

Placement Test

Preparation: You will need a copy of the novel *Where the Red Fern Grows*. 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 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 90 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 *Where the Red Fern Grows*. Later, each of you will read part of page 11 of this novel aloud to me to help me decide if you are ready to read this book.**

***Where the Red Fern Grows* is a story about a boy and his hunting hounds. The story begins with someone seeing a dog fight.**

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 11.)
4. **Some of the hard words are underlined on this page. We will practice these hard words before you read part of this page aloud to me.**

(Touch under the words residential section.) **These words are residential section. What words? Residential section. The residential section in a city is the place where there are many houses and apartments with just a few businesses. What do we call the part of a city where there are many houses and apartments with just a few businesses? *The residential section.***

(Touch under the word unfortunate.)
This word is unfortunate. What word?
Unfortunate. Unfortunate means unlucky. What does unfortunate mean? Unlucky.

(Touch under the words sanitation department.) **These words are sanitation department. What words?**
Sanitation department. The job of the sanitation department is to keep a city clean. They pick up the garbage.

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 *Where the Red Fern Grows*

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

I was walking along whistling when I heard the dogfight. At	11
first I paid no attention to it. After all it wasn't anything to get	25
excited about, just another dogfight in a <u>residential section</u> .	34
As the sound of the fight grew nearer, I could tell there were	47
quite a few dogs mixed up in it. They boiled out of an alley,	61
turned, and headed straight toward me. Not wanting to get bitten	72
or run over, I moved over to the edge of the sidewalk.	84
I could see that all the dogs were fighting one. About twenty-	96
five feet from me they caught him and down he went. I felt sorry	110
for the <u>unfortunate</u> one. I knew if something wasn't done quickly	121
the <u>sanitation department</u> would have to pick up a dead dog.	132
I was trying to make up my mind to help when I got a surprise.	147
Up out of that snarling, growling, slashing mass reared an old	158
redbone hound. For a second I saw him. I caught my breath. I	171
couldn't believe what I had seen.	177

Excerpt from: Rawls, Wilson. Where the Red Fern Grows. New York, New York: Random House, Inc., 1996.