



## 4–8: Preparing for Assessment

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### Introduction

This guide discusses the preparation process for administering the Developmental Reading Assessment® (DRA®2) in Grades 4–8.

There are a few different steps in the preparation process for the primary grades. For information on preparing to administer DRA2 in Grades K–3, please watch the tutorial K–3: Preparing for Assessment.

Before assessing the students, there is a nine-step process that should be completed. These steps are

- preparing students;
- checking books and forms;
- assembling materials;
- reviewing the Record of Oral Reading;
- reading Benchmark Assessment Books;
- making copies;
- creating timelines and planning activities;
- selecting and preparing an appropriate testing location; and
- determining grade-level texts.

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### Step 1: Prepare Students

Before conducting the assessment, explain to students what they will be asked to do during the oral and written parts of the assessment and at the conference. Make sure the other students know what is expected of them while the individual assessments are being conducted.

If students are not familiar with what is expected during the assessment, provide opportunities for them to practice the skills that will help them prepare for it. There are generic DRA2 blackline masters that intermediate and middle school readers can use to practice the assessment skills.

These are found in the back of the Teacher Guide, and they can be used to keep a reading log as well as practice prediction, note taking, written summary, and metacognitive awareness. Be sure to use these forms with texts other than the DRA2 Benchmark Assessment Books. The assessment books should never be used for classroom instruction.

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### Step 2: Check Books and Forms

The next thing to do to get ready for assessment is make sure that all of the necessary books and forms are ready, specifically the Teacher Guide and the twenty-eight Benchmark Assessment Books.

All of the necessary forms can be found in the Blackline Masters book or CD. There are forms that are used with each text to assess individual students and those that are used to collect overall classroom data.



A portion of the Benchmark Assessment Book, used in the assessment, appears in the correlating Teacher Observation Guide. As the student reads aloud, record any miscues and other reading behaviors that are referenced on this guide. This makes it possible to identify the student's strengths and areas that require additional instruction and support.

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**Step 5:  
Read  
Benchmark  
Books**

Next, read the Benchmark Assessment Books to prepare for evaluating the students' responses in the Student Booklets. Reading the books will also help prepare for selecting the appropriate descriptor on the Continuum for each Comprehension skill assessed.

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**Step 6:  
Copy  
Assessment  
Forms**

After assembling all of the master forms, make copies of the specific forms to use for each individual student. Depending on the grade level being assessed, be sure to have the Student Reading Surveys for Grades 4 and 5 or Grades 6–8, Teacher Observation Guides, and Student Booklets for the texts that will be used.

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**Step 7:  
Create  
Assessment  
Timeline/  
Plan Activities**

Typically, it will be possible to conduct the assessment with a student within one day or in two or three consecutive days. Just remember to allow enough time for each step of the assessment to be completed in one sitting.

Select a time each day for the assessment conferences when other students are engaged in quiet activities that they can do on their own. It is important to specifically plan those activities. These activities might include reading independently or with a partner, working at a computer station, or writing in a journal.

The Teacher Guide also provides some additional ideas for Classroom Management. These pages are labeled with the tab *Assessment Guidelines*.

IF the student appears to be reading below grade level.  
THEN select the DRA2-level text you think is the most appropriate for the student's level of Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension.

IF the student has read and scored Independent in Comprehension and Oral Reading Fluency on on-grade-level fiction and nonfiction texts.  
THEN you may select the next-grade-level DRA2 texts for the assessment.

**Classroom Management Tips**  
The following are possible general options you might use for administering the assessment. Variations to these suggestions may be necessary to accommodate individual school schedules.

**Option 1**  
Conduct the assessment for your entire class over a two-to-three week period of time during a regularly scheduled reading workshop or during sustained silent reading.  
Have all students complete the Student Reading Survey during the first day. On day two, conduct one-on-one student reading conferences with several students. On the following day, these students complete the Student Booklet independently while one-on-one student reading conferences are conducted with several more students. This pattern is repeated until all students have been assessed.

**Option 2**  
Conduct the assessment during a two- to three-hour extended reading and writing workshop time.  
Have students complete the Student Reading Survey prior to the extended workshop time. During the extended workshop, conduct as many one-on-one student reading conference sessions as time and materials permit. As conferences are completed, students are directed to complete the assessment independently. If students read different texts and/or multiple copies of texts are available, approximately ten students could complete the assessment within a two-hour block of time.

**Option 3**  
Conduct the assessment with the support of a substitute teacher.  
Have students complete the Student Reading Survey before their reading conferences. While a substitute works with the class, conduct as many one-on-one student reading conference sessions as time and materials permit. As conferences are completed, students are directed to complete the assessment independently. The number of students assessed depends on the release time allowed and the number of available DRA2 texts.

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**Step 8:  
Select/Prepare  
Location**

Next, choose a location for conducting the assessment. It should be an area that is quiet and free from distractions, but make sure it is in a location where the rest of the class is visible. It should be possible to talk with each student comfortably while the other students are

working quietly. It is important that texts being read aloud are not overheard by other students. The texts must be new to each individual student or the assessment results could be skewed. Generally, a small table is sufficient.

Have the assessment materials, a pen or pencil, a stopwatch, and a calculator ready. Remember, the DRA2 kit includes a clipboard that has a built-in stopwatch and calculator.

It may be useful to use a recording device during the conferences. Some teachers find it helpful to review the conference a second time or use the recordings to document student progress over time.

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**Step 9:  
Determine  
Grade-Level  
Texts**

It is important that the texts selected for the assessment are appropriate for the students' reading levels. This helps them place their focus on constructing meaning instead of decoding.

Use previous DRA2 and other reading assessment information to determine at what level students can read independently. It is recommended that students are assessed with Benchmark Assessment Books that are below grade level, at grade level, or one grade level above their current grade. It is also important to assess students with both fiction and nonfiction texts at each level. If students read a fiction text in the fall, then in the spring assess with a nonfiction text.

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**Review**

This guide discussed the nine-step process that should be completed before administering the DRA2 to Grades 4–8. These steps are

- preparing students;
- checking books and forms;
- assembling materials;
- reviewing the Record of Oral Reading;
- reading Benchmark Assessment Books;
- making copies;
- creating timelines and planning activities;
- selecting and preparing an appropriate testing location; and
- determining grade-level texts.