

Word Writing

Description Children write all of the words they can write within a designated time limit.

- You Need**
- ▶ Blank paper with a space for children to write their name.
 - ▶ Word Writing—Class Record form

Why Use It This assessment gives you a rich inventory of what children control in terms of writing. Examining this document will not only tell you the words that children can spell accurately, but also what they are thinking about words and how they work. You can note attempts as well as evidence that children are placing words into categories. You can think about how their strengths in writing words can support reading.

- How to Use It**
- ▶ Early in the year, you may want to administer this assessment individually so that you can prompt children with familiar words, for example *I, the, it, is, in* (refer to the high-frequency word lists on pages 187–203).
 - ▶ At your signal, children write their names and then write all the words they know until you say stop. (Give them between five and ten minutes.) Encourage children to try words even if they think they don't know how to spell them with all the letters.
 - ▶ Suggested language: "We are going to do something special today. Each of you is going to write as many words as you can. Are you thinking of a word you know you can write?" Get some suggestions from the children. "Start by writing your name on the line at the top of the page." Give children time to write their name. "Write words carefully. If you are not sure how to write a word, just try it. Try to leave spaces between your words so that I can read them."
 - ▶ Early in the year, make this assessment informal. You do not need to hide the print on the walls. In fact, it will be interesting to note how children are using the resources in the classroom. Mid year or later, you may want to make assessment more challenging by being sure that children perform the task without access to print on the walls.
 - ▶ Analyse the child's writing to notice what letter/sound relationships and spelling patterns the child controls.

- What to Notice**
- ▶ Awareness of child's own inventory of words
 - Knowledge of the way one word leads to another, revealing connections between words as well as categories
 - Use of phonograms and spelling patterns
 - Ease and fluency in constructing words
 - Use of endings to make several words from a root word
 - Ability to hear the sounds in words
 - Ability to represent sounds with letters
 - Knowledge of high-frequency word patterns
 - Ability to use and connect word parts

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An example of one child's writing is included below. Michael has a score of 59 accurately written words. In addition, notice that he:

- ▶ has many different ways of getting to words.
- ▶ began with his name and then wrote another name he knew.
- ▶ wrote simple, high-frequency words in the first column but seemed to connect them because of similar patterns (*in, is, it; there, here*).
- ▶ added *s* to *book*, making another word, as well as adding *ing* and *ed* to *play*.
- ▶ wrote *good* and then thought of *go*, perhaps noting their similarity visually.
- ▶ wrote *you* and then *your*.
- ▶ wrote *into* and then wrote two other forms of the word *to*, which he wrote instantly because he knew them.
- ▶ constructed some words without having to think about sounds and letters.
- ▶ added *d* to *see* to produce *seed*.
- ▶ made one attempt that resulted in inaccurate spelling—*tat* for *that*, which may have been the result of hurrying or not noticing (he knows how to use *th* because he spelled *that* correctly later in the sequence, after *them, they* and *then*).

