

## Seven Sources of Data About Student Reading and Writing Abilities

Note: The names of tests for which acronyms are used in the table are explained at the end of the chart.

Data source	Examples of this type of assessment	Type of scoring/assessment	What the assessment measures	What it reports	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>State assessments</b>	NY Regents Exam; MCAS; FCAT	Criterion/summative assessment	Meeting of state standards	Categories—does not meet, partially meets, meets, or exceeds	Free to districts; aligned with state curriculum frameworks; common measure across state; all students who do well, score well; can be used as program evaluation tool	Reporting is too late to use for instruction; not diagnostic for individual students; to be used effectively as a diagnostic tool for program strengths and weaknesses; need to do individual item/strand analysis
<b>Standardized assessments</b>	Stanford 10; Terra Nova; Gates-MacGinitie	Norm-referenced; scale scores or stanine scores or percentiles; summative assessment	Reading proficiency; vocabulary	Ranked performance against others in that grade	Can be administered to a group; have some breakout of subskills; can be used as a program evaluation tool; norms are current, and off-grade norms are available	Limited diagnostic capability; often the reporting is too late to use to inform instruction; often hard to interpret; norms do not indicate "actual level" but report relative to how students in that grade level typically perform; skillful interpretation requires statistical knowledge
<b>Leveled reading assessments</b>	SRI*; DRP*; STAR Reading Assessment	Reading level; lexile score or DRP level/ formative or summative	Reading comprehension	A score that corresponds to a reading "level"	Easy to interpret; options are increasingly online, providing instant scoring/results; results typically linked to book lists at student's "reading" level; tends to be less expensive	These measure the construct of "reading" differently; some question about reliability/validity for middle and high school since interest and motivation play a role in some students' scores; not diagnostic
<b>Diagnostic reading tests</b>	DRA*; GRADE*; DAR*; NWEA* Reading Test	Profile of subtest scores; formative, summative, or diagnostic	A variety of components of reading proficiency, vocabulary, and comprehension	Subtest scores with grade-level referencing	Can provide a more in-depth "reader profile;" can be linked more easily to instruction; typically easier to get reporting in a timely manner	Most need to be administered individually in whole or in part; each defines and measures aspects of reading somewhat differently; understanding and using measures can be challenging; other than NWEA, parallel forms/reading passages for pre-post limited
<b>School or district writing prompts</b>	On-demand writing to a standard prompt	Rubric scoring by one or more readers; summative or diagnostic	Ability to use traits of good writing in a specific piece	Holistic or trait scoring of writing ability	Rubrics can be developed that capture traits of writing valued by the district; progress of students over time can be tracked; co-scoring by teachers is helpful to increase understanding of writing challenges students face and inform instruction; can be used both diagnostically and summatively	Reliability of scoring questionable if only one person scores each piece; takes a lot of time to score; student interest in prompt may vary, affecting validity of scores as a measure of progress; good parallel prompts require piloting to develop, a step often not taken
<b>Course/grade-level assessments that require reading/writing</b>	Common assessments; exhibition or research project	Rubrics; checklists; grades portfolio; summative	Content knowledge; reading and writing ability	Multi-teacher assessment of student knowledge and literacy skills	Allows for common expectations and standards for performance to be set across classes; rubric development can help instruction target specific academic literacy habits and skills; collaborative review allows teachers to review and modify instruction	Takes time to score; need for inter-rater reliability to be established; instructional preparation and support often varies among teachers so validity of assessment needs to be monitored and clear parameters for support and instruction need to be adhered to
<b>Classroom assessments/projects that require reading/writing</b>	Essay test; term paper; lab report; I-search project	Rubrics; checklists; grades portfolio; formative or summative	Content knowledge; reading and writing ability	Individual teacher assessment of student knowledge and literacy skills	Assessment most directly matches instruction and can provide direct timely feedback about student literacy and learning; rubric scoring combined with checklists and scoring guideline can direct student attention to important aspects of the assignment	Grading or scoring relies on the judgment of a single teacher; assignment has greater chance of being poorly constructed to actually assess content and literacy learning since many teachers have weak backgrounds in assessment development

DRA: Diagnostic Reading Assessment  
 DRP: Degrees of Reading Power  
 GRADE: Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation

NWEA: Northwest Evaluation Association  
 SRI: Scholastic Reading Inventory