

Placement Test

Preparation: You will need a copy of the novel *My Brother Sam is Dead*. 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 *My Brother Sam Is Dead*. 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.**

This novel takes place during the American War of Independence. It tells the story of the conflict within a family when most of the family are loyal supporters of the English king, but one son enlists in the new American Revolutionary Army.

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 word taproom.) **This word is taproom. What word?**
Taproom. A taproom is the room in a tavern or bar where food and drink is served. What do you call the room in a tavern or bar where food and drink is served? A taproom.

(Touch under the word minister.) **This word is minister. What word?**
Minister. A minister is the leader of a Christian church, especially a Protestant one. What do we call the leader of a Christian church? A minister.

(Touch under the word fetched.) **This word is fetched. What word?** *Fetched.*
Fetched is an old-fashioned word that means went after and brought back something. What word means went after and brought back something? *Fetched.*

(Touch under the word embarrassed.) **This word is embarrassed. What word?** *Embarrassed.*
Embarrassed means self-conscious or ashamed. What word means self-conscious or ashamed? *Embarrassed.*

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 *My Brother Sam Is Dead*

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

| | |
|---|-----|
| There were seven of us at the table in the <u>taproom</u> . | 11 |
| Mother and Father and me were there. Then there was | 21 |
| the <u>minister</u> , Mr. Beach, who lived in Newtown but | 30 |
| spent Saturday night here in Redding so he could | 39 |
| preach in our church early Sunday morning. Then | 47 |
| there was a couple of farmers from Redding Center I | 57 |
| didn't know, and, of course, Sam. But still they all sat | 68 |
| silent. I guess they figured that it was up to Father | 79 |
| to speak first, seeing as Sam was his son. | 88 |
| My mother got up, <u>fetched</u> a plate from the rack, | 98 |
| and filled it with stew from the iron pot on the fire. | 110 |
| Then she drew Sam a pot of beer from the tap and put | 123 |
| it all down in front of him. He was hungry, and he | 135 |
| bent over his plate and began shoving in the food as | 146 |
| fast as he could. | 150 |
| "Don't eat like that," Father snapped. | 156 |
| Sam looked <u>embarrassed</u> and sat up straight. | 163 |

Excerpt from: Collier, James Lincoln and Collier, Christopher. *My Brother Sam Is Dead*. New York, New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1974.