

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency and Retell Fluency¹
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6th Ed.
University of Oregon

Directions for Administration and Scoring

Target Age Range

Retell Fluency (RTF) (Optional, not endorsed)																				
Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)																				
Beg	Mid	End	Beg	Mid	End	Beg	Mid	End	Beg	Mid	End	Beg	Mid	End	Beg	Mid	End			
Kindergarten			First Grade			Second Grade			Third Grade			Fourth Grade			Fifth Grade			Sixth Grade		

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency is intended for most children from mid first grade through sixth grade. The benchmark goals are listed at the end of this guide.

Description

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) is a standardized, individually administered test of accuracy and fluency with connected text. The DORF passages and procedures are based on the program of research and development of Curriculum-Based Measurement of reading by Stan Deno and colleagues at the University of Minnesota and using the procedures described in Shinn (1989). A version of CBM Reading also has been published as The Test of Reading Fluency (TORF) (Children’s Educational Services, 1987). DORF is a standardized set of passages and administration procedures designed to (a) identify children who may need additional instructional support, and (b) monitor progress toward instructional goals. The passages are calibrated for the goal level of reading for each grade level. Student performance is measured by having students read a passage aloud for one minute. Words omitted, substituted, and hesitations of more than three seconds are scored as errors. Words self-corrected within three seconds are scored as accurate. The number of correct words per minute from the passage is the oral reading fluency rate.

A series of studies has confirmed the technical adequacy of CBM Reading procedures in general. Test-retest reliabilities for elementary students ranged from .92 to .97; alternate-form reliability of different reading passages drawn from the same level ranged from .89 to .94 (Tindal, Marston, & Deno, 1983). Criterion-related validity studied in eight separate studies in the 1980s reported coefficients ranging from .52 - .91 (Good & Jefferson, 1998).

DIBELS Retell Fluency (RTF) is intended to provide a comprehension check for the DORF assessment. In general, oral reading fluency provides one of the best measures of reading competence, including comprehension, for children in first through sixth grades. RTF does not meet our criteria for widespread use as a benchmark screening assessment but it can be used on an individual basis when there is a question about a student’s reading comprehension. The purpose of the RTF measure is to (a) prevent inadvertently learning or practicing a misrule, (b) identify children whose comprehension is not consistent with their fluency, (c) provide an

Good, R. H., & Kaminski, R. A., & Dill, S. (2002). DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency. In R. H. Good & R. A. Kaminski (Eds.), *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (6th ed.). Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement. Available: <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/>.

explicit linkage to the core components in the NRP report, and (d) increase the face validity of the DORF.

(1) The misrule that we want to prevent is that speed-reading without attending to meaning is either desirable or the intent of the oral reading fluency measure. With a prompted retell, children will be less likely to conclude that simply reading as fast as they can is the desired behavior, and teachers will be less likely to imply that simply reading as fast as they can is desired.

(2) Teachers frequently are concerned about children who read fluently and do not comprehend. My read of the data is that this pattern is infrequent - but may apply to some children. It seems to me this procedure may identify those children without increasing unduly the amount of time spent in the assessment.

(3) The National Reading Panel (2000) report is clear on the core components of early reading, and DIBELS maps explicitly onto the first three, Retell Fluency is included to provide a brief measure that corresponds directly to the comprehension core component. The current oral reading fluency measure corresponds about as well as anything to reading comprehension. Retell Fluency provides an additional, explicit score that corresponds to the National Reading Panel core components.

(4) A primary concern teachers have about oral reading fluency is the face validity of the measure. Incorporation of an explicit comprehension check may help teachers feel increasingly comfortable with oral reading fluency.

Guidelines for Interpreting Retell Fluency. Preliminary evidence indicates that the Retell Fluency measures correlates with measures of oral reading fluency about .59. It appears children's retell scores may be typically about 50% of their oral reading fluency score, and that it is unusual for children reading more than 40 words per minute to have a retell score 25% or less than their oral reading fluency score. So, a rough rule of thumb may be that, for children whose retell is about 50% of their oral reading fluency score, their oral reading fluency score provides a good overall indication of their reading proficiency, including comprehension. But, for children who are reading over 40 words per minute and whose retell score is 25% or less of their oral reading fluency, their oral reading fluency score alone may not be providing a good indication of their overall reading proficiency. For example, a child reading 60 words correct in one minute would be expected to use about 30 words in their retell of the passage. If their retell is about 30, then their oral reading fluency of 60 is providing a good indication of their reading skills. If their retell is 15 or less, then there may be a comprehension concern that is not represented by their fluency.

Materials: Student copy of passage; examiner copy, clipboard, stopwatch; colored scoring pen.

Directions for Administration – Part 1: Oral Reading Fluency

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

Please read this (point) out loud. If you get stuck, I will tell you the word so you can keep reading. When I say, "stop" I may ask you to tell me about

what you read, so do your best reading. Start here (point to the first word of the passage). **Begin.**

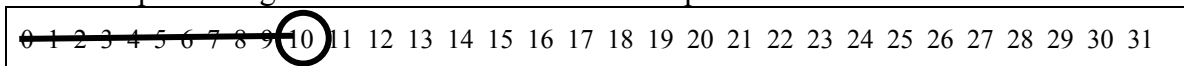
4. Start your stopwatch when the student says the first word of the passage. The title is not counted. If the student fails to say the first word after 3 seconds, tell them the word and mark it as incorrect, then start your stopwatch.
5. The maximum time for each word is 3 seconds. If the student does not provide the word within 3 seconds, say the word and mark the word as incorrect.
6. Follow along on the examiner copy of the probe. Put a slash (/) over words read incorrectly.
7. At the end of **1 minute**, place a bracket (]) after the last word provided by the student, stop and reset the stopwatch, and say

Stop. (remove the passage)

Directions for Administration – Part 2: Retell

8. If the student reads 10 or more words correct, administer Part 2: Retell. Say,
Please tell me all about what you just read. Try to tell me everything you can. Begin.
9. Start your stopwatch after you say “begin”.
10. Count the number of words the child produces in his or her retell by moving your pen through the numbers as the student is responding. Try to record accurately the number of words in the student’s response. Put a circle around the total number of words in the student’s response.

Example: If the student says “The bird had a nest. There was a mommy bird.” Move your pen through the numbers as the student responds and circle the total words.



11. The first time the student does not say anything for 3 seconds, say **“Try to tell me everything you can.”** This prompt can be used only once.
12. After the first prompt, if the student does not say anything or gets off track for 5 seconds, circle the total number of words in the student’s retell and say, **“Stop.”**
13. At the end of **1 minute**, circle the total number of words in the student’s retell and say, **“Stop.”**

Directions for Scoring – Part 1: Oral Reading Fluency

1. Score reading passages immediately after administration.
2. Discontinue Rule. If the student does not read any words correctly in the first row of the first passage, discontinue the task and record a score of 0 on the front cover.

3. Record the total number of words read correctly on the bottom of the scoring sheet for each passage.
4. If the student reads fewer than 10 words correct on the first passage, record their score on the front cover and do not administer passages 2 and 3.
5. If the student reads 3 passages, record their middle score on the front cover. For example, if the student gets scores of 27, 36, and 25, record a score of 27 on the front cover. If they read only 1 passage, have them read the middle (second) passage.
6. Hesitate or struggle with words. If a student hesitates or struggles with a word for 3 seconds, tell the student the word and mark the word as incorrect. If necessary, indicate for the student to continue with the next word.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
I have a goldfish.	“I have a ... (3 seconds)”	I have a goldfish .	<u>3</u> /4

7. Hyphenated words. Hyphenated words count as two words if both parts can stand alone as individual words. Hyphenated words count as one word if either part cannot stand alone as an individual word.

Passage	Number of Words
I gave Ben a red yo-yo.	6
We did push-ups, pull-ups, and sit-ups.	9

8. Numerals. Numerals must be read correctly in the context of the sentence.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
My father is 36.	“My father is thirty-six.”	My father is 36.	<u>4</u> /4
My father is 36.	“My father is three six.”	My father is 36 .	<u>3</u> /4
I am 6 years old.	“I am six years old.”	I am 6 years old.	<u>5</u> /5

9. Mispronounced words. A word is scored as correct if it is pronounced correctly in the context of the sentence. If the word is mispronounced in the context, it is scored as an error.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
It was a live fish.	“It was a liv fish.” (i.e., short i)	It was a live fish.	<u>3</u> /4
I ate too much.	“I eat too much.”	I ate too much.	<u>3</u> /4

10. Self Corrections. A word is scored as correct if it is initially mispronounced but the student self corrects within 3 seconds. Mark SC above the word and score as correct.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
It was a live fish.	“It was a liv ... live fish.” (i.e., self-corrects to long i within 3 sec.)	It was a ^{SC} live fish.	<u>4</u> /4

11. Repeated Words. Words that are repeated are not scored as incorrect and are ignored in scoring.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
I have a goldfish.	“I have a ... I have a goldfish.”	I have a goldfish.	<u>4</u> /4

12. Articulation and dialect. The student is not penalized for imperfect pronunciation due to dialect, articulation, or second language interference. For example, if the student consistently says /th/ for /s/, and reads “rest” as “reht,” he or she should be given credit for a correct word. This is a professional judgment and should be based on the student’s responses and any prior knowledge of his/her speech patterns.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
It is time for a rest.	“It is time for a reht.” (articulation)	It is time for a rest.	<u>6</u> /6
We took the short cut.	“We took the shot cut.” (dialect)	We took the short cut.	<u>5</u> /5

13. Inserted words. Inserted words are ignored and not counted as errors. The student also does not get additional credit for inserted words. If the student frequently inserts extra words, note the pattern at the bottom of the scoring page.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
It is time for a rest.	“It is time for a long rest.”	It is time for a rest.	<u>6</u> /6
I ate too much.	“I ate way too much.”	I ate too much.	<u>4</u> /4

14. Omitted words. Omitted words are scored as incorrect.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
It is time for a rest.	“It is time for rest.”	It is time for r rest.	<u>5</u> /6
I ate too much.	“I ate much.”	I ate t / o much.	<u>3</u> /4

15. Word Order. All words that are read correctly but in the wrong order are scored as incorrect.

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
The ice cream man comes.	“The cream ice man comes.”	The ice cream man comes.	<u>3</u> /5
I ate too much.	“I too ate much.”	I ate t / o much.	<u>2</u> /4

16. Abbreviations. Abbreviations should be read in the way you would normally pronounce the abbreviation in conversation. For example, TV could be read as “teevee” or “television” but Mr. would be read as “mister.”

Passage	Student Says	Scoring Procedure	Correct Words / Total Words
May I watch TV?	“May I watch teevee?”	May I watch TV?	<u>4</u> /4
May I watch TV?	“May I watch television?”	May I watch TV?	<u>4</u> /4
My teacher is Mr. Smith.	“My teacher is mister Smith.”	My teacher is Mr. Smith.	<u>5</u> /5
My teacher is Mr. Smith.	“My teacher is ‘m’ ‘r’ Smith.”	My teacher is Mr. Smith.	<u>4</u> /5

Directions for Scoring – Part 2: Retell Fluency

1. Score retell while the child is responding. Circle total number of words immediately after examiner says, “Stop.”
2. Number of retell words. Count the number of words the child retells that illustrate their understanding of the passage.
3. Exclamations are not counted. Only actual words are counted. If the child inserts mazes or other sounds, inserted sounds are not counted.

Passage	Student Says
I love going to the library downtown. There are so many books. There is a big room in the library that is just for kids. I can reach all the books by myself.	They uhh they are going to the uhhh library. It is uhhh downtown. uhh There’s a room.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 **13** 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

4. Count contractions as one word. For example, if the child uses “She’s,” or “We’ll” they would only count as one word.

Passage	Student Says
I love going to the library downtown. There are so many books. There is a big room in the library that is just for kids. I can reach all the books by myself.	They’re going to the library. It’s downtown. There’s a room.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 </div>	

5. Songs or recitations are not included. If the child recites the ABC’s or tells a song or poem, even if relevant to the retell, the recitation, song, or poem is not counted.

Passage	Student Says
I love going to the library downtown. There are so many books. There is a big room in the library that is just for kids. I can reach all the books by myself.	They’re going to the library. The books have letters like, A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 </div>	

6. Minor repetitions, redundancies, irrelevancies, and inaccuracies are counted. The crucial judgment is whether the student is retelling the passage or has gotten off track on another story or topic. In this example, the child (a) goes from “they” to “I”, (b) changes “love” to “like,” (c) changes the order of events, (d) repeats “library,” (e) confuses “room” and “books,” and (f) confuses “reach” and “read.” However, their retell is fundamentally on track. and all words would count.

Passage	Student Says
I love going to the library downtown. There are so many books. There is a big room in the library that is just for kids. I can reach all the books by myself.	They’re going to the library. The library is downtown. I like the library. They have books just for kids. I can read them myself.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 </div>	

7. Rote repetitions of words or phrases are not counted.

Passage	Student Says
I love going to the library downtown. There are so many books. There is a big room in the library that is just for kids. I can reach all the books by myself.	They’re going to the library. They’re going to the library. They’re going to the library. (sing-song voice)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 </div>	

8. Repeating their retell is not counted. Especially when children are prompted to “try to tell me everything you can” they may simply repeat what they have already provided.

Passage	Student Says
<p>I love going to the library downtown. There are so many books. There is a big room in the library that is just for kids. I can reach all the books by myself.</p>	<p>They’re going to the library. Lots of books. [prompt] They’re going to the library. Books.</p>
<p>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31</p>	

9. Stories or irrelevancies that are off track are not counted. Children may start telling something from their own experience that is vaguely related to the passage. Such stories are not counted.

Passage	Student Says
<p>I love going to the library downtown. There are so many books. There is a big room in the library that is just for kids. I can reach all the books by myself.</p>	<p>They’re going to the library. They have lots of books. My mom took me to the library. We got Dr. Seuss and Willy Wonka. They are my favorite books.</p>
<p>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31</p>	

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: <i>“Please read this (point) out loud. If you get stuck, I will tell you the word so you can keep reading. When I say, ‘stop’ I may ask you to tell me about what you read, so do your best reading. Start here (point to the first word of the passage). Begin.”</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) ...starts stopwatch after the student says the first word of the passage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) ...waits 3 seconds for the student to read the first word. After 3 seconds, says the correct word, starts the stopwatch, and scores the first word as incorrect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) ...says the correct word and scores the word as incorrect, if the student hesitates or struggles with a word for 3 seconds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) ...puts a slash through words read incorrectly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) ...writes “sc” above an error if self-corrected within 3 seconds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) ...discontinues the assessment and records the appropriate score if a. the student does not get any words correct in the first row of the first passage (records a score of 0); OR b. the student reads fewer than 10 words correct on the first passage (records the score of the first passage).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9) ...places a bracket (]) after the last word provided and says “stop,” at the end of 1 minute.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10) ...accurately determines the number of total words, errors, and number of word read correctly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11) ...records the total words, errors and number of correct words at the bottom of each passage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12) ...records the median (i.e., middle) number of words correct on the front cover.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13) ...shadow scores with an expert examiner, and is within 2 points on the final score.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The assessor...	Yes	Continue Practicing
1) ...administers retell if student reads 10 or more words correctly on Oral Reading Fluency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) ...holds clipboard and stopwatch so the student cannot see what he/she records.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) ...states standardized directions verbatim: <i>“Please tell me all about what you just read. Try to tell me everything you can. Begin.”</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) ...starts the stopwatch after saying “begin”.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) ...scores as the student is responding by moving a pen/pencil through the numbers on the scoring grid to count the number of words in the retell.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) ...applies scoring rules consistently and correctly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) ...says <i>“Try to tell me everything you can.”</i> If the student does not say anything for 3 seconds. (This prompt can be used only once.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) ...says “stop” after the above prompt is given and the student does not say anything or gets off track for 5 seconds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9) ...says “stop” at the end of 1 minute.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10) ... circles the total numbers of words in the student’s retell at the end of the administration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11) ...writes the retell score in the blank under the scoring grid and on the front cover.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12) ...shadow scores the retell with an expert examiner and is within 2 points on the final score.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>