

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

Level S

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

Excerpt from *The Van Gogh Cafe* by Cynthia Rylant, pp. 32-37

Set 1, Level S 690 words

Independent Level:  
Yes No

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

**Book Introduction:** Say this to the reader before he or she begins the student copy of the text: "Marc and his 10 year old daughter, Clara, are the owners of a restaurant called the Van Gogh Cafe. The restaurant is located in a very old building. Both Marc and Clara work in the cafe. Read to find out what happens when a special guest comes in one day. 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.

**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.

Marc comes out of the kitchen. He is looking for his watch, which he believes he put inside the porcelain hen (her head lifts off), and as he looks around the cafe to smile and greet his customers, Marc suddenly sees the elegant man at the small back table. And unlike everyone else who has remembered his good manners, Marc stops what he is doing and stares.

The man smiles shyly and looks away.

Marc is staring because he knows who this is. He looks around the cafe to see if anyone else realizes who is among them. No one **(100 Words)** does. No one remembers this man's movies.

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

But Marc remembers them all. Marc has seen all of the old silent films, the ones with Charles Chaplin and Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. He knows them by heart, and he knows the actors' faces like he knows his daughter's face, and Marc is *certain* who this elegant man in the cafe is.

He is a star.

Clara doesn't know, of course. She has watched old movies with her father,

but, except for Chaplin, she doesn't know the actors. Only their movements.

And it is perhaps the way the elegant man has **(200 Words)** moved through the cafe that reminds her of something she has seen before. Reminds everyone. But none can quite place the memory.

The breakfast hours pass and people go their way, to work, to the mall at the edge of town, back home to put up a tree.

But the elegant man stays on. He has hardly touched his egg. His teacup is still half full. The door of the Van Gogh Cafe opens and closes, opens and closes, and he stays on, looking out the window.

Marc cannot help himself. When there is no one left in the cafe **(300 Words)** except the silent star, Marc walks over to his table. Clara, curious, shyly follows.

Marc offers his hand and the man gracefully takes it. They shake.

"I know your work," Marc says softly. "I love it. I love all your films."

Clara's eyes are wide. She has not known until now that a star is in her cafe.

The old man blushes and smiles.

"Thank you," he says.

There is an awkward moment, then, graciously, he offers Marc and Clara the two empty chairs at his table.

Happily, they sit.

Marc and the silent star talk about the old films as Clara listens. There is an innocence in her father's face she has not seen before. He is like a boy. The silent star seems pleased, quietly thrilled, to talk of his work with someone who understands so well. He laughs and sighs and even trembles slightly, reliving it all.

There is a moment or two when each is quiet, catching his breath.

"Why, sir, are you at the Van Gogh Cafe?" Marc gently asks. Clara waits.

The old man seems glad someone has asked. He reaches into his coat and pulls forth an old photograph. He hands it first to Clara, then to Marc.

It is of a beautiful young man in a waistcoat and top hat, standing before an old theater. Marc looks carefully at the building in the picture.

“Is this...?”

“Yes,” replies the silent star.

The building is the Van Gogh Cafe. In 1923. When it was a theater.

“He and I did some shows here together, the summer we met.” The silent star smiles and puts the photograph back inside his coat.

“Today I am waiting for him,” he says.

Clara’s heart is pounding. She feels that she herself is in a movie. Every gesture the man makes, each word he speaks is so beautiful to her. She knows the cafe remembers this man. She can feel it drawing in to him, reaching for this man who has been a part of its first magic, on the stage of the old theater.

Oddly, not one person has walked into the cafe to break this spell.

Marc offers the star a fresh cup of tea and a piece of apple pie, which is gratefully accepted. Then Marc and Clara leave the old man to his waiting.

**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.

<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 does Marc do when he first sees the elegant old man?	“... He looks at the man then he knew he was a movie star; he stops and stares; he looks around to see if anyone else recognizes the star.”
2. <i>Inferential:</i> How does Marc feel about recognizing the star? How can you tell?	“... He feels amazed that the man is here – he stops and stares right away, plus spends time asking him questions; he is so thrilled – Clara thinks he looks “more innocent” which means he is younger again; he is happy – he is remembering part of his childhood.
3. <i>Inferential:</i> Re-read this line from the story: “The silent star seems pleased, quietly thrilled, to talk of his work...” What signs are there that the star is pleased? How does he show this to Clara and Marc?	“...The star is laughing and sighing as he tells his story. Plus, when Marc asks about why he’s there, he “reaches into his coat and pulls forth an old photograph.” It’s like he is so ready to talk about his connection to the café.”
4. <i>Inferential:</i> What changes for Clara from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?	“... at first she didn’t know who the man was, but in the end she understands that he’s a star from old movies; she knows more about the history of the cafe now – she knows it was a theater, so now she feels like she’s in a movie.”

**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 does Marc do when he first sees the elegant old man?

2) How does Marc feel about recognizing the star? How can you tell?

3) Re-read this line from the story: "The silent star seems pleased, quietly thrilled, to talk of his work..." What signs are there that the star is pleased? How does he show this to Clara and Marc?

4) What changes for Clara from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?

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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.





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

1) What does Marc do when he first sees the elegant old man?

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2) How does Marc feel about recognizing the star? How can you tell?

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3) Re-read this line from the story: "The silent star seems pleased, quietly thrilled, to talk of his work..." What signs are there that the star is pleased? How does he show this to Clara and Marc?

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4) What changes for Clara from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?

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