

DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency¹
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6th Ed.
University of Oregon

Directions for Administration and Scoring

Target Age Range

Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)								
Beg	Mid	End	Beg	Mid	End	Beg	Mid	End
Kindergarten			First Grade			Second Grade		

Nonsense Word Fluency is intended for most children from mid to end of kindergarten through the beginning of second grade. It may be appropriate for monitoring the progress of older children with low skills in letter-sound correspondence.

Description

DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) is a standardized, individually-administered test of the alphabetic principle – including letter-sound correspondence and of the ability to blend letters into words in which letters represent their most common sounds (Kaminski & Good, 1996). The student is presented an 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper with randomly ordered VC and CVC nonsense words (e.g., sig, rav, ov) and asked to produce verbally the individual letter sound of each letter or verbally produce, or read, the whole nonsense word. For example, if the stimulus word is “vaj” the student could say /v/ /a/ /j/ or say the word /vaj/ to obtain a total of three lettersounds correct. The student is allowed 1 minute to produce as many letter-sounds as he/she can, and the final score is the number of letter-sounds produced correctly in one minute. Because the measure is fluency based, students receive a higher score if they are phonologically recoding the word and receive a lower score if they are providing letter sounds in isolation. The NWF measure takes about 2 minutes to administer and has over 20 alternate forms for monitoring progress. The one-month, alternate-form reliability for NWF in January of first grade is .83 (Good et al., in preparation). The concurrent criterion-validity of DIBELS NWF with the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised Readiness Cluster score is .36 in January and .59 in February of first grade (Good et al., in preparation). The predictive validity of DIBELS NWF in January of first grade with (a) CBM ORF in May of first grade is .82, (b) CBM ORF in May of second grade is .60, (c) Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Total Reading Cluster score is .66 (Good et al., in preparation). The benchmark goal for Nonsense Word Fluency is 71 correct letter sounds per minute by end of first grade. Students scoring below 62 at the end of first grade may need intensive instructional support to achieve first grade reading goals.

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Materials: Practice items; student copy of probe; examiner copy of probe, clipboard, stopwatch; colored scoring pen.

Directions for Administration

1. Place the practice items in front of the student.
2. Place the examiner probe on clipboard and position so that the student cannot see what you record.
3. Say these specific directions to the student:

Look at this word (point to the first word on the practice probe). ***It's a make-believe word. Watch me read the word: /s/ /i/ /m/ "sim"*** (point to each letter then run your finger fast beneath the whole word). ***I can say the sounds of the letters, /s/ /i/ /m/*** (point to each letter), ***or I can read the whole word "sim"*** (run your finger fast beneath the whole word).

Your turn to read a make-believe word. Read this word the best you can (point to the word "lut"). ***Make sure you say any sounds you know.***

CORRECT RESPONSE: If the child responds "lut" or with all of the sounds, say	INCORRECT OR NO RESPONSE: If the child does not respond within <u>3 seconds</u> or responds incorrectly, say
<i>That's right. The sounds are /l/ /u/ /t/ or "lut"</i>	<i>Remember, you can say the sounds or you can say the whole word. Watch me: the sounds are /l/ /u/ /t/</i> (point to each letter) <i>or "lut"</i> (run your finger fast through the whole word). <i>Lets try again. Read this word the best you can</i> (point to the word "lut").

4. Place the student copy of the probe in front of the child.

Here are some more make-believe words (point to the student probe). ***Start here*** (point to the first word) ***and go across the page*** (point across the page). ***When I say, "begin", read the words the best you can. Point to each letter and tell me the sound or read the whole word. Read the words the best you can. Put your finger on the first word. Ready, begin.***

5. Start your stopwatch.
6. Follow along on the examiner copy of the probe and underline each letter sound the student provides correctly, either in isolation or read as a whole word. Put a slash (/) over each letter sound read incorrectly.
7. At the end of 1 minute, place a bracket (]) after the last letter sound provided by the student and say, ***"Stop."***

8. These directions can be shortened by beginning with Number 4 for repeated measurement when the student clearly understands the directions and procedure.

Directions for Scoring

1. Discontinue Rule. If the student does not get any sounds correct in words 1-5, discontinue the task and record a score of 0.
2. Correct letter sounds. Underline the individual letters for letter sounds produced correctly in isolation and score 1 point for each letter sound produced correctly. For example, if the stimulus word is “tob” and the student says /t/ /o/ /b/, the individual letters would be underlined with a score of 3.

Word	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
tob	“t...o...b”	<u>t</u> <u>o</u> <u>b</u>	<u>3</u> /3
dos	“d...o...s”	<u>d</u> <u>o</u> <u>s</u>	<u>3</u> /3

3. Correct words. Use a single underline under multiple letters for correct letter sounds blended together and give credit for each letter sound correspondence produced correctly. For example, if the stimulus word is “tob” and the student says “tob”, one underline would be used with a score of 3.

Word	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
tob	“tob”	<u>t o b</u>	<u>3</u> /3
dos	“d...os”	<u>d o s</u>	<u>3</u> /3

4. Partially correct words. If a word is partially correct, underline the corresponding letters for letter sounds produced correctly. Put a slash (/) through the letter if the corresponding letter sound is incorrect. For example, if the word is “tob” and the student says “toab” (with a long o), the letters “t” and “b” would be underlined, and the letter “o” would be slashed with a score of 2.

Word	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
tob	“toab” (long o)	<u>t</u> / <u>b</u>	<u>2</u> /3
dos	“dot”	<u>d</u> <u>o</u> /	<u>2</u> /3

5. Repeated sounds. Letter sounds given twice while sounding out the word are given credit only once. For example, if stimulus word is “tob” and the student says, /t/ /o/ /ob/, the letter “o” and the letters “ob” are underlined. The student receives only 1 point for the letter sound “o” even though the correct sound was provided twice (a total of 3 for the entire word).

Word	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
tob	“t...o...ob”	<u>t</u> <u>o</u> b	<u>3</u> /3
dos	“d...o...s...dos”	<u>d</u> <u>o</u> <u>s</u>	<u>3</u> /3

6. 3 second rule – sound by sound. If the student is providing individual letter sounds and hesitates for 3 seconds on a letter sound, score the letter sound incorrect, provide the correct letter sound, point to the next letter, and say “**What sound?**” This prompt may be repeated. For example, if stimulus word is “tob” and the student says, /t/ (3 seconds), prompt by saying, “/o/ (point to b) **What sound?**”

Word	Student Says	Prompt	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
tob	“t” (3 sec)	/o/ (point to b) What sound?	<u>t</u> o b	<u>1</u> /3
dos et	“d...o” (3 sec)	/s/ (point to e) What sound?	<u>d</u> <u>o</u> s e t	<u>2</u> /5

7. 3 second rule – word by word. If the student is reading words and hesitates for 3 seconds on a word, score the word incorrect, provide the correct word, point to the next word, and say, “**What word?**” This prompt can be repeated. For example, if stimulus words are “tob dos et” and the student says, “tob” (3 seconds), prompt by saying, “**dos** (point to et) **What word?**”

Words	Student Says	Prompt	Scoring Procedure
tob dos et	“tob” (3 sec)	“ dos (point to et) What word? ”	<u>t</u> <u>o</u> <u>b</u> d o s e t
tuf kej ik	“tuf” (3 sec)	“ kej (point to ik) What word? ”	<u>t</u> <u>u</u> <u>f</u> k e j i k

8. Sound order – sound by sound. Letter sounds produced in isolation but out of order are scored as correct. For example, if stimulus word is “tob” and the student points to and says, /b/ /o/ /t/, all letters would be underlined, with a score of 3. The purpose of this rule is to give students credit as they are beginning to learn individual letter sound correspondences.

Word	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
tob	“b...o...t” (point correctly)	<u>t</u> <u>o</u> <u>b</u>	<u>3</u> /3
dos	“o...d...s” (point correctly)	<u>d</u> <u>o</u> <u>s</u>	<u>3</u> /3

9. Sound order – word by word. Blended letter sounds must be correct and in the correct place (beginning, middle, end) to receive credit. For example, if stimulus word is “tob” and the student says, “bot”, only the “o” would be correct and in the correct place, for a score of 1.

Word	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
tob	“bot”	<u>t</u> <u>o</u> b	<u>1</u> /3
ik	“ki”	i k	<u>0</u> /2

10. Insertions. Insertions are not scored as incorrect. For example, if the stimulus word is “sim” and the student says “stim”, the letters “s,” “i,” and “m” would be underlined and full credit would be given for the word with no penalty for the insertion of /t/.

Word	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
tob	“stob”	<u>t</u> <u>o</u> <u>b</u>	<u>3</u> /3
dos	“dots”	<u>d</u> <u>o</u> <u>s</u>	<u>3</u> /3

11. Dialect and articulation. The student is not penalized for imperfect pronunciation due to dialect, articulation, or second language inferences. This is a professional judgment and should be based on the student’s responses and any prior knowledge of their speech patterns. For example, a student may regularly substitute /th/ for /s/. If the stimulus word is “sim” and the student says “thim,” the letter “s” would be underlined and credit for a correct-letter sound correspondence would be given.

Word	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Letter Sounds
sim	“thim” (articulation error)	<u>s</u> <u>i</u> <u>m</u>	<u>3</u> /3
rit	“wit” (articulation error)	<u>r</u> <u>i</u> <u>t</u>	<u>3</u> /3

12. Self correct. If a student makes an error and corrects him/herself within 3 seconds, write “SC” above the letter sound or word and count it as correct.
13. Skips row. If a student skips an entire row, draw a line through the row and do not count the row in scoring.

Administration and Scoring Directions for
NWF-CLS and NWF-WRC Field in the DIBELS 6th Edition

Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) has two scores derived from the standard administration. The Correct Letter Sounds is the count of all correct letter sounds in the student response. The Whole Words Recoded Completely and Correctly (WRC) is the number of words that the child recoded (read as a whole word) completely and correctly. With the standard administration and scoring procedures, short dashes under individual letters are used to identify a correct letter sound and a longer dash under multiple letters is used to identify blending of sounds. For WRC, simply count the number of words recoded completely and correctly, and record that at the bottom of the NWF page and on the front cover of the testing booklet.

Nonsense Word Fluency Scoring Example:

Word	Student Says	Marking Procedure	Score
wuz	“w...u...z”	<u>w</u> <u>u</u> <u>z</u>	CLS=3, WRC=0
wuz	“wuz”	<u>w u z</u>	CLS=3, WRC=1
wuz	“w...u...z...wuz”	<u>w</u> <u>u</u> <u>z</u>	CLS=3, WRC=1

Pronunciation Guide:

Different regions of the country use different dialects of American English. These pronunciation examples may be modified or distinguished consistent with regional dialects and conventions. See dialect and articulation scoring note for clarification. The letters “x” and “q” are not used. The letters “h,” “w,” “y,” and “r” are used only in the initial position. The letters “c” and “g” are used only in the final position.

Letter	Sound	Example
a	/a/	bat
e	/e/	bet
i	/i/	bit
o	/o/	top
u	/u/	hut
b	/b/	bat
c	/k/	tic
d	/d/	dad
f	/f/	fan
g	/g/	pig
h	/h/	hat
j	/j/	jet
k	/k/	can
l	/l/	lot
m	/m/	man
n	/n/	not
p	/p/	pan
r	/r/	ran
s	/s/	sat
t	/t/	top
v	/v/	van
w	/w/	wet
y	/y/	yak
z	/z/	zipper

The assessor...	Yes	Continue Practicing
1) ...holds clipboard and stopwatch so the student cannot see what he/she records.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) ...performs standardized directions verbatim: "Look at this word (point to first word on practice sheet). It's a make-believe word. Watch me read the word: /s/ /i/ /m/ 'sim' (point to each letter then run your finger fast beneath the whole word.) I can say the sounds of the letters, /s/ /i/ /m/ (point to each letter), or I can read the whole word 'sim.'" "Your turn to read a make-believe word. Read this word the best you can. Make sure you say any sounds you know." Correct: "That's right. The sounds are /l/ /u/ /t/ or 'lut.'" Incorrect: "Remember, you can say the sounds or you can say the whole word. Watch me: the sounds are /l/ /u/ /t/ or 'lut.' Let's try again. Read this word the best you can." "Here are some more make-believe words. Start here and go across the page. When I say, 'begin,' read the words the best you can. Point to each letter and tell me the sound or read the whole word. Read the words the best you can. Put your finger on the first word. Ready? Begin."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) ...responds to correct and incorrect responses appropriately.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) ...starts stopwatch after saying "begin."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) ...waits 3 seconds for the student to produce letter-sound or word. After 3 seconds, tells the correct sound or word and asks the student to try the next sound or word. If the student does not respond, asks him/her to move on to the next sound or word.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) ...underlines letter sounds produced correctly alone or in context, and slashes incorrect letter sounds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) ...discontinues the assessment if the student does not get any correct letter sounds in first 5 words.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) ...places a bracket (e.g.,]) after the last letter sound provided and says "stop," at the end of 1 minute.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9) ...accurately counts the correct letter sounds for each row.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10) ...accurately totals the correct letter sounds for each row, and the correct words.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11) ...records the number of correctly produced letter sounds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12) ...shadow scores with an expert examiner and is within 2 points on the final score.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>