

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

Level U

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

Excerpt from *Frightful's Mountain* by Jean Craighead George, pp. 3-6

Level U 565 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: "In this story you'll be reading about a peregrine falcon named Frightful who finds herself far away from Sam Gribly, the teenage boy who raised and took care of her for most of her life. 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.

Frightful, the peregrine falcon, could not see. A falconer's hood covered her head and eyes. She remained quiet and calm, like all daytime birds in the dark. She could hear, however. She listened to the wind whistling through pine needles. This wind music conjured up images of a strange woods and unknown flowers. The sound was foreign. It was not the soft song of wind humming through the hemlock needles of home.

Frightful was a long way from her familiar forest. Suddenly an all-invading passion filled her. She must go. She must find one mountain among thousands, one hemlock tree (**100 words**) among millions, and the one boy who called himself Sam Gribly.

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

The one mountain was her territory; the one tree was Sam's house; the perch beside it, her place. And Sam Gribly was life.

Frightful had not been quite two weeks old when she first saw Sam Gribly. He had lifted her from her nest on a cliff. Small as she was, she had jabbed him with her already powerful talons as he carried her to the ground. "I'm going to call you Frightful," he had said. "You are a raving beauty." Then he carried her to the

gigantic hemlock (**200 words**) tree on the mountain and into its hollowed-out bole. This was Sam's home.

He fed her four and five times a day. He carried her on his gloved fist and talked to her. Before long, Frightful thought of him as her mother. He nurtured her like a peregrine falcon mother would.

When she was older, Sam made a perch for her and placed it outside his tree. He taught her to fly to his hand. When she was full-grown, he took her hunting with him. By now, the memory of her parents was pushed far back in her mind. Sam (**300 words**) was her family.

At night and on winter days, Sam brought Frightful inside the huge old tree. She perched on his rustic bedstead and warmed herself by the clay fireplace. On spring and summer days, she would sit on her perch outside and watch the birds, the butterflies, and busy Sam. Patiently she waited for him to take her hunting. It was her greatest pleasure. She loved the sky. She loved the updrafts and coiling winds, and she loved "waiting on," hovering above Sam until he kicked up game. Then she stooped, the wind singing in her feathers.

Frightful was an excellent hunter who rarely missed. The food was shared. Their lives depended on each other. She must find Sam again now.

Frightful crouched to fly. She could not see. She folded her gray-blue wings to her body and straightened up.

Hooded and tethered, she had traveled with two strange men for several days.

One of them had taken her from the perch beside the big hemlock tree. He had a deep jerky voice and a face like a condor's. She looked intently at him before he slipped the falconer's hood over her head.

Sam had begged and pleaded with the man not to take her away, but he had pushed Sam aside and carried her down the mountain to a pickup truck. A leather perch had been presented to her feet. She had stepped up on it as Sam had taught her to do. A door had closed, and she was inside a camper on the truck. The motor rumbled, and she was moving.

**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> Name one or two things that Sam taught Frightful to do.	“...to fly to his hand; what it felt like to be part of a family who cares for you; how to be an excellent hunter; to step up onto a leather perch”
2. <i>Literal:</i> How did Frightful get such ‘a long way from her familiar forest’?	“by two strange men who tied her up, put a hood on her head and drove her far away in a truck; by two men who stole her from her perch by Sam’s tree”
3. <i>Inferential:</i> Describe what kind of person Sam is. What in the text makes you think that?	“...kind because he raised, cared for, and was like a parent to Frightful; he gives up too quickly because he begged the men not to take Frightful, but didn’t fight hard enough for her”; a peaceful person because he begged the men not to take Frightful but didn’t fight them”
4. <i>Inferential:</i> The author writes, “... she must find one mountain among thousands, one hemlock tree among millions, and the only boy who called himself Sam Gribley.” Why does Frightful feel such passion for Sam?	“... she is so passionate because she has spent most of her life with Sam and they depend on each other; Sam has taken care of her since she was born so he is like her parent and family who she loves; she is determined to return to the only family and home she has ever had”

**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) Name one or two things that Sam taught Frightful to do.

2) How did Frightful get such 'a long way from her familiar forest'?

3) Describe what kind of person Sam is. What in the text makes you think that?

4) The author writes, "... she must find one mountain among thousands, one hemlock tree among millions, and the only boy who called himself Sam Gibley." Why does Frightful feel such passion for Sam?

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Level U

**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.

**Name:**

**Date:**

*In writing, retell the important parts of what you just read.*

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<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:* Name one or two things that Sam taught Frightful to do.

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*Question #2:* How did Frightful get such 'a long way from her familiar forest'?

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*Question #3:* Describe what kind of person Sam is. What in the text makes you think that?

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*Question #4:* The author writes, "...she must find one mountain among thousands, one hemlock tree among millions, and the one boy who called himself Sam Gribley."  
Why does Frightful feel such passion for Sam?

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