

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

Level Z+

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

Excerpt from *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe pp. 3-5

Level Z+ 660 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 excerpt from *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe, you will read about Okonkwo, a villager in Nigeria in the 1890's, and how he rose to fame and power." 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:** Note: For this level of text complexity, the running record is not required for scoring. However, if you would like to conduct the full assessment, you may of course do so and consider the student's oral reading in addition to his or her comprehension. When scoring **for this text**, if the student misreads more than one of the names, count it as only one miscue, as the names will be tricky for most English-speaking readers and do not represent common challenges for this level of text.

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond.

His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights. **(102 words)**

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

The drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath. Amalinze was a wily craftsman, but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water. Every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms, on their backs and their thighs, and one almost heard them stretching to breaking point. In the end Okonkwo threw the Cat.

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That was many years ago, twenty years or more, and during this time Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan. He was tall and huge, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very severe look. He breathed heavily, and it was said that, when he slept, his wives and children in their houses could hear him breathe. When he walked, his heels hardly touched the ground and he seemed to walk on springs, as if he was going to pounce on somebody. And he did pounce on people quite often. He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get his words out quickly enough, he would use his fists. He had no patience with unsuccessful men. He had had no patience with his father.

Unoka, for that was his father's name, had died ten years ago. In his day he was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow. If any money came his way, and it seldom did, he immediately bought gourds of palm-wine, called round his neighbors and made merry. He always said that whenever he saw a dead man's mouth he saw the folly of not eating what one had in one's lifetime. Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbor some money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts.

\*\*\*\*\* *(See Student Copy for the rest of this text.)* \*\*\*\*\*

**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> Why is Okonkwo famous?	"He won a big fight; he's done a lot of important things; he's known for not having patience."
2. <i>Inferential:</i> Does this passage present Okonkwo's father in a positive or a negative way? What makes you think this?	"It's negative because Okonkwo thinks his father is lazy – and Okonkwo can't stand laziness; Negative because he borrows so much money; It's positive because we see how Okonkwo's father loved music and was able to be happy;"
3. <i>Inferential:</i> How does Okonkwo feel about his father and why?	"He's embarrassed by him because the father is so unsuccessful; he is annoyed and upset by him because the father is the kind of person Okonkwo can't stand; frustrated because Okonkwo himself is so respected but his dad isn't."
4. <i>Inferential:</i> What do you think life is like in the villages? What makes you think this?	"Pretty hard because there is a cold and dry wind that blows making everything hazy and so dry; There are many kinds of people – some people are like Okonkwo and really responsible and others are like his dad, irresponsible, but they still live there."

**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) Why is Okonkwo famous?

2) Does this passage present Okonkwo's father in a positive or a negative way? What makes you think this?

3) How does Okonkwo feel about his father and why?

4) What do you think life is like in the villages? What makes you think this?

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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:* Why is Okonkwo famous?

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*Question 2:* Does this passage present Okonkwo's father in a positive or a negative way? What makes you think this?

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*Question 3:* How does Okonkwo feel about his father and why?

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*Question 4:* What do you think life is like in the villages? What makes you think this?

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