

Placement Test

Preparation: You will need a copy of the novel *The Sign of the Beaver*. 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 100 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 Sign of the Beaver*. Later, each of you will read part of page 3 of this novel aloud to me to help me decide if you are ready to read this book.**

In this novel a pioneer boy named Matt is being left alone to take care of the family cabin and farm while his father goes to bring back the rest of Matt's family. You will read part of the advice Matt's father gave him for taking care of things while he is away.

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 3.)
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 hard to reckon.) **These words are hard to reckon. What words? *Hard to reckon*. *Hard to reckon* is an old-fashioned way of saying hard to figure out. If something is hard to reckon it is hard to... *figure out*.**

(Touch under specially.) **This word is specially. What word? *Specially*. We would usually say especially, but Matt's father has shortened the word. Be very careful to read the word like Matt's father said it when you read this page to me.**

(Touch under notches.) **This word is notches. What word? *Notches*. Often pioneers did not have calendars, so they cut a small piece out of a stick each day. Once seven days were cut out of a stick, they knew one week had passed.**

(Touch under chink.) **This word is chink. What word? *Chink*. Pioneers often built their houses out of logs.**

The logs had spaces between them. They filled the spaces with mud so cold air could not come into the house. This mud was called chink. What do we call the mud the pioneers used between the logs of their houses? *Chink*.

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 Sign of the Beaver*

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

“Six weeks,” his father had said that morning. “Maybe	9
seven. <u>Hard to reckon</u> exactly. With your ma and sister	19
we’ll have slow going, <u>specially</u> with the new little	28
one.	29
“You may lose track of the weeks,” he had added.	39
“Easy thing to do when you’re alone. Might be well to	50
make <u>notches</u> on a stick, seven notches to a stick. When	61
you get to the seventh stick you can start looking for us.”	73
A silly think to do, Matt thought, as though he	83
couldn’t count the weeks for himself. But he wouldn’t	92
argue about it, not on the last morning.	100
Then his father reached up to a <u>chink</u> in the log wall	112
and took down the battered tin box that held his watch	123
and his compass and a few silver coins. He took out the	135
big silver watch.	138

Excerpt from: Speare, Elizabeth George. The Sign of the Beaver. New York, New York: Dell Publishing, 1983.