

Teacher Copy: Assessment for Independent Reading Levels  
Levels L-Z+ (Fiction/Narrative)

Level S

Reader's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Excerpt from *Taking Care of Terrific* by Lois Lowry, pp. 1-2

Level S 370 words

Independent Level:  
Yes No

Accuracy Rate \_\_\_\_\_%

**Book Introduction:** Say this to the reader before he or she begins reading the student copy of the text: "This story is about a girl named Enid who is feeling lonely and unloved. Please read aloud the first section. (Point to the line on the student copy to show the child where the first section ends.) After this part, you may read the rest silently. If you need to, you can reread the first part. When you are finished reading, I will ask you to retell what you have just read."

**During and after the Running Record, you may make these observations and notes to inform instruction:**

- Self-corrects;
- Pauses while reading to think;
- Uses more than one strategy to figure out unfamiliar words;
- Miscues make sense;
- Miscues fit the syntax or structure of the sentence;
- Miscues look similar to words in the text;
- Figures out the meaning of unfamiliar words—  
if the child mispronounces a word during the running record, ask the child if they know the meaning of the word when they finish reading the excerpt.

**Running Record:** For the first 100 words of the passage, record each miscue above the relevant word as the student reads. You may decide to hear and record miscues for an additional 100 words to get a better portrait of the student's oral reading. See *Teacher Guidebook* for specific recording practices, and for guidance on analyzing the student's miscues towards future instruction. Use the Accuracy Rate calculator at the end of the text excerpt to determine if this student's accuracy demonstrates independence at this level. Use the Oral Reading Fluency Scale to determine if this student is reading fluently at this level.

I threw down the book I'd been trying to read, stared out of my bedroom window for a while at the tops of the trees, sighed, and picked up my sketch pad. I doodled a few designs: leaves and stems curling around each other, intertwined. Carefully I colored in the leaves with a green marking pen, leaving some white spots for highlights, so that they looked glossy and radiant.

Maybe, I thought glumly, I'd feel better if someone sprinkled me with fertilizer. Plants do.

Once I bought a dumb little jade plant at a street fair. It really needed somebody; **(100 words)** it looked crummy and neglected, like an orphan who's never been taken to the zoo.

\*\*\*\*\* (Reader may read silently from this point on.) \*\*\*\*\*

I gave it to my mother on her birthday, and she took over with her little tweezers and tweakers and her bottles of plant food, talking to it: "There, now. This will make you perk up," and eureka, it perked up. Grew. Flourished.

Probably my mother talked like that to me when I was little. She hasn't for a long time, though. My parents chose the Carstairs School because in the

catalogue it said, “We encourage independence.” (It also said, “We charge fifty-two hundred dollars **(200 words)** a year tuition for day students, plus lab fees and books, and our graduates get into the best Ivy League college” but the thing that hooked my parents was the “We encourage independence.”)

Murmuring “There now, this will perk you up” to a fourteen-year-old girl probably does not encourage independence. So that is why my mother says that only to small droopy plants suffering from aphids or root rot. To me, when I look, feel, and am droopy, discouraged, depressed, and practically about to throw myself out of my bedroom window because nothing in my life seems to go the **(300 words)** way I want it to, my mother says, “Enid, for heaven’s sake, you have to learn to solve your own problems. And it might be a start if you would do something about your *hair*.”

Sometimes I wish I were a philodendron.

If I were a philodendron, I would not be sitting here, a prisoner in my own bedroom, thinking about what happened this summer, scared stiff and super miserable. **(370 words)**

**Scoring the Running Record for Accuracy and Oral Reading Fluency**

**Total miscues including self-corrected:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Self-corrections:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Miscues reader did not self-correct:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Accuracy Rate:** Circle the number of miscues per 100 words the reader did not self-correct.

100 Words	100%	99%	98%	97%	96%
	0 miscues	1 miscue	2 miscues	3 miscues	4 miscues
95%	94%	93%	92%	91%	90%
5 miscues	6 miscues	7 miscues	8 miscues	9 miscues	10 miscues

- 96%-100% = independent reading level of accuracy
- 90%-95% = instructional reading level of accuracy

**Oral Reading Fluency Scale – Circle the Level that Best Describes the Student’s Oral Reading** \*Note: Oral Reading Fluency is not taken into account until Level K for determining reading level, though it should of course be considered and taught into at earlier levels.

<b>Fluent</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrase groups. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure of the text. Preservation of the author’s syntax is consistent. Most of the text is read with expressive interpretation. Pace is consistently conversational.
	<b>Level 3</b>	Reads primarily in three or four-word phrase groups. Some small groupings may be present. However, the majority of phrasing seems appropriate and preserves the syntax of the author. Some expressive interpretation is present; this may be inconsistent across the reading of the text. The pace is mixed: there is some faster and some slower reading.
<b>Non fluent</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	Reads primarily in two-word phrases with some three or four-word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings may seem awkward and unrelated to larger context of sentence or passage. Beginning a little expressive interpretation, frequently first seen when reading dialogue. The pace is somewhat slow.
	<b>Level 1</b>	Reads primarily word-by-word. Occasional two-word or three-word phrases may occur—but these are infrequent and/or they do not preserve meaningful syntax. No expressive interpretation. The pace is noticeably very slow.

Adapted from: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2002 Oral Reading Study and Zutell and Rasinski’s Multidimensional Fluency Scales (Zutell, J., & Rasinski, T. V. (1991). Training teachers to attend to their students’ oral reading fluency. *Theory Into Practice*, 30, 211–217. Please refer to the *Benchmarks for Student Progress* for details regarding Oral Reading Rate.

**Retell:**

Say, "Please retell this story." Be sure to retell the important parts, and to tell them in order." Write notes regarding the student's retelling on the back of this page.

If the student has trouble getting started or says very little, you may use non-leading prompting. Examples of non-leading prompting include: What happened next? Can you say more? Did anything else happen? Make a note that you needed to prompt the student, as you will want to teach this student how to self-initiate more elaborated retells.

Use the Sample Student Responses to determine if the child's retelling and responses to the comprehension questions are acceptable. See scoring guidance for specifics regarding how to account for the retell and the responses to questions in determining a student's independent reading level.

**Comprehension: Questions:** If the student's retell did not include answers to the following questions, please ask any/all of the questions that were not addressed. There are many acceptable responses to each question, some of which are listed below. The reader's response is acceptable as long as it demonstrates an accurate understanding of the text. As the reader answers each question, be sure to record the response carefully.

Question	Sample Acceptable Responses
1. <i>Literal:</i> What is Enid comparing herself to throughout this passage?	"...to plants; to a plant that needs encouragement, just like the plants that her mom encourages"
2. <i>Inferential:</i> When Enid describes the jade plant she bought she says, "It looked crummy and neglected, like an orphan who's never been taken to the zoo." How might the jade plant relate to the way Enid is feeling?	"... she is feeling neglected like the jade plant; she may be feeling like an orphan because her mom isn't taking care of her; Enid's mom was able to take care of the jade plant and bring it back to life and Enid wishes her mom would take care of her in the same way; it reminds her of her own life and her relationship to her mom"
3. <i>Inferential:</i> How do you think Enid feels about the Carstairs School? How can you tell?	"... It seems that Enid doesn't like the school. I can tell because: she makes fun of the way her parents picked out the school; she thinks all the talk about independence and Ivy League schools distracts people from noticing how expensive it is; even though her parents want her to be more independent, she still wants to be taken care of and the school doesn't take care of her"
4. <i>Inferential:</i> How do you think Enid feels about her mother? What makes you think that?	"... Enid thinks her mom doesn't understand and doesn't want to help her. I think this because in the story Enid's mother tells her to solve her problems by herself; Enid thinks her mom pays more attention to the plants than to her- especially when her mom tells Enid she should solve problems by herself; Enid wishes her mom would pay as much attention to her as she does to the plants. I think this because Enid says '...sometimes I wish I were a philodendrom"

**Notes on retelling (this may be a transcription or comments on students' ability to retell in order and prioritize the key story elements):**

**Student's replies to comprehension questions (if necessary because not addressed in retell):**

1) What is Enid comparing herself to throughout this passage?

2) When Enid describes the jade plant she bought she says, "It looked crummy and neglected, like an orphan who's never been taken to the zoo." How might the jade plant relate to the way Enid is feeling?

3) How do you think Enid feels about the Carstairs School? How can you tell?

4) How do you think Enid feels about her mother? What makes you think that?

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**Final Score**

Yes No Was the reader's accuracy rate at least 96%?

Yes No Did the student read with fluency? (a score of 3 or 4 on the Oral Reading Fluency Scale)\*

Yes No Did the reader demonstrate literal and inferential comprehension through one of the following combinations of retell and responses:

- A clear, accurate retell that incorporates answers to three out of four comprehension questions. (This may be with or without non-leading prompting. See directions for retell for more about non-leading prompting).
- A mostly accurate retell PLUS acceptable responses to three out of four of the comprehension questions (answered or included in the retell). The retell need not be well-crafted or completely comprehensive, but if it indicates mostly inaccurate comprehension, try the next level down.

Is this the student's independent reading level?

- If you did NOT answer "yes" to all questions in this **Final Score** box, try an easier text. Keep moving to easier texts until you find the level at which you are able to answer "yes" to all questions in the **Final Score** box.
- If you answered "yes" to all questions in this **Final Score** box, the student is reading independently at this level. However, it is possible that the student may also read independently at a higher level. Keep moving to higher passages until you can no longer answer "yes" to all questions. The highest level for which you can answer "yes" for all questions is the student's independent reading level.

\*Note: Oral Reading Fluency is not taken into account until Level K for determining reading level, though it should of course be considered and taught at earlier levels.



<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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*Please answer the following questions in your own words. You may use extra paper if you need it.*

*Question #1:* What is Enid comparing herself to in this part of the story?

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*Question #2:* When Enid describes the jade plant she bought she says, “It looked crummy and neglected, like an orphan who’s never been taken to the zoo.” Who do you think the jade plant is being compared to?

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*Question #3:* How do you think Enid feels about the Carstairs School? How can you tell?

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*Question #4:* How do you think Enid feels about her mother? What makes you think that?

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