Reading Progress Rubrics: Kindergarten

About these Rubrics

Each rubric represents a continuum of skills, leading to grade-level proficiency. Grade-level proficiency represents information from a variety of states' content standards, including the Common Core standards. You might not find a one-to-one correspondence with your particular standards or curriculum. However, if students can perform the actions represented here as "grade level expectations," they will become strong, proficient readers over time.

How to Use the Rubrics

These rubrics help you understand "next steps" learning. They ensure that your students have the foundation skill necessary to learn more complex skills. In this way, these rubrics will help you with lesson planning. The indicators for each are skill-based, not knowledge based (e.g., "the student will learn/know...") or conceptual (e.g., "the student will understand..."). The indicators are specific actions that you can observe.

As you work with students, pay attention to what you see them do. Then, decide which level they can perform all the behaviors. Does the student demonstrate all the skills for level 1? If so, look at level 2. Does the student demonstrate all the skills for level 2? If so, look at level 3. The student's reading level is the highest level at which he or she can consistently perform *all* the listed skills.

When you determine what level a student has mastered, your role is to develop instructional opportunities that will help students perform the skills in the *next* level. For example, if a student can consistently perform all the actions in level 2 but not level 3, you will provide instruction to help the student perform the skills in level 3.

How Not to Use the Rubrics

Of course we want every student to read on or above grade level. Unfortunately, many students are not ready to begin learning grade-level skills. They do not have the background knowledge or foundational skills to learn grade-level skills.

As you look at these rubrics, do not focus on the grade-level skills (level 4) and provide instruction of those skills. If the students are not ready for them, they cannot learn them or will not be able to demonstrate them consistently in the long term. You have to pay attention to the developmental stages (levels 0 – 3).

The Reading Levels

Each grade level and each reading component has 6 levels in these rubrics: level 0 through level 6.

Level 0: the student has no ability in that reading component or is significantly behind reading ability.

Levels 1–3: the student is making progress towards grade-level proficiency

Level 4: the student is on grade level; the specific items in bold face are the essential grade-level skills for that reading component

Level 5: the student has exceeded grade-level expectations for that reading component; use the next higher rubrics to determine next steps for learning

Indicators in level 4 are the grade-level skills. Indicators in level 4 that are depicted in bold face type are the essential skills for a particular grade level. Any student who can demonstrate all level 4 skills is on grade level for that reading component area.

A Few FAQs

1. **What If a Student is Below Level 0 for a grade level or specific reading component?**

For kindergarten, level 0 means "no ability," so there is nothing below level 0. For students in grades 1–8, however, it is possible to be below level 0. If you have a student in this situation, get a copy of the rubrics for the next grade group down. For example, if a 4th grade student cannot perform level 0 for a certain reading component, use the rubrics for grades 2–3. But keep the "correct" grade-level rubrics on hand: students will eventually be ready to perform the skills described by that rubric.

2. **What If a Student is Above Level 5 for a grade level or specific reading component?**

First, that's great! Second, that does not mean that you no longer need to provide instruction in that reading component. If the student can learn more, your job is to help him or her do it. Take a look at the rubrics for the next higher grade group and find the next level for learning.

3. **Are the rubrics sequential across grade levels? Does level 5 for one grade level correspond to level 0 for the next grade level?**

No. Instead, they are overlapping. This reflects the fact that students in a grade level may be far behind (or above) expectations. Because they are overlapping, the rubrics will provide anticipated development for students in various grade levels. The rubrics are organized like this:

Level 0	**Kindergarten**	Level 5		
		Level 0	**First Grade**	Level 5

As a result, a student who can perform the grade-level skills for one rubric will not be at level 0 for the next higher rubric, though he or she might also not be ready to learn the grade-level skills represented on the next higher level rubric. As noted before, observe the student and determine what level the student has mastered, and then provide instruction to help the student master the next level.

Rubric for Phonemic Awareness

	0	1	2	3	4	5
K	Student is unable to identify any sounds within given words or words containing given sounds.	Student is able to identify beginning sound of own name.	Student is able to identify beginning sounds of simple words.	Student is able to identify beginning and end, sounds of words.	**Student is able to demonstrate understanding that spoken language is a sequence of identifiable sounds.** Student is able to identify beginning, end, and middle sounds of common, simple words. Student is able to identify rhyming one syllable words.	Student is able to blend and segment the phonemes of one syllable words. Student is able to identify rhyming two syllable words. Student is able to change beginning and ending sounds in words to produce new words.

Rubric for Phonics

	0	1	2	3	4	5
K	Student does not know most letters of the alphabet and cannot link sounds to letters.	Student is able to name most but not all letters of the alphabet. Student can identify own name in writing.	Student is able to name the letters of the alphabet. Student is able to recognize letters by name when presented in writing. Student is able to read own name.	Student is able to name the letters of the alphabet and describe the common sounds of consonants. Student is able to recognize the beginning sound in common one-syllable words when presented in writing.	Student is able to name the letters of the alphabet and describe the sound each makes. **Student is able to demonstrate decoding and word recognition strategies and skills by: recognizing common words by sight; recognizing beginning consonant letter-sound associations in one-syllable words.**	Student can recognize common one and two-syllable words by sight and can decode new one syllable words using knowledge of sound-letter associations.

Rubric for Fluency

	0	1	2	3	4	5
K	Student is unable to read any words aloud.	Student is able to read aloud own name.	Student is able to read aloud own name, and some simple, common words.	Student is able to read aloud simple, common words after teacher reads same words.	Student is able to identify and read aloud simple, common words.	Student is able to read aloud simple sentences using one syllable words with comprehension.

Rubric for Vocabulary

	0	1	2	3	4	5
K	Student doesn't meaning of common phrases or words.	Student is able to name common objects. Student is able to understand simple words, commands, and expressions.	Student is able to name common objects. Student is able to use descriptive words for people and things.	Student is able to use descriptive words for people and things. Student is able to classify common things by category (e.g., food items, animals). Student is able to ask for clarification of words not understood.	Student is able to use descriptive words for people, places, and actions. Student is able to ask for clarification of words not understood. Student is able to classify words by categories (e.g., colors, numbers, food) and determine which words are misclassified.	Student is able to use and read all words in grade-level text. Student is able to use text, picture, and story clues to discover probable meanings of unknown words.

Rubric for Comprehension

	0	1	2	3	4	5
K	Student displays no comprehension of any text.	Student is able to identify some events from a story. Student can identify characters from a story.	Student is able to identify main characters of a story. Student is able to describe some events from a story.	Student is able to identify main characters of a story. Student is able to identify main events of a story.	**Student is able to sequence a story to include beginning, middle, and end.** **Student is able to relate events in a story to own life.** **Student is able to identify the characters, setting, and important events in a story.**	Student is able to listen to and retell short stories. Student is able to respond and elaborate in answering who, what, when, where questions.

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Rubric for Oral Language Development

	0	1	2	3	4	5
K	Student is unable to pronounce words clearly. Student does not know and cannot respond to common words. Student is unable to combine words into meaningful statements. Student cannot distinguish among forms of oral statements.	Student is able to pronounce words needed to communicate. Student responds to and understands common words. Student uses incomplete sentence structures. Student uses non-verbal expressions to communicate. Student can listen attentively for short periods of time.	Student is able to pronounce simple common words. Student is able to use simple common words according to their dialectic definitions. Student uses subject/agent and action in incomplete sentence structures Student will seek and share information.	Student is able to pronounce most words in oral vocabulary Student is able use new words according to their dialectic definitions. Student is able to use modeled grammatical constructions. Student can distinguish among statements, commands, and questions. Student will share information as relevant to a conversation.	Student is able pronounce and use common words. **The student is able to use appropriate nouns to name objects.** Student is able use and descriptive words for objects. Student is able to recognize nonsense words. Student is able to speak in complete sentences. Student is able to distinguish among statements, commands, and questions. Student will identify and communicate own informational needs. Student can identify and respond to simple humor.	Student is able to understand new words with similarities to known words. The student is able to use a variety of nouns to name objects with similar characteristics. Student is able to speak in complete sentences with modifiers correctly placed. Student can correctly match oral statements to non-verbal expressions. Student can identify informational needs of others and provide that information. Student can distinguish between true statements and intentional falsehoods made for comic purposes.