

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

Level W

Reader's Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____

Excerpt from *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare, pp. 1-3

Set 2, Level W 603 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 book, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, which takes place in 1687, a girl named Kit Tyler is leaving her home of Barbados for a new home in New England. 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 talk about the big or important things that happened in the story."

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, record the reader's miscues (or errors) above the words as he or she reads. Later, you may or may not code them, using miscue analysis (MSV). Stop when the child has made five miscues and go back to the previous level.

On a morning in mid-April, 1687, the brigantine Dolphin left the open sea, sailed briskly across the Sound to the wide mouth of the Connecticut River and into Saybrook harbor. Kit Tyler had been on the forecastle deck since daybreak, standing close to the rail, staring hungrily at the first sight of land for five weeks.

"There's Connecticut Colony," a voice spoke in her ear. "You've come a long way to see it."

She looked up, surprised and flattered. On the whole long voyage the captain's son had spoken scarcely a dozen words to her. She had noticed him often, (100 words) his thin wiry figure swinging easily hand over hand up the rigging, his sandy, sun-bleached head bent over a coil of rope.

***** (Reader may continue silently from this point on) *****

Nathaniel Eaton, first mate, but his mother called him Nat. Now, seeing him so close beside her, she was surprised that, for all he looked so slight, the top of her head barely reached his shoulder.

"How does it look to you?" he questioned.

Kit hesitated. She didn't want to admit how disappointing she found this

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first glimpse of America. The bleak line of shore surrounding the gray harbor was a disheartening contrast to the shimmering green and **(200 words)** white that fringed the turquoise bay of Barbados which was her home. The earthen wall of the fortification that faced the river was bare and ugly, and the houses beyond were no more than plain wooden boxes.

“Is that Wethersfield?” she inquired instead.

“Oh, no, Wethersfield is some way up the river. This is the port of Saybrook. Home to us Eatons. There’s my father’s shipyard, just beyond the dock.”

She could just make out the row of unimpressive shacks and the flash of raw new lumber. Her smile was admiring from pure relief. At least this grim place was **(300 words)** not her destination, and surely the colony at Wethersfield would prove more inviting. **(313 words)**

“We’ve made good time this year,” Nat went on. “It’s been a fair passage, hasn’t it?”

“Oh, yes,” she sparkled. “Though I’m glad now ’tis over.”

“Aye,” he agreed. “I never know myself which is best, the setting out or the coming back to harbor. Ever been on a ship before?”

“Just the little pinnaces in the islands. I’ve sailed on those all my life.”

He nodded. “That’s where you learned to keep your balance.”

So he had noticed! To her pride, she had proven to be a natural sailor. Certainly she had not spent the voyage groaning and retching like some of the passengers.

“You’re not afraid of the wind and the salt, anyway. At least, you haven’t spent much time below.”

“Not if I could help it,” she laughed. Did he think anyone would stay in that stuffy cabin by choice? Would she ever have had the courage to sail at all had she known, before she booked passage, that the sugar and molasses in the hold had been paid for by a load of Connecticut horses, and that all the winds of the Atlantic could never blow the ship clean of that unbearable stench? “That’s what I minded most about the storm,” she added, “four days shut away down there with the deadlights up.

“Were you scared?”

“Scared to death. Especially when the ship stood right on end, and the water leaked under the cabin door. But now I wouldn’t have missed it for anything. ’Twas the most exciting thing I ever knew.”

His face lighted with admiration, but all for the ship. “She’s a stout one, the *Dolphin*,” he said. “She’s come through many a worse blow than that.” His eyes dwelt fondly on the topsails.

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%
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.

Fluent	Level 4	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.
	Level 3	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.
Non fluent	Level 2	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.
	Level 1	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> Where is Kit's boat sailing into?	"... [note: prompt for more specific than 'New England' as that has been given in the introduction] Connecticut Colony; Connecticut; Saybrook.
3. <i>Inferential:</i> What is Kit thinking as she spots land?	"...glad to finally see land after five weeks in a boat; disappointed at how it looks; glad that this is not her final destination"
4. <i>Inferential:</i> What does Kit think about Nathaniel, the first mate? How do you know?	"...she thinks he's pretty cool because she's talking to him a lot; she likes that he is finally talking to her and that he has noticed her – she wants to impress him; she notices that he is taller than she thought and she doesn't want to hurt his feelings about his town – she likes him"
4. <i>Inferential:</i> Why doesn't Kit tell Nathaniel what she really thinks about Saybrook?	"...because she doesn't want to make him feel bad; she can tell he is proud of his town and she doesn't really like what she sees"

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) Where is Kit's boat sailing into?

2) What is Kit thinking as she spots land?

3) What does Kit think about Nathaniel, the first mate? How do you know?

4) Why doesn't Kit tell Nathaniel what she really thinks about Saybrook

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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.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

**In writing, retell what you just read.
Be sure to retell the important parts, in the right order.**

Please answer these questions in your own words. You may use extra paper if you need it.

1) Where is Kit's boat sailing into?

2) What is Kit thinking as she spots land?

3) What does Kit think about Nathaniel, the first mate? How do you know?

4) Why doesn't Kit tell Nathaniel what she really thinks about Saybrook
