

# Decoding Threshold Quick Check

Use the two-part Decoding Threshold Quick Check to identify students who may need to strengthen their phonics and decoding skills to support fluency and comprehension development.

## PART ONE

### Oral Reading Fluency

First, determine each student's oral reading fluency level by calculating words correct per minute (WCPM).

1. Have each student read the 100-word passage aloud, including the title. You may listen to each student one-on-one, or have students record and upload their reading.
2. Read the "Directions to Students" out loud so students understand what they are being asked to do.
3. Time the reading. Start the timer when the student reads the first word of the title. Stop the timer after the student reads the last word of the passage.
4. As the student reads, note any errors (omitted or misread words). *If the student self-corrects an error, count it as correct.*
5. Calculate Words Correct per Minute (WCPM):  

$$(100 - \# \text{ of errors}) \div (\# \text{ of seconds} / 60)$$

You may stop the Quick Check if a student is clearly reading faster than 100 WCPM.

Generally speaking, a student who can read 100 WCPM has crossed the decoding threshold and likely will benefit from vocabulary and comprehension-focused intervention while continuing to strengthen fluency.

Students who are not yet reading at a rate of 100 WCPM may need foundational literacy intervention. These students should complete Part Two of the Quick Check, which includes an encoding (spelling) task.

### Oral Reading Fluency Passage

**Directions to Students:** *I am going to listen to you read a short passage out loud. Read as smoothly and accurately as you can. Don't worry if you come across a tricky word—just do your best. If you get stuck, I'll wait a moment and then tell you the word so you can keep going. If you realize you made a mistake and fix it, that's great! Just keep going. When I say "Begin," start reading the passage out loud. You can start with the title. Ready? Okay, you can begin.*

### Gold Rush!

"Gold Found in California!" That was the news spreading around the world in the spring of 1848. Thousands of people packed up their belongings. They traveled by steamship or stagecoach to the hills of California. Most had no experience working as miners. Few had the necessary tools. But all who showed up had a big dream: to find gold and get rich. Over the next eleven years, miners would uncover millions of dollars in gold. But not everyone became rich. Many people grew tired of living in dirty, crowded camps and gave up mining and did other things.

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## Encoding (Spelling)

This portion of the Quick Check helps identify students with gaps in foundational phonics and decoding skills. It is designed for students scoring below 100 WCPM on the Oral Reading Fluency portion and can be administered to large groups, including the whole class.

1. Read the "Directions to Students" out loud so students understand what they are being asked to do.
2. As noted in the directions, have students number their papers from 1 to 20.
3. Read the script for each spelling word, and have students write the spelling word on their papers.
4. Collect the papers and score the number of words spelled correctly.

### Scoring and Instructional Guidance:

- 16 – 20 correct: Student is likely to benefit from fluency work to strengthen automatic word recognition, along with comprehension-focused intervention.
- 10–15 correct: Student may need support with vowel teams and syllabication before shifting to comprehension-focused intervention.
- 0–9 correct: Student likely needs systematic phonics and decoding intervention.

**Directions to Students:** *We are going to do a quick spelling test. Please number your paper from 1 to 20. I am going to say a word, use it in a sentence, and repeat the word. Write the word as accurately as you can. If you are unsure, give it your best try. We won't go back to previous words, so listen carefully. When you're ready, I'll begin.*

1.	Chap. Cold, wintry weather can chap your lips. Chap.
2.	Thank. The man took time to thank the boy for raking the leaves. Thank.
3.	Stick. Put the marshmallow on the end of a stick to roast it over the fire. Stick.
4.	Slime. The snail left a trail of slime as it moved along the sidewalk. Slime.
5.	Tote. The teacher placed the stacks of papers to grade in her tote. Tote.
6.	Artist. The artist had paint spots on her apron. Artist.
7.	Porch. I like to sit on the front porch and enjoy a cup of tea. Porch.
8.	Stir. Stir the ingredients together before pouring the mixture into the pan. Stir.
9.	Snail. The snail moved slowly down the sidewalk. Snail.
10.	Hallway. The students walked quietly down the hallway. Hallway.
11.	Oath. The president takes an oath before starting his or her term. Oath.
12.	Flashlight. Don't forget to pack a flashlight for the camping trip. Flashlight.
13.	Sauce. Carson poured spaghetti sauce over his noodles. Sauce.
14.	Bought. Drake bought groceries for the week each Sunday. Bought.
15.	Brook. The brook ran through the forest. Brook.
16.	Spoonful. Add a spoonful of water to the mixture. Spoonful.
17.	Holiday. The winter holiday gives students a well-deserved break. Holiday.
18.	Maximum. The maximum amount is the most you can have. Maximum.
19.	Preoccupy. Thoughts of cake will preoccupy the birthday boy. Preoccupy.
20.	Dismantle. The mechanic needs to dismantle some parts of the car to repair it. Dismantle.

## Oral Reading Fluency Passage

### Gold Rush!

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Over the next eleven years, miners would uncover millions of dollars in gold. But not everyone became rich. Many people grew tired of living in dirty, crowded camps and gave up mining and did other things.

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