

Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST) Introduction

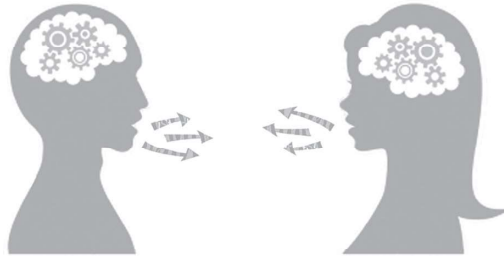
The Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST) in this book is an informal, diagnostic, individually administered assessment tool to help you determine the point of instruction for your students and monitor progress made from doing the activities you select. Because it is not a normed test, there can be flexibility in its administration. You can reteach the directions as necessary or add your own word for the child to blend, segment, or delete if you want to gather additional information on a particular student.

The materials the administrator of the assessment needs include the assessment itself, a pencil, and counters or chips for the student to use for the segmentation part. If counters are not available, the student can clap the number of segments instead. The assessment is administered orally since PA has to do with the sounds of language.

When Skills Are Typically Mastered

Although children develop their PA skills at different rates, it is helpful to be aware of when specific skills are typically mastered. The following table presents a suggested time line; however, these are general grade-level alignments, and you can expect some overlap.

Skill Number	Skill	Typically Mastered
1	Concept of spoken word	Preschool/kindergarten
2	Rhyme recognition	Preschool/kindergarten
3	Rhyme completion	Preschool/kindergarten
4	Rhyme production	Kindergarten
5	Syllable blending	Kindergarten
6	Syllable segmentation	Kindergarten
7	Syllable deletion	Kindergarten
8	Phoneme isolation of initial sound	Kindergarten
9	Phoneme isolation of final sound	Kindergarten/first grade
10	Phoneme blending—onset and rime	First grade
11	Phoneme blending—all phonemes	First grade
12	Phoneme segmentation	First grade
13	Phoneme deletion of initial sound	First grade
14	Phoneme deletion of final sound	First grade/second grade
15	Adding phonemes	First grade/second grade
16	Phoneme substitution of initial sound	Second grade



Frequently Asked Questions

Question

How fast do you say the sentences in the concept of spoken word section?

Answer

Talk in a normal conversational speed. If you tend to speak rapidly, slow it down, but speak in a natural, conversational voice.

Question

Do you administer the entire test to every child?

Answer

“Best practices” suggest that you should assess every student. However, for those students who do not appear to be struggling, you may not want to administer any of it. Be aware, though, that sometimes a student only *appears* to be doing okay. Such a child may have a good sight-word vocabulary because words in early books are almost always in a student’s oral vocabulary. But once students reach the latter part of third grade, they begin to encounter many words not in their oral vocabularies, and some students then have difficulty decoding these words because of a lack of PA skills.

Start at the section where a student will have a success rate of at least five out of six correct, and go from there. You can use your judgment, based on kid watching and other school assessments, to make your decision about where to begin administering the test. If you are unsure, however, start at the beginning (concept of spoken word). Erring on the side of “too easy” when choosing where to begin the assessment is a good rule of thumb.

Question

At what point do you stop administering the assessment?

Answer

Administer the test until the child reaches a frustration level; typically, if the student misses three out of six, stop. However, use your judgment. Some children get stuck on rhyme but can do syllable blending without any problem.

Question

How many questions should a child answer correctly on each section of the assessment to be successful?

Answer

To be successful, a child needs to correctly answer at least five out of six questions, but compare the grade level of the child with the grade level at which a skill is typically mastered.

Question

What do you do with the information you get from giving the test?

Answer

Look at the first section where the child missed two or more, and use the activities in this book that relate to that section. Consider starting with Tier 2 activities if the child misses skills that are supposed to be mastered at their grade level. However, follow the RTI guidelines at your school concerning decisions about placing children into Tier 2 or 3 instruction. Of course, you may choose to use the Tier 2 and 3 activities with students who are not mastering the PAST skills and are not yet placed in a Tier 2 or 3 group for instruction.

Question

When and how often should this assessment be administered?

Answer

Consider assessing two to three times a year. The first test, or pretest, can be given in August or September. Some kindergarten teachers prefer to wait until January to give a phonological awareness assessment because of the diversity of children's home-language environments. After students experience PA instruction and activities for the first part of the year in kindergarten, it may be easier to tell who is not progressing and therefore requires intervention. Other kindergarten teachers like to get baseline data on their students and prefer to give the pretest in August.

Regardless, after the children experience whole-group and/or small-group activities relating to the assessment, it should be given in January to monitor progress. A final test, or post-test, should be given in April or May. Some teachers copy the tests on different-colored paper to help identify when the assessment was given—for instance, yellow in August, red in December, and green in April.

It is not necessary to repeat the section(s) of the test where the child scored at least five out of six correctly. Each time the assessment is given again, start at the point where the child made more than one error out of six questions.

The previous guidelines are appropriate for Tier 1 students. Additional assessing and monitoring are necessary for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. See the recommended monitoring times in the chart on page xix. Your school may have its own phonological screening instruments so you can follow those guidelines. You may also repeat sections of the PAST. Since it is an informal diagnostic tool and not one that has to be administered the same way to each student, you may want to change some of the words for successive testing, so the student doesn't memorize the words. Just follow the instructions in the skill section you are assessing, but add your own words. Choose words that are about the same length or have the same number of syllables as the words provided in the test.

Question

What will I learn by assessing my Spanish-speaking students in Spanish?

Answer

Research suggests that phonological awareness skills transfer from one language to another (Durgunoglu and Oney 2000). By using the Spanish-language PAST with your Spanish-speaking students, you will learn if your students have a sense of phonological awareness in their native language. If they pass the Spanish version but fail the English PAST, the barrier is likely a language barrier and not a phonological awareness barrier. If a student performs poorly on the PAST in their native language, then you might want to seek additional support for the student.

Question

How can I administer the Spanish-language PAST to my students if I don't speak Spanish?

Answer

Consider asking a bilingual teacher or other Spanish speaker in your district to administer the test to your Spanish-speaking students. Or perhaps you could invite a retired Spanish-speaking teacher to help.

Question

How do I find the time to give this test to my students?

Answer

There are several options. Consider having an instructional aide or volunteer work with the rest of the class while you test. Some teachers assess during sustained silent reading, while others do it while students are in flex groups or centers.

Question

What if I continue to assess the child and they do not show adequate progress?

Answer

It is possible that the student might need to move from Tier 2 to Tier 3 or even need a special education referral. Another possibility is that the child is not developmentally ready to master the skill. For example, a child who cannot delete the first sound in a word is not likely to succeed at sound substitution.

Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

1. Concept of Spoken Word

Tell the student you are going to play a game with words and colored chips. Use the sentence “Joey likes cake” as an example. As you say each word of the sentence, push a colored chip forward—one chip per word. Then ask the child to do it. Once the student understands the skill, read each sentence to the student and ask the child to repeat the sentence while pushing up one chip for each word. Ask the student how many words are in the sentence. Put a check in the box to the right of the sentence if the child does it correctly.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Tom ran home. | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I have two pets. | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Did you eat lunch? | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. What are you doing? | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Terry loves to play soccer. | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Yesterday it rained. | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

2. Rhyme Recognition

Tell the child that two words that sound alike at the end, such as *hat* and *sat*, are rhyming words. Ask if *sit* and *bit* rhyme. (yes) Then ask if *chair* and *boy* rhyme. (no) If the child appears to grasp the skill, do the same for each of the following pairs of words. Put a check in the box to the right of the pair if the child answers correctly.

- | | | |
|----------------|-----|--------------------------|
| 1. top—hop | yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. bed—said | yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. run—soap | no | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. hand—sand | yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. funny—bunny | yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. bat—base | no | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

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3. Rhyme Completion

Tell the child that you are going to say a poem but need help finishing it. Read the following example and ask the child to help you complete the poem with a rhyming word. *I like to walk, I like to hike, I like to ride my big blue _____.* The child should say "bike." If the child seems to grasp the skill, do the same for the following items. Put a check in the box to the right if the child answers correctly. Consider it correct if the child chooses another rhyming word other than the one listed, including a nonsense word, as long as it rhymes.

1. The big bald eagle likes to fly.

So very high up in the _____. sky ☐

2. Our teacher said to sit up straight.

Then asked us all to count to _____. eight ☐

3. I saw some grapes, a whole big bunch.

I think I'll eat them for my _____. lunch ☐

4. The tree outside my room is tall.

I saw the leaves about to _____. fall ☐

5. My mother's ring is very old.

It's made of silver and of _____. gold ☐

6. My cold is bad and getting worse.

My teacher said to see the _____. nurse ☐

Total: _____

4. Rhyme Production

Tell the child that you are going to say a word. The student is to tell you a word that rhymes with it. The answer can be a real word or a nonsense word. Ask the child to tell you a word that rhymes with *sit*. Possible answers include *bit*, *fit*, *mit*, *pit*, *dit*, and *jit*. Put a check in the box to the right if the child answers correctly. Write down the child's answers on the lines provided.

1. pan _____ ☐

2. cake _____ ☐

3. hop _____ ☐

4. see _____ ☐

5. dark _____ ☐

6. candy _____ ☐

Total: _____

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5. Syllable Blending

Tell the child you are going to say a word in a funny way. The job of the student is to put the parts together and say the whole word. Give these examples, pausing between syllables: *out—side* (*outside*), *ro—bot* (*robot*). Have the child say the sample words normally. Then do the following words and put a check in the box to the right if the child says them correctly.

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. pen—cil | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. black—board | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. rain—bow | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. side—walk | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. pop—corn | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. pa—per | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

6. Syllable Segmentation

Tell the student that you are going to say a word and then break it into parts, or syllables. First say, “rainbow.” Then clap out the two parts in *rainbow* while saying each part. Then push up a chip as you say each syllable. Read each of the following words, and ask the child to push up a chip while saying each syllable. It is not necessary to clap the syllables again unless the skill needs to be retaught. Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------------|---------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. sometime | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. fantastic | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. basket | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. maybe | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. bedroom | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. helicopter | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

7. Syllable Deletion

Tell the student you are going to play a game with words where one part of the word is left out. For example, *sunshine* without *shine* is *sun*. Ask the child to say *airline* without *air*. The child should say “line.” Using the words below, tell the child the syllable to leave off. Use this sentence structure: “Say (down)town without down.” Put a check in the box to the right if the student deletes the correct syllable.

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1. (down)town | town | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. bas(ket) | bas | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. (in)side | side | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. af(ter) | af | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. for(get) | for | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. (skate)board | board | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

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8. Phoneme Isolation of Initial Sound

Tell the child you are going to say a word, and they are to tell you the first sound of that word. Ask the child what the first sound is in the word *top*. The child should say /t/. Do the same with the words below and put a check in the box to the right if the child says the first sound correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-----|--------------------------|----------|------|--------------------------|
| 1. big | /b/ | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. apple | /a/ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. land | /l/ | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. desk | /d/ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. farm | /f/ | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. ship | /sh/ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

9. Phoneme Isolation of Final Sound

Tell the child you are going to say a word. The student is to tell you the last sound in the word. Ask the child what the last sound is in the word *pot*. The child should say /t/. Do the same with the words below and put a check in the box to the right if the child says the sound correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-----|--------------------------|----------|------|--------------------------|
| 1. pick | /k/ | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. bug | /g/ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. ran | /n/ | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. same | /m/ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. fill | /l/ | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. tooth | /th/ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

10. Phoneme Blending—Onset and Rime

Tell the student that you are going to say some words in a funny way. The job of the student is to put the parts together and say the whole word. Do these examples by segmenting each word into onset and rime. Then have the child say the whole word blended together: /m/ /op/ is *mop*; /n/ /est/ is *nest*. Put a check in the box to the right if the child says the whole word correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----|--------------------------|---------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1. /s/ /un/ | sun | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. /f/ /ish/ | fish | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. /p/ /ig/ | pig | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. /ch/ /op/ | chop | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. /b/ /us/ | bus | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. /sp/ /ill/ | spill | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

11. Phoneme Blending—All Phonemes

Tell the student that you are going to separate all the sounds in a word. The student is to say the whole word. Do these examples by segmenting each sound and having the student say the whole word, for example, /s/ /ī/ /t/ is *sit*, and /s/ /t/ /ŏ/ /p/ is *stop*. Read each word in segmented fashion. Put a check in the box to the right if the child says the whole word correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|--------------------------|------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1. /m/ /ē/ | me | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. /m/ /ŭ/ /s/ /t/ | must | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. /b/ /ě/ /d/ | bed | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. /sh/ /ŏ/ /p/ | shop | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. /h/ /ă/ /t/ | hat | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. /p/ /l/ /ă/ /n/ /t/ | plant | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

12. Phoneme Segmentation

Tell the student that you're going to play a game with all the sounds in the words below. As an example, show the student the three sounds in *dime*. Push up a chip for each sound you say—/d/ /ī/ /m/. Ask the child to try it with the word *hat*. Read each of the following words and ask the student to push up a chip for each sound. Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|---------|---|--------------------------|---------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. in | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. ship | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. at | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. sock | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. name | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. chin | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

13. Phoneme Deletion of Initial Sound

Tell the child you will be playing a word game where the beginning sound of a word is left off. For example, *bed* without /b/ is *ed*. Ask the child to say *fan* without /f/. The answer is *an*. Read each word below and tell the child the beginning sound to leave off. Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|----------|----|--------------------------|-----------|-----|--------------------------|
| 1. /s/un | un | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. /n/eck | eck | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. /p/ig | ig | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. /b/at | at | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. /m/op | op | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. /t/ape | ape | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

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14. Phoneme Deletion of Final Sound

Tell the child that in this word game, the final sound of a word is left off. For example, *goat* without /t/ is *go*. Ask the child to say *meat* without /t/. The answer is *me*. Read each word and tell the child the ending sound to leave off. Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|------------|------|--------------------------|-----------|-----|--------------------------|
| 1. ro/d/e | row | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. sea/t/ | sea | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. trai/n/ | tray | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. ba/k/e | bay | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. grou/p/ | grew | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. in/ch/ | in | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

15. Adding Phonemes

Tell the child that you are going to add a sound to the beginning of a word to make a new word. For example, when /f/ is added to *an* you get *fan*. Ask the child to say *at*. Ask what you get when you add /m/. The child should say "mat." Ask the child to do the same with the rest of the words below. Put a check in the box to the right if the child is able to blend the word correctly.

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| 1. Say <i>it</i> . Now add /f/. | fit | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Say <i>ink</i> . Now add /s/. | sink | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Say <i>ice</i> . Now add /n/. | nice | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Say <i>in</i> . Now add /ch/. | chin | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Say <i>end</i> . Now add /b/. | bend | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Say <i>top</i> . Now add /s/. | stop | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

16. Phoneme Substitution of Initial Sound

Tell the child you will be playing a very different game with sounds of words. You are going to ask them to take off the first sound of a word and replace it with another sound. Example: Replace the first sound in *pail* with /m/. The new word is *mail*. Ask the child to replace the first sound in *top* with /h/. The word is *hop*. Ask the child to do the same with the rest of these words. If the child answers correctly, put a check in the box to the right.

- | | | |
|--|------|--------------------------|
| 1. Replace the first sound in <i>man</i> with /k/. | can | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Replace the first sound in <i>pig</i> with /d/. | dig | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Replace the first sound in <i>sack</i> with /t/. | tack | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Replace the first sound in <i>well</i> with /f/. | fell | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Replace the first sound in <i>bed</i> with /r/. | red | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Replace the first sound in <i>shop</i> with /ch/. | chop | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total: _____

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