

LEARNING READINESS

Determining a child's readiness for learning has been a most challenging task over the years. What constitutes a child's readiness for formal learning is a contentious issue-how is readiness defined? How is it measured? Usually, a teacher will gather information from past reports, direct observations of classroom behaviour and a student's reaction to specific tasks and activities to determine readiness for formal learning.

Reading readiness tests were commonly used in schools through the 1950s and 1960s. During my time at the Education Department's Curriculum and Research Branch in the mid to late 1960s, they were a central focus of interest and research.

Readiness for formal learning, mainly reading, typically was, and continues to be, assessed by measuring or observing a student's development in cognitive areas including motor skills, visual and auditory perceptual skills, language and thinking, motivational and attention skills as well as other maturational indicators both social and emotional.

THE EARLY LEARNING CHECKLIST (Sykes, 2000)

The Early Learning Checklist (ELC) was developed from components of the *Gates Reading Readiness Tests* (1939), Daniels and Diack's, *The Standard Reading Tests* (1964), the *Boehm Test of Basic Concepts* (1971), the *Brigance Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills* (1993), Curriculum Associates Inc., and items from the *Perceptual Abilities Test*, (Sykes, 1998) and specifically developed literacy and numeracy tests.

The aims of this Checklist are to:

- Identify the student's mastery of basic general, literacy and numeracy skills
- Identify learning needs
- Provide directions for instructional planning and interventions.

GENERAL SKILLS

Personal Information

The student is required to answer the following questions and then to give written responses, if able.

Tick correct responses.

Item	Knows ✓	Writes ✓
1. First name		
2. Full name		
3. Age		
4. Boy/Girl		
5. Names members of family		
6. Name of suburb/town		
7. Street name		
8. Street number		
9. Date of birth		
10. Telephone number		
11. School name		

Body Parts

The student is required to identify the following body parts, by pointing to mentioned part.

Tick correct responses.

Item	✓	Item	✓	Item	✓
1. mouth		11. legs		21. chin	
2. eyes		12. arms		22. fingernails	
3. nose		13. fingers		23. heels	
4. feet		14. thumbs		24. elbows	
5. hair		15. toes		25. shoulders	
6. tongue		16. neck		26. ankles	
7. teeth		17. stomach		27. jaw	
8. hands		18. chest		28. hips	
9. ears		19. back		29. wrists	
10. head		20. knees		30. waist	

Colours

The student is required to identify the following colours. Use pictures, drawings, pencils etc. as cues.

Tick correct responses.

Item	✓	Item	✓
1. red		6. brown	
2. blue		7. black	
3. green		8. pink	
4. yellow		9. grey	
5. orange		10. white	

Directional, Positional and Quantitative Concepts and Terms

The student is required to demonstrate a knowledge of the following concepts and terms. Pictures, drawings and/or actions may be used to test an understanding of each concept.

Tick correct responses.

Item	✓	Item	✓
1. up/down		9. below/above	
2. out/in		10. off/on	
3. top/middle/bottom		11. front/back	
4. over/under		12. right/left	
5. closed/open		13. big/small	
6. low/high		14. short/long	
7. inside/outside		15. some/many	
8. beginning/end		16. half/whole	

Draws a Person

The student is required to draw a person. Tick details present.

Item	✓	Item	✓	Item	✓
1. head		5. mouth		9. ears	
2. legs		6. arms		10. neck	
3. eyes		7. trunk		11. feet	
4. nose		8. hands		12. fingers	

Visual-Motor Skills

The student is required to copy geometric shapes provided by the teacher. Approximate "expected" age levels are provided below shapes. Tick correct responses.

1. Circle	✓	2. Cross	✓	3. Square	✓	4. Triangle	✓	5. Diamond	✓	6. Triangle in a Triangle	✓
(3)		(3-4)		(4-5)		(5-6)		(6-7)		(7-8)	

Visual Discrimination of Letters and Words

The student identifies which of four letters and words is different in each row.

Tick correct responses and underline the student's responses.

Letters:

1.	c	c	o	c
2.	m	n	m	m
3.	p	p	p	q
4.	u	n	n	n
5.	d	d	b	d

Words:

1.	on	on	no	on
2.	ten	ten	ten	tan
3.	saw	was	was	was
4.	step	stop	step	step
5.	bream	bream	braem	bream

Auditory Sequential Memory of Digits

The student is required to recall digit sequences. Digits presented **1 per second**. Two trials at each level e.g., 7-5 then 4-8 etc.

Approximate "expected" age levels are provided.

Record student's responses.

Forward

The teacher says numbers forward and student repeats numbers forward. e.g., teacher says 7, 5 and student expected to say 7, 5, etc.

Numbers	✓	Numbers	✓	<u>Years</u>
1. 7, 5		4, 8		(2-3)
2. 2, 5, 3		1, 4, 6		(3-4)
3. 4, 8, 1, 5		9, 6, 3, 8		(5-6)
4. 7, 1, 3, 6, 9		2, 7, 9, 8, 4		(6-7)
5. 6, 2, 8, 1, 7, 5		4, 9, 1, 3, 6, 8		(7-8)

Backward

The teacher says the numbers forward and the student repeats order backward.
eg., teacher says 2-6 and student expected to say 6-2, etc.

Tick correct responses.

Numbers	✓	Numbers	✓	<u>Years</u>
1. 2, 6		4, 9		(5-6)
2. 8, 1, 5		7, 3, 6		(6-7)
3. 9, 4, 1, 7		6, 2, 5, 8		(7-8)
4. 5, 3, 2, 9, 7		1, 4, 8, 6, 9		(8-9)

Auditory Discrimination of Words

The student is asked to say "same" or "different" to each pair of words.

Tick correct responses.

Same or Not	✓	Same or Not	✓
lake/rake		pit/pet	
grub/grab		shop/shop	
just/gust		pig/dig	
bid/bid		strain/strain	
train/twain		brake/drake	
name/name		tip/dip	
glad/glad		crab/grab	

Auditory Blending of Words

The teacher gives the sounds (at a rate of 1 per second) and the student is required to say the word.

Tick correct responses.

Sequence	✓
c-a-t	<input type="checkbox"/>
d-o-g	<input type="checkbox"/>
t-w-i-n	<input type="checkbox"/>
h-a-n-d	<input type="checkbox"/>
fr-o-g	<input type="checkbox"/>
sh-e-d	<input type="checkbox"/>
b-e-nd	<input type="checkbox"/>
m-o-th	<input type="checkbox"/>
l-u-n-ch	<input type="checkbox"/>
dr-a-g-o-n	<input type="checkbox"/>
e-l-e-ph-a-n-t	<input type="checkbox"/>
c-a-t-er-p-i-ll-ar	<input type="checkbox"/>

Identifying Initial Sounds in Spoken Words

The student identifies the initial sound in the following words.

Teacher says the word and has the student identify the "first" sound in each word.

Tick correct responses.

Say "first" sound	✓
sun	
tip	
dog	
cat	
get	
pig	
bus	
nest	
fish	
chin	
shop	
thing	

Identifying Final Sounds in Spoken Words

The student identifies the final sound in the following words.
Teacher says the word and has the student identify the "last" sound in each word.

Tick correct responses.

Say "last" sound	✓
cup	
ten	
crab	
bank	
jazz	
tram	
dress	
bird	
give	
animal	
cricket	
giraffe	

Identifying Medial Sounds in Spoken Words

The student identifies the medial sound in the following words. Teacher says the word and has the student identify the "middle" sound in each word.

Say "middle" sound	✓
bag	
pin	
fog	
sun	
met	
room	
time	
save	
beach	
tune	
boat	
soil	

LITERACY SKILLS

Reciting the Alphabet

Student is required to recite the alphabet.

Tick correct responses. Record any omissions and substitutions.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

Recognising Lower-case Letters (Names)

Student is required to give the name for each letter.

Tick correct responses. Record incorrect responses.

a	d	g	q	b	p	c	e	l	t	i	f	j
n	m	r	h	o	u	v	w	y	x	z	k	s

Recognising Lower-case Letters (Sounds)

Student is required to give the sound for each letter.

Tick correct responses. Record incorrect responses.

a	d	g	q	b	p	c	e	l	t	i	f	j
n	m	r	h	o	u	v	w	y	x	z	k	s

Recognising Upper-case Letters (Names)

Student is required to give the name of each letter.

Tick correct responses. Record incorrect responses.

O	A	D	G	Q	B	P	C	E	L	T	I	F
J	N	M	R	H	U	V	W	Y	X	Z	K	S

Writing Lower-case Letters when Sounds are given

Student is required to write the letters when sounds are given.

Tick correct responses. Record incorrect responses. **Note starting point and if letter formation is correct.**

o	a	d	g	q	b	p	c	e	l	t	i	f
j	n	m	r	h	u	v	w	y	x	z	k	s

Writing Lower-case Letters when Names are given

Student is required to write the letters when names are given.

Tick correct responses. Record incorrect responses. **Note starting point and if letter formation is correct.**

o	a	d	g	q	b	p	c	e	l	t	i	f
j	n	m	r	h	u	v	w	y	x	z	k	s

BASIC NUMERACY SKILLS

Student Counts by Rote to 20 or beyond

Record the result.

Student Counts Objects (blocks, counters etc.) to 20 or beyond

Record the result. **Note**-it is essential that the student quickly establishes the "correct" counting strategy. One-to-one correspondence

("one touch-one count") left to right across the row and then down to next line and repeat etc. Check for random/mixed strategies e.g., right to left/left to right counting, down-up, up-down, counting etc

Student Understands Numbers

The student is required to show quantities (counters, blocks, objects, etc.) to match numbers.

Tick correct responses.

1	3	6	4	5	8	7	2	10	9

Student Recognises Written Numbers

The student is required to recognise the following numbers

Tick correct responses. Record incorrect responses.

5	8	12	17	24	29	31	36	40	55	63	72	89	90	102

Student Writes Numbers in Sequence

The student is required to write numbers in order. Stop testing if student reaches 50. Note any reversals and omissions.

Student reads number words to 10.

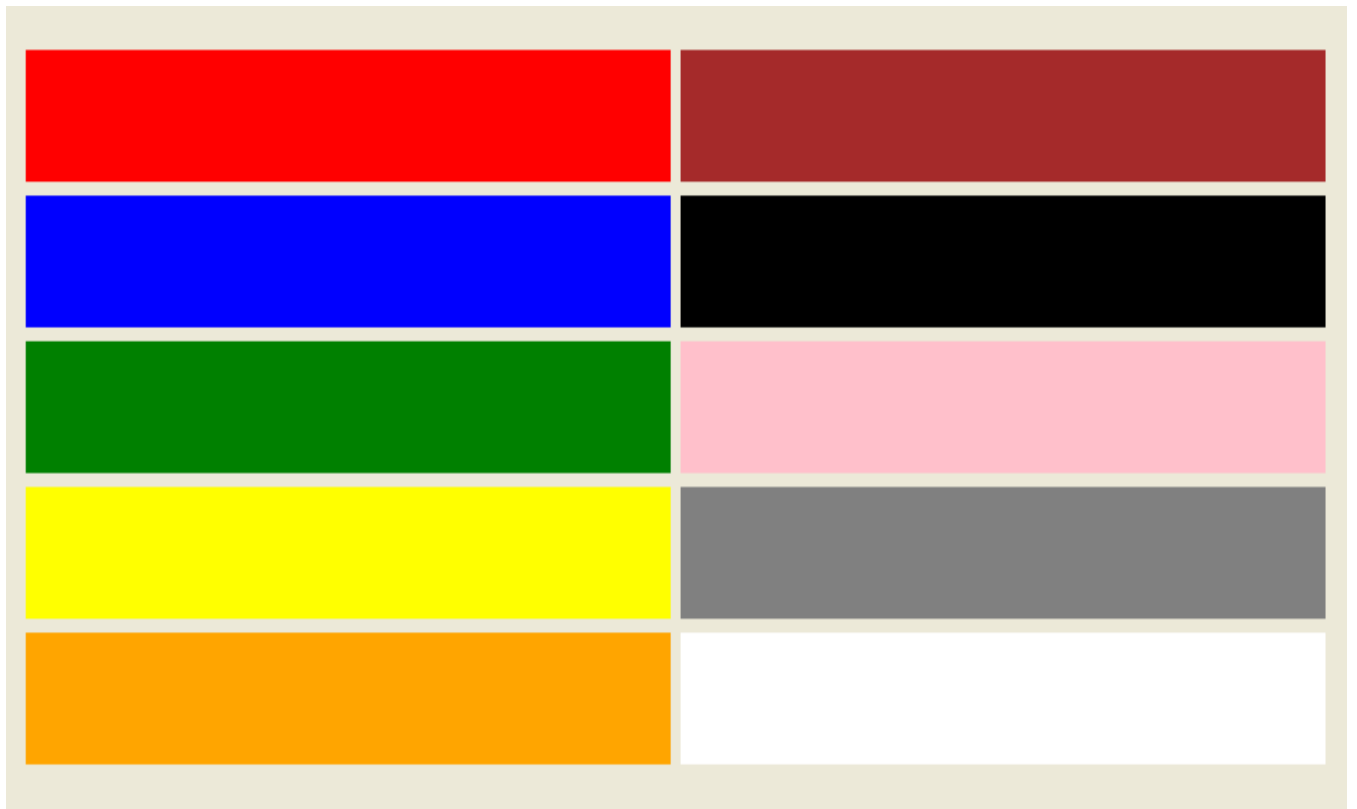
Tick correct responses. Record incorrect responses.

Have each word on a card.

three, one, ten, four, seven, five, two, eight, six, nine.

As most of the skills assessed by this checklist are important prerequisites in the acquisition and development of early literacy and numeracy skills, a careful study of the student's responses should provide useful directions for instruction. The checklist can be used as a "test and teach" aid.

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

three	one
ten	four
seven	five
two	eight
six	nine

This resource has been prepared by Dr. Stewart C. Sykes - Psychologist. MAPS.
Former Associate Professor of Psychology and Special Education and Director of the
Krongold Centre for Exceptional Children.
Monash University, Australia.

Office: 189-191 Balaclava Road Caulfield North Victoria Australia 3161
Ph: 03 9526 0017
Fax: 03 9526 0099
Email: stewart@docsykes.com

Copyright © 2009 Dr. Stewart C. Sykes. All rights reserved.
Revised: 9-February-2009