

Burt Reading Test (1974) Revised

With all standardised reading tests it is essential that there is no teaching to the test. None of the words should be taught in preparation for the test.

Each child is tested individually on the Burt Reading Test.

Instructions

- Administer the test in a quiet area away from other children.
- Child (younger than 9 years old) starts at the top and reads words from left to right.
- Stop after 10 consecutive errors (or earlier if struggling).
- Count the words that have been read correctly. This is the raw score. Consult the chart 'Revised Norms For Burt (Re-arranged)' and convert the raw score into a Reading Age e.g. a score of 24 would give a reading age of 6.5. The reading ages are given in years and months (Not years and tenths of a year).

Recording

While the child is reading the words on the printed sheet, the teacher should record the responses on a separate sheet (a photocopy of the test works well). The recording should not be made so obvious as to distract the child. At the same time the recording should be carefully and systematically done for each pupil. Do not try to count orally the number of words correctly (or incorrectly) read by the child, and do not try to score on odd bits of paper. A convenient way of recording is to make a tick (✓) or to circle each word correctly read.

If a pupil reads too fast for the purpose of recording, he may be asked to read more slowly, or to reread a word which the teacher was not sure about.

Where to start

Children up to the age of nine or those known to be weak readers should start the test from the beginning.

Pupils above the age of nine years may be allowed to commence the test at the third, fourth or fifth group of ten words (according to the age and the teacher's judgement), i.e. a 10-year-old may commence at the word 'nurse', a 13-year-old at 'emergency'. The point at which a child should commence is left to the discretion of the teacher, but a mark should be made on the record sheet of the first word of the group at which these older or brighter pupils commence, to enable the teacher to calculate the score correctly.

Should a pupil fail with any word of a group of ten words, when he has started at a point beyond the initial groups of ten, then he should be taken back to read the preceding group of ten words.

e.g. A child commencing at 'beware' and failing on any word within this group should be taken back to read the group commencing 'nurse'.

If he read correctly all ten words in this pair of lines, he should, of course, be credited with success on all earlier words.

During the test

- The child's original response should be accepted but spontaneous corrections should be allowed.
- The child should not be told whether his responses were correct or not; if he asks, only general encouragement should be given.
- Asking for a repetition of the word should be used only when the examiner is not sure of what the pupil has said. If the word is clearly said wrongly, e.g. 'know' instead of 'known' then there is no need to ask for a repetition. Asking the child to reread the word should not be used to indicate "You had better look at it again, there is something wrong with it." The only case in which one would allow this is when an obviously bright pupil or good reader makes a slip in an earlier word. For example a bright ten-year old reading quickly may leave the 's' off boys', but on being asked again to read the word will usually give it correctly. It may be appropriate to advise a pupil who makes several such errors through inattentiveness to look at each word carefully before saying it.
- The pupil should be allowed to read at his own speed. Some pupils are very slow and show a fairly well developed power of word analysis and synthesis if given sufficient time. The pupil should not be hurried, and self-corrections should be counted as correct.
- Guessing is allowed; indeed a child should be encouraged to guess rather than omit words that he does not know.
- Words should not be pronounced for pupils even when they stumble over them. Usually when a child is unable to say the word, the injunction, "We will leave that one. Let's go to the next word," is sufficient.
- The usual pronunciation of words should be accepted. Local variations occur and these should be allowed for in deciding on the correctness or otherwise of responses.
- Any attempt at coaching or teaching the difficult words to pupils should be studiously avoided

* Note that it is advisable to wait at least six months before testing a child again on the same test.