud to me to help me decide if you are ready to read this book.**

(Show students the illustration on page 4.) **In this illustration, four children are looking at pictures of themselves from an earlier time. When these children were younger, their parents died. They were afraid to go live with their grandfather, so they ran away and lived in an old boxcar. One of the things these children love to do is solve mysteries.** (Identify the children from left to right for the children: Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny.)

Hard Word Review

3. (Note: This part of the placement test needs to be administered individually. Give the student a copy of the novel open to page 5.)
4. **Some of the hard words are underlined on this page. We will practice these hard words before you read this page aloud to me.**

(Touch under the name Stockings.) **This name is Stockings. What name? *Stockings*. Stockings is the name of a rag doll that Violet and Jessie made for Benny when the children were living in the boxcar.**

(Touch under the divided word Violet.)
This name is divided into two parts because there is not enough room on the line. This name is Violet. What name? Violet.

(Touch under the divided word remarked.) **This word is divided into two parts because there is not enough room on the line. This word is remarked. What word? *Remarked*. Remarked means said. What does remarked mean? *Said*.**

(Touch under the names of the four children.) **These are the names of the children in the story. The first name is Henry. What name? *Henry*. The next name is Jessie. What name? *Jessie*. The next name is Violet. What name? *Violet*. The next name is Benny. What name? *Benny*.**

(Touch under the words abandoned boxcar.) **These words are abandoned boxcar. What words? *Abandoned boxcar*. A boxcar, is a train car that is shaped like a big long box. An abandoned boxcar is one that is no longer used.**

5. You will read part of this page aloud to me. I would like you to track under the words with your finger as you read aloud. You will read aloud for 1 minute. I will tell you when to stop reading. Be careful to read exactly what is on the page. (Start the timer and record student errors as indicated above.)

Placement Test Scoring Sheet for *The Boxcar Children: The Copycat Mystery*

Name of Student: _____ Date: _____
Teacher: _____ Tester: _____
Words Read Per Minute (wrpm) _____ Errors: _____ Accuracy % _____
Placement: _____
Comments: _____

Jessie laughed. "How can we ever forget	7
<u>Stockings?</u> "	8
Benny took the picture from Henry and	15
looked at it closely, smiling a little. "Violet	23
and Jessie made him for me when we were	32
living in the boxcar."	36
"From a pair of old socks," recalled <u>Vio-</u>	44
<u>let.</u>	
"Sometimes it seems like yesterday	49
when we were living in the boxcar," <u>re-</u>	57
<u>marked</u> Jessie thoughtfully. "Then other	61
times, it feels as if it all happened a very	71
long time ago."	74
"I know what you mean," said Violet. "A	82
lot has happened since then."	87
After their parents died, <u>Henry</u> , <u>Jessie</u> ,	93
<u>Violet</u> , and <u>Benny</u> had run away together.	100
For a while, they'd made their home in an	109
<u>abandoned boxcar</u> in the woods. They knew	116
they had a grandfather, but they thought he	124
was mean.	126

Excerpt from: Warner, Gertrude Chandler. The Copycat Mystery. Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company, 2001.