

# The Teaching of Reading: a Continuum from Kindergarten Through College



A Supplementary Textbook for College Education Majors  
with Practical Classroom Diagnostic Tests and  
Answers to the Phonics vs. Whole Language Controversy

and Especially for  
College Reading Instructors  
Willing to Try New Approaches to Old Problems

and for the Training of Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutors  
and Parents Who Want to Homeschool Their Children

By

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## **Section 5, Chapter 36:**

# **Survey Tests for Simple Fancy and Insane Words Origin and Theory behind the Tests**

Since 1969 I have been actively involved in the remediation of reading problems of adolescents and adults. As part of my professional duties, I have had to administer standardized reading tests to illiterates. I have had to watch them suffer the embarrassment and humiliation of having their ignorance exposed for the duration of the tests. After the standardized tests were administered, I knew no more about the student than I did before except that he now had a number such as 1.7 or 2.3 to insert in the appropriate blank on a reporting form.

### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

In April 1981 the Delegates Assembly in the International Reading Association passed the following resolution: "RESOLVED, that the International Reading Association strongly advocates that those who administer standardized reading tests abandon the practice of using grade equivalents to report performance of either individuals or groups of test-takers and be it further RESOLVED, that the president or executive director of the Association write to test publishers urging them to eliminate grade equivalents from their tests."

—*The Reading Teacher*

If a reading remediation specialist is to follow the ethical standards regarding testing, i.e., to protect "...participants from...mental discomfort ... and take all possible measures to minimize distress" (*APA Monitor* 8, No. 3 [1977]:22-23), and still be able to justify placement into programs via accepted standardized tests, a new test must be devised and validated as no such test exists today. This is what I have tried to do.

## **DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE TESTS**

Tell the student you are going to give him a "QUICK AND PAINLESS" Test to see where you should begin helping him. Show him the list of words that comprise the test over Type #1 words. Ask the student if he can read any the words. If he can't, then the test is over. No point in continuing. He can't read. We recommend that you start teaching him the most basic word families and phonic patterns that can be found in AVKO's *Suggested Order for Diagnosis and Remediation of Type #1 Words* (AVKO Great Idea Series #614)—or in *THE PATTERNS OF ENGLISH SPELLING*.

If he can read the words *scrambled* and *admitted* but not the word *accomplished*, you should start him at Level B, one level below the last word he correctly read (or spelled if you're using these tests for spelling remediation).

Only if a student gets at least 4 of the words on Test #1 correct should you give the test on Type #2 Words. The same directions apply. If he can't read any of the words, we start with level A as found in AVKO's *Suggested Order for Diagnosis and Remediation of Type #2 Words* (AVKO Great Idea Series #615)—or in *THE PATTERNS OF ENGLISH SPELLING*. Otherwise, you start one level below the last word correctly read—or spelled.

Test #3 is given in the same fashion as #1 and #2. Always start one level below the last word correctly read or spelled.

We recommend that Tests #4 & #5 not be given in grade school or middle school remediation. We believe they are best suited to be given as part of a higher level remedial situation such as often occurs at the college level.

## TYPE #1 WORDS

These words contain normal everyday phonic patterns. If a student can read five or more of these words, the chances are the student applies the phonic rules whether he knows them formally or not. In which case, the chances are the student may not profit from further instruction in the simple phonic patterns that are generally taught in basal or remedial series. On the other hand, if he can't read any or just a few of the words, he probably could profit from training in these basic phonic patterns provided the materials and techniques used are new to him. In which case we strongly suggest such materials as *Sequential Spelling I* as well as the many ideas to be found in *The Patterns of English Spelling*.

WORD	Level	Notations
scratches	A	_____
strolling	B	_____
faithfully	C	_____
misleading	D	_____
coastline	E	_____
disapproval	F	_____

## TYPE #2 WORDS

These words can be called "FANCY" words because they follow "fancy" patterns that generally are NOT taught in school books. A rather significant number of students learn to read "FANCY" phonic patterns on their own. These students tend to come from families of high socio-economic status and have had exposure to foreign languages. However, an equally significant number of students who have learned the basic phonics that is taught in their schools do NOT learn the "FANCY" phonic patterns on their own. We recommend that if a student scores perfectly (or almost perfectly on Test #1) but misses all or most of the words in Test #2, you praise the student for having learned that which he was taught and excuse him for not having learned that which he was never taught.

WORD	Level	Notations
initialed	A	_____
emphatic	B	_____
fatigue	C	_____
decoupage	D	_____
attaché case	E	_____
entrepreneur	F	_____

## TYPE # 3 WORDS

These words are those words that do not follow any normal or "fancy" rules of phonics. In early elementary schools, teachers often refer to them as "outlaws." Only the most common of these "outlaws" or "insane" words are systematically taught in the early grades. The bulk of these words occur infrequently in children's literature and even less frequently in regular school textbooks. Consequently, they are not systematically taught. As with the "FANCY" patterns, there are a significant number of students who learn these words on their own without having been taught them. Likewise, there are a significant number who do NOT learn these words without having been taught. (Ed. Note: I was in college before I could read Jose and cache and hors d'oeuvres. The last two, [victuals and gaoler] I knew the meanings from context but didn't realize that the words really were pronounced "vittles" and "jailer" until I was told!) Prediction: Many students will misread thorough as "through" and salve as "slave" or "solve."

WORD	Level	Notations
shouldn't	A	_____
beautifully	B	_____
thorough	C	_____
ancient	D	_____
usual	E	_____
aisle	F	_____
salve	G	_____
cache	H	_____
hors d'oeuvres	I	_____
victuals	K	_____
gaoler	L	_____

## TYPE #4 WORDS

We strongly suggest that this test NOT be given in a remedial situation below that of college. As only a relatively few of these words are normally taught systematically in any school curriculum, we predict that only those who learn well what isn't taught (those who have perfect scores on Test #2 and score at least seven correct on test #3) will do well on this test. Would you believe that we have isolated well over 1,000 pairs (and larger word groupings!) that are "TRICKY!"

Read the sentences and have the students spell the words that are underlined.

### "TRICKY" Word Grouping      Level      Sentence to be used.

knew/new/gnu	A	We <u>knew</u> that the <u>news</u> had to be bad.
root/route/rout	B	What's the best <u>route</u> to use to get there?
desert/desert/dessert	C	That house looks like it's been <u>deserted</u> .
aisle/isle/I'll	D	The soup is located on the next <u>aisle</u> .
preys/prays/praise	E	The wolf often <u>preys</u> on small animals.
intents/intense	F	This test is over, for all <u>intents</u> and purposes.
spayed/spade	G	We took our dog to the vet to have her <u>spayed</u> .
cache/cash	H	The detective found a <u>cache</u> of stolen items.

## TYPE #5 WORDS

These are those words that writers often deliberately "misspell" so as to convey "flavor and color" to their writing. As with the TYPE #4 Words we strongly advise that this test NOT be given in a remedial situation below that of college. As only a relatively few of these "words" are systematically taught in any school curriculum, we predict that only those who learn easily words which they haven't been taught will do well on this test.

**TYPE #5 WORDS are to be dictated in normal sloppy speech as indicated by these spellings which were taken from books, magazines, and newspapers.**

**Correct Literate Spellings  
Students are expected to spell them  
the correct or literate way.**

"Yuh wanna bet?"

Do you want to bet?

"C'mon. Yor gonna luv yor prezint."

Come on. You're going to love your present.

"Yuh shuda bin thair!"

You should have been there.

"Ya shoodina sed dat."

You shouldn't have said that.

"Y'all cum again."

You all come again.

"Sit daoun rat cheer."

Sit down right here.

"An ordah iz whutch a giv tuh uh waitriss."

An order is what you give to a waitress.

"Fokes rown cheer aw wuz weah ovahhaws."

Folks around here always wear overalls.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Because we expect it to take two or three more years to complete our study and to completely validate these tests (and similar tests), we are presenting the findings as tentative and not conclusive.

1. A raw score of 0 or 1 on Test #1 indicates that the student is reading below 5.0 and would be found qualified for special help by other testing devices.
2. A raw score of 0 or 1 on Test #2 indicates that the student is reading below 7.8.
3. Scores of 5 & 6 (Perfect) on Test #1 and scores of 0 & 1 on Test #2 are common among students reading from 4.0 to 6.0. Our preliminary conclusion is that for these students to progress in reading they must be systematically taught the Type #2 Words. Our preliminary findings also indicate that students taught these phonic patterns do indeed increase their reading ability rapidly up to the point that their vocabularies and experience can bring them.
4. Scores of 0 or 1 on Test #3 indicate the student is reading below 5.0.
5. Combined scores on Tests #1, #2, & #3 of 21 or more will correlate highly with other tests that predict the ability to do college work.

If you would like to take part in the validation process of this instrument, contact: Don McCabe, Box 83, Birch Run, MI. 48415.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

1. There will be at least a .90 correlation between a raw score of 0 (ZERO) on Test #1 and grade-equivalent scores of less than 5.0 as obtained from previously administered standardized tests rated acceptable under the provisions of P.L. 94-142.
2. The tested abilities or inabilities to read the specific READING LEVEL EPITOMIZERS (the words on Test #1) will be sufficiently criterion based so as to form a developmental/remedial model for reading instruction.
3. There will be at least a .90 correlation between a raw score of 0 (ZERO) on Test #2 and grade-equivalent scores of less than 9.0 as obtained from previously administered standardized tests rated as acceptable under the provisions of P.L. 94-142.
4. The tested abilities or inabilities to read the specific READING LEVEL EPITOMIZERS (the words on Test #2) will be sufficiently criterion based so as to form a developmental/remedial model for reading instruction.
5. There will be at least a .90 correlation between a raw score of 0 (ZERO) on Test #3 and grade-equivalent scores of less than 5.0 as obtained from previously administered standardized tests rated as acceptable under the provisions of P.L. 94-142.
6. There will be at least a .90 correlation between a raw score of 10 or more and grade-equivalent scores of more than 10.0 as obtained from previously administered standardized tests rated as acceptable under the provisions of P.L. 94-142.
7. The tested abilities or inabilities to read the specific READING LEVEL EPITOMIZERS (the words on Test #3) will be sufficiently criterion based so as to form a developmental/remedial model for reading instruction.
8. There will be at least a .875 correlation between the total rank scores of the first three tests and the grade-equivalents as obtained from previously administered standardized tests rated as acceptable under the provisions of P.L. 94-142.
9. There will be a total raw score of the three subtests (on Type #1, #2, and #3 READING LEVEL EPITOMIZERS) that will indicate with 99.5% accuracy (a significance level of  $<.005$ ) that the adolescent would receive grade-equivalent scores of AT LEAST FOUR GRADES BELOW THE LEVEL AT WHICH HIS/HER AGE WOULD PLACE HIM if given any standardized test rated as acceptable under the provisions of P.L. 94-142 for determining eligibility for special help.
10. The total raw scores will accurately identify students at either end of the normal distribution curve.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

**SAMPLE SELECTION:** To find a large subset of the general population that will contain an abnormally high number of adolescents with severe reading problems and who also have recent standardized reading test scores readily available and whose need for a screening device such as herein proposed facilitates approval by appropriate authorities, about 500 adolescents who are incarcerated in detention centers will be tested. For comparison purposes the test will be given to approximately 500 randomly selected adolescents currently attending public schools.

**DATA SELECTION PROCEDURES:** The administrators of the test will not know the reading levels of the test-takers. After the test is given and the data is recorded, the data from previously taken tests will be entered. Student identities will be protected. Other data collected will be age, race, sex, type of schools attended (rural/urban)

**DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES:** The analysis will be done under the direction of Research Director, AVKO Educational Research Foundation.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**"READING LEVEL LANGUAGE EPITOMIZERS"** is a term coined to represent those words that so epitomize, are so representative of the grouping of words to which it belongs, that an adolescent who can read that word can read almost every word within its grouping. Conversely, if a student cannot read a particular "reading level language epitomizer" then he probably is unable to read a very great many words within its grouping.

**TYPE #1 Words** is a construct for those words that consist almost entirely of phoneme/grapheme patterns that are presented in most basal reading series and in which the following letter patterns have the following pronunciations: b = /b/, c = /k/ or /s/, d = /d/, f = /f/, g = /g/ or /j/, h = /h/, j = /j/, k = /k/, l = /l/, m = /m/, n = /n/, p = /p/, r = /r/, s = /s/, t = /t/, v = /v/, w = /w/, x = /ks/, y = /y/, z = /z/, ch = /ch/ sh = /sh/, th = /th/ or /TH/, ph = /f/, qu = /kw/, wh = /hw/ or /h/. Long A is ai, aCe, ay, ei, and ea. Long E is e, ee, ea, ie, and eCe. Long I is i, ie, y, and iCe. Long O is o, ow, oe, oa, and o-e. Long OO (as in moo) or Long U (as in few) are oo, ue, ew, and uCe. The /OW/ diphthong is ou and ow. The /AW/ diphthong is aw and au. The /OY/ diphthong is oy and oi. The /oo/ sound as in foot is oo and u. The Short A is a or ea. The Short E is e or ea. The Short I is i or y. The Short O is o. The Short U is u. The -r controlled vowels are: ar, are, er, ere, ir, ire, or, ore, ur, ure, ear, and our.

Note: We consider Ph to be both a Type #1 & Type 2 pattern because it occurs so commonly with other Type #2 patterns such as "ci = /sh/", "an = /un/", and "y = Short I" — all of which occur with the "ph = /f/" in the word *physician*. The typical basal reader definition of a long vowel saying its name works in the case of A, E, I, and O. However, the U has two sounds, the consonant sound /y/ plus the vowel sound /oo/ as in "moo." Type #1 words usually have a base of just one syllable. For example, the words *shipping*, *shipment*, and *shipper* have a one syllable base: *ship*. Type #2 words generally have a base of two or more syllables. For example: *precious initial* and *physician*.

**Type #2 Words** is a construct for those letter/sound patterns that rarely, if ever, are systematically taught in any basal reading series but are learned by good readers generally without any formal instruction. We hypothesize that "poor" or "average" readers need systematic instruction in at least some of these patterns in order to become independent adult readers. It is further hypothesized that all these patterns do not need to be systematically taught, and that there are many different logical sequences that can be followed that will permit students to instantiate the schemata for these phonic patterns in their regular reading. For a complete listing of these patterns see AVKO Great Idea Booklet #615, A Suggested Order for Diagnosis and Remediation of Type #2 Words: The "FANCY."

**TYPE #3 Words** are those words for which there appears to be no logical explanation for their spelling. Elementary teachers commonly refer to these words as the "outlaws" who refuse to follow rules.

**Type #4 Words** are any of the following types of words:

1. Homophones such as be/bee/Bea/B/.
2. Dialect dependent homophones such as aunt/ant (Standard), park/pock or Don/Dawn (Boston).
3. Heteronyms such as *lead* and *lead*.
4. Typography dependent heteronyms such as resume and resumé.
5. Similarity of configuration words such as solder/soldier, change/charge, superstitions/superstitious, than/then, accept/except, ancient/accent/accident, expect/except
6. Accent dependent words such as REcOrd/reCORD.
7. Words that have two or more acceptable spellings such as Chanukah and Hanukkah
8. Words easily distinguishable in their base forms (such as hope and hop) but can cause problems in their -ed & -ing forms. Too often students have bunnies "hoping" while they're "hopping" to spell it correctly.

### TIME REQUIRED FOR TESTING:

We hope the entire testing procedure will take less than three minutes per subject. But we are not asking for a stopwatch performance.