

Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading
Just Read, Florida! and the Florida Center for Reading Research

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1. What is the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading?

A.1. The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading is a new comprehensive K-12 assessment system that provides teachers with assessment tools to support instructional decision-making in reading.

Q.2. What is meant by the phrase, “comprehensive K-12 assessment system?”

A. 2. The assessment system provides information to K-12 teachers that incorporates all of the inter-related elements of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Q. 3. Where were the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading originally constructed, and do they have a strong research base?

A. 3. The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading are an initiative from the Florida Department of Education, Just Read Florida and were developed at the Florida Center for Reading Research, under the direction of Drs. Barbara Foorman and Joe Torgesen. Researchers relied on decades of reading research and employed state-of-the-art statistical techniques to ensure validity and reliability of the assessments.

Q. 4. How is this reading assessment system different from the reading portion of the FCAT?

A. 4. The FCAT is designed to focus on the assessment *of* learning and is considered an outcome measure. The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading focus on providing information *for* student learning. It provides teachers with the student-specific data needed to guide reading instruction.

Q.5. What types of assessment data does this system provide?

A. 5. Reading assessments have been developed to provide teachers with screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring information for grades Kindergarten through 12. There are 4 types of assessments: the Broad Screen, the Broad Diagnostic Inventory, the Targeted Diagnostic Inventory and Progress Monitoring Tasks.

Q. 6. What is the purpose of screening students and who will be screened?

A. 6. The quick screening process will alert teachers to those students who have a high probability of reading success with well-planned instruction. Conversely, it alerts teachers to students who may have more difficulty and require targeted learning objectives.

Q. 7. What types of tasks are given in the Broad Screen?

A. 7. In the beginning and middle of kindergarten, knowledge of letter names and sounds and phonemic awareness provide the information needed to identify students with a high probability of reading success. By the end of kindergarten, phonemic awareness and word reading are the best predictors. In grades 1 and 2, an individual word reading task is the best predictor of reading success. In grades 3-12, an adaptive reading comprehension assessment administered via the computer serves to predict reading success.

Q. 8. What additional in depth assessments are available for students who do not meet the screening criteria for success in reading?

A. 8. In grades K-2, a Targeted Diagnostic Inventory is individually administered to isolate key reading skills that are necessary for successful reading. In grades 3-12, maze and word analysis tasks are administered via computer to access relative strengths and weaknesses in fluency, low level comprehension skills, and orthographic skills. An Informal Diagnostic Toolkit for grades 3-12 is being developed and includes instructional-level reading comprehension passages, a phonics and word analysis inventory, a sight word inventory, and templates for passage-specific teacher questioning techniques.

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Q. 9. What is the difference between the Broad Screen and the Broad Diagnostic Inventory?

A. 9. The Broad Diagnostic Inventory is available in grades K-2 and provides diagnostic information for comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling (grade 2, only).

Q. 10. Will Ongoing Progress Monitoring Tasks be available?

A. 10. Yes, oral reading fluency passages will be available in grades 1-5 and maze passages in grades 3-12. Plans are underway to continue development with additional progress monitoring tools for letter-sound knowledge, phonemic awareness, and word building in grades K-2 and instructional-level comprehension passages for 3-12.

Q. 11. How long does it typically take to administer the assessments?

A. 11. In grades K-2, the screen will take between 3-5 minutes. The Broad Diagnostic K-2 will take 10-15 minutes per task. The Targeted Diagnostic Inventory testing time will vary by student. In grades 3-10, the adaptive reading comprehension screen will take approximately 10-45 minutes depending on student ability. The maze and word analysis tasks will take approximately 20-35 minutes.

Q. 12. How often are the assessments administered?

A. 12. The assessments are administered in September, January and April of the school year.

Q. 13. Who will administer the tests to the students?

A. 13. In grades K-2, classroom teachers are the key to diagnosing students' reading abilities. Providing teachers the opportunity to assess each student ensures that the assessment data and instruction that follows are designed appropriately to match the needs of the student and classroom. In grades 3-12, the assessment is internet-based and can be delivered individually or in a lab setting.

Q. 14. How will this data be reported to the state of Florida?

A. 14. Student results will be part of the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) system. In K-2, the scores will be entered via hand or an Internet-based scoring tool. In grades 3-10 scores are automatically sent to the PMRN site from an internet-linked computer. Screening data will be reported for progress monitoring purposes.

Q. 15. How will this assessment system make teaching reading easier for teachers?

A. 15. Teachers will have a comprehensive assessment system, covering all the key areas of reading, with data that quickly identifies students who will be successful, and those that need further diagnosis. Additional diagnostic tasks will be available to isolate key areas of concern. Instructional routines that are linked to the assessments will be available through FCRR to support instruction. These measures will be used statewide and provide consistency among schools and districts. They will also allow districts to streamline their assessments and reduce redundancy.

Q. 16. How will this assessment system benefit students?

A. 16. Students will receive instruction tailored to their individual needs and designed to promote reading success throughout the grades.

Q. 17. How much will these assessments cost districts and when will they be available to school districts?

A. 17. The assessment system is FREE! The Florida Assessments for Instruction for Reading will be available to districts in 2009-2010 school year. Pre-kindergarten measures are anticipated in 2010-2011.