

**Vermont  
Developmental Reading  
Assessment  
(VT-DRA)**

**Administration Manual**

**Revised October 2005**

Manual developed by the Vermont Department of Education  
1998 Developmental Reading Assessment  
originally developed by  
Joetta Beaver, Upper Arlington, Ohio;  
published by Celebration Press  
(Pearson Learning)  
and adapted by the  
Vermont Department of Education and the University of Vermont,  
with support from the  
Northeast and Islands Regional Lab, Brown University



# Table of Contents

	Page
Purpose.....	2
Background and Rationale.....	2
Potential Benefits.....	3
Who, Where and When.....	4
Results to be Obtained.....	4
Assessment Materials.....	5
Procedures.....	6
Procedures during BANDS A1 and A2.....	7
Procedures during BAND B.....	8
Procedures during BANDS C and D.....	9
Record of Oral Reading	
Key Points.....	10
Scoring the Record of Oral Reading.....	11
Retellings/Comprehension	
Key Points.....	12
Scoring Comprehension.....	13
Fluency Procedures for BANDS C and D.....	14
Finding the Highest BAND.....	15
Putting It All Together	
Before the Assessment.....	15
Getting The Assessment Started.....	16
During the Assessment.....	17
After the Assessment.....	17
Reminders.....	18

## **Purpose**

Welcome! This Administration Manual is intended to accompany the required training for those who will be assessing Vermont's second grade students using the Vermont-Developmental Reading Assessment (VT-DRA).

Early reading assessment is an important part of the state's comprehensive assessment system. One key purpose of the VT-DRA, is accountability — to find out how well Vermont second graders meet two key standards in reading (Vermont Framework Standard 1.2/Grade Expectation R2:9 — reading accuracy, and Standard 1.3/Grade Expectation R2:10 — reading comprehension). It is important to keep in mind that results from this assessment do not reflect the grade 2 program so much as the pre-K through grade 2 program, including home and community support for early literacy.

The VT-DRA can serve two additional purposes: informing instruction and providing information to parents. Since the assessment takes place on an individual basis, it provides an opportunity for teachers to closely observe a number of factors about students' reading performance — fluency, strategy use, skills present or not yet developed, etc. — and then to use or communicate this information immediately. Similar assessments should be taking place on a regular basis in every primary-level classroom, and the VT-DRA is intended to mirror and promote such good practices, while at the same time providing uniform information about Vermont students' progress toward meeting key standards. Because measures used for large-scale assessment purposes need to be uniform and fair to students, it is essential for all who administer and score the VT-DRA to do so in a consistent manner across all sites. That is an important part of the initial training and the required, annual Update/Calibration Sessions.

The VT-DRA is **not** intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of students' reading achievement. As mentioned above, the VT-DRA focuses on only two Grade Expectations, and should be supplemented by a variety of classroom-based and school-level assessments that provide information about the various dimensions of literacy (reading strategies, concepts of print, phonemic awareness, breadth and depth of reading, written responses to reading, etc.).

## **Background and Rationale**

The Developmental Reading Assessment was created, field tested and revised over eight years by Joetta Beaver and a team of primary level teachers in Upper Arlington, Ohio. The procedures also incorporate the exemplary work of Dr. Marie Clay of New Zealand. The DRA is published by Celebration Press, which is part of Pearson Learning. The Vermont Department of Education, in partnership with a team from the University of Vermont, supported by the Northeast and Islands Regional Lab (Brown University), has made several modifications in the DRA to provide uniform, fair information for Vermont's statewide assessment program. These modifications include customized standardized formats, procedures and materials.

The VT- DRA evaluates two major aspects of reading: accuracy of oral reading and comprehension, through reading and retelling of narrative stories. Both aspects of reading are critical to independence as a reader. (Note: VT-DRA books are not to be used with any Vermont students before they are assessed at the end of grade 2. This includes use at kindergarten or first grade. See Appendix for suggestions about adapting the VT-DRA procedures for regular classroom use.)

**Oral reading accuracy** is assessed through *records of oral reading* (which use a printed script of the text). To ensure uniformity and fairness, specific procedures/conventions for administration and scoring are outlined. (Note: Teachers may either take a record of oral reading or a running record (no script); so long as Vermont's uniform decisions for scoring are followed). Running records are described in detail in An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement by Marie Clay (Heinemann. 2002).

**Comprehension** of what is read is assessed through *retellings and follow-up questions*. Reading is not accomplished if students do not create meaning from text. Retellings are one way to find out what the student has understood from the story. In the VT-DRA, uniform follow-up prompts and questions are **always** asked immediately after the retelling to probe for additional understanding. Story-specific scoring guides list the key elements in particular stories and are used to evaluate the acceptability of students' retellings. These scoring guides intentionally list only the elements of the story which are most essential for students' understanding of the story; they do not list 100% of the story content that a retelling might include. Scoring tips provide additional help for teachers and promote consistency of scoring.

## **Potential Benefits**

The VT-DRA has several potential benefits. First, it includes assessment tasks which closely tap the Grade Expectations being assessed. In addition, the tasks reflect high-quality, effective classroom practices: having children read stories at appropriate levels of difficulty, and observing closely their oral reading accuracy and comprehension. Such tasks should influence classroom practice in a positive manner, encouraging teachers to make sure that every student is reading books at appropriate levels of difficulty, and also promoting an increased focus on reading comprehension. Regularly using retellings emphasizes to students that reading involves both word recognition **and** thinking about what is read.

The context of the VT-DRA - one to one conferences — is one which is appropriate for young children and provides the opportunity for the assessor to note a variety of skills, behaviors and strategies used (or not yet used) by the child.

Finally, this assessment provides uniform information and benchmarks across schools. If children move from one school or district to another, the information will follow the child. The assessment should also provide consistency in expectations across schools by helping to set targets for key points in students' development as readers.

## **Who, Where and When?**

All Vermont second grade students in schools which receive public funds need to take the assessment. The assessment includes procedures for students who are at very early stages of reading (see Band A1 in Observation Guides). For a very few students, accommodations or an alternate form of assessment may need to be used (see Appendix page XVIII). Accommodations and alternate assessments must be addressed in a student's individual plan (IEP, EST, 504).

Specially trained teachers administer the VT-DRA. These are teachers who have completed the full day "New Folks Training", **have also** attended the required **annual** Update/Calibration session, and who can administer the assessment consistently and sensitively.

Assessment should occur in a school space that allows for one-to-one observation and conversation, without other students overhearing or interrupting. Because teachers must audiotape each assessment, quiet spaces are recommended. If students overhear stories read aloud (or re-told), they may have an advantage over other students. This would result in non-standardization (which should be avoided). All VT-DRA assessment conferences must take place within the month of May. The assessment conference (at one sitting) should go no longer than forty-five minutes per student. In many cases less time will be needed, but initially you should schedule 45 minutes per student. In cases where the assessment is not finished at the end of 45 minutes (and there should only be a few of these), you should schedule a second conference for another day, so that the child is not disadvantaged by being tired. Do not break off in the middle of a book. If it appears that a student will need more time than the time in the remaining 45 minute block to complete an additional book, you should stop at the end of the current level and continue with the next level on another day.

## **Results to be Obtained**

When all assessment conferences are completed (before the end of May), audiotapes and Individual Student Data forms should be collected, checked for accuracy and sent (by the school's assessment contact person) to the Department of Education. Observation Guides will be kept at the school for immediate instructional use and for communication purposes (sharing the information with other teachers, parents, etc.). Following data analysis during the summer and a "quality control" review of a random sample of the audiotapes, the Vermont Department of Education will provide schools with an individual performance report for each student, a student roster, and school summary data.

## **Assessment Materials**

**Twenty books** are used as reading material in the VT-DRA. These books, which have been organized according to a gradient of difficulty (using factors such as story length, complexity, readability, degree of support from pictures, complexity of vocabulary, etc.) include books appropriate for students at a pre-reading stage, to those appropriate for students who are able to handle books quite challenging for third grade and above. VT-DRA book titles are listed on the Locator Guide (see Appendix page II).

**VT-DRA Book** sets are in every elementary school that houses a second grade. If additional copies of the books are needed someone from the school needs to contact Pearson Learning at 1-800-552-2259. The books for the VT-DRA come in two sets, ordering information is listed below:

Set 1 = 17 books, ISBN # 0-673-58814-9

Set 2 = 3 books, ISBN # 0-673-58008-3

**Administration Manuals** (this document) have been provided to each assessor. In addition, Quick-View Guides and Administration Rubrics have also been printed for each assessor — so that the most critical information can be readily available during the assessment conference.

**Vermont-DRA Observation Guides** are provided to each assessor (one set each). Guides include administration and scoring guidelines as well as typed scripts for the recording of the record of oral reading for *each* book/level. (Note: The VT-DRA Observation Guides are different from those published by Celebration Press.)

**Individual student data forms (ISDF) and identification labels** will be provided by the contractor in April of each year. One ISDF will need to be completed and returned for each child in the second grade.

**Audiotapes** (one for each child) will be provided by the contractor, and distributed to schools in April. All assessment conferences must be audio taped to ensure that uniform conditions are provided for all students.

**Tape recorders** with good recording capabilities are needed for the assessment, but are not provided by the Department of Education. It is a good idea to check the quality of your recording device(s) early in the year to be sure that you have equipment you need in May.

**Fees** for substitute teachers (to cover classrooms during training, etc.) are the school's responsibility. Every effort, however, has been made to provide training alternatives so that the need for finding several substitutes on the same day is reduced. In addition, training options during non-school hours are usually available.

## Procedures

### Select a Starting Point

The 20 VT-DRA books are grouped into five BANDS (levels of proficiency) from easiest to hardest.

**BAND A1** Levels BB-8 (For students reading at a pre-primer level)

**BAND A2** Levels 10-14A (For students reading at a primer to mid-first grade level)

**BAND B** Levels 16, 16A, and 18 (For students reading at late first grade to mid-second grade level)

**BAND C** Levels 24 and 28 (For students reading at a late second grade level)

**BAND D** Levels 30, 30A, 38, and 40 (For students reading at a third grade level or higher)

Procedures have been designed to help teachers efficiently and effectively find the highest BAND at which the child's performance demonstrates ***both*** acceptable accuracy of oral reading (Standard 1.2/GE 2:9) and comprehension (Standard 1.3/GE 2:10). Acceptable performance is that which is scored YES for oral reading accuracy and YES for comprehension (YY).

**Where to begin:** First, the classroom teacher should use the Locator Guide to select a comfortable starting point. The *Locator Guide*, found on the Quick-View Guide (and in the Appendix on page II), lists the books in each BAND, and also lists additional trade books which are comparable in difficulty to the books within that band. Compare the student's independent level of classroom reading to stories/levels listed to determine the most efficient starting point. Within each band one or more books is printed in bold type to suggest this title as the best to start with in a particular band.

**Typical Conference:** Procedures vary slightly depending on the BAND. The teacher, using the Observation Guides, audiotapes the conference, follows the exact script, and has the child read the story and retell the key ideas. During the retelling, the teacher asks the specified questions and uses a story-specific scoring guide to evaluate the adequacy of the retelling. The student is then asked to read a portion of the story aloud and the teacher takes a record of oral reading using specific coding and scoring conventions. The teacher continues with other books until the student's highest BAND (proficiency level) is determined. The teacher notes the student's performance on the Individual Student Data Form and confirms that the student's ID labels are on the audiotape, the data form, and the Observation Guide.

In most cases two or three books (levels) will be administered to the child in order to find his/her highest BAND; in some cases (with very competent readers who start and finish at BAND D) only one level will be needed. In a few cases, particularly if it is difficult to find the right starting point, several levels may be needed.

Explicit instructions for procedures are included on each Observation Guide.

## **Procedures for BANDS A1 & A2**

When administering the assessment in **BANDS A1 or A2** for each book/level assessed, the procedures involve:

<p><b>Administration: BANDS A1-A2</b> (Levels BB-8 &amp; 10-14A) Specific directions and language to be used are listed on each Observation Guide</p>	<p><b>Scoring</b> Specific directions are described in more detail in other parts of this manual.</p>
<p>Teacher selects (using Locator Guide) and introduces a book by reading the instructions on the Observation Guide.</p> <p>Child takes a “picture walk” through the book, looking at the pictures and telling the teacher what “might be happening in the story.”</p>	<p>In BANDS A1 and A2 only, information given during the “picture walk” does contribute to the scoring of comprehension. Teacher uses the <b>comprehension scoring guide and checks any relevant information given.</b></p>
<p>Child reads the <b>entire</b> story aloud; teacher takes a record of oral reading (using the script provided).</p>	<p>Teacher tallies errors and circles the % on the accuracy grid to <u>score</u> Oral Reading Accuracy as YES (<b>90%</b> or higher) or NO (89% or lower).</p>
<p>Child retells the story in his/her own words, and responds to specified prompts and questions from the teacher</p>	<p>Teacher uses the scoring guide to <u>score</u> comprehension as YES (all boxes checked) or NO (not all boxes checked).</p>
<p>Teacher completes the summary box and uses the DECISION GUIDELINES (these are located on each Observation Guide or on the large Quick View Guide) to determine the next step – to continue with an additional level or BAND, or STOP.</p>	

## **Procedures for BAND B**

<p><b>Administration: BAND B</b> (Levels 16, 16A, 18) Specific directions and language to be used are listed on each Observation Guide</p>	<p><b>Scoring</b> Specific directions are described in more detail in other parts of this manual.</p>
<p>Teacher selects (using Locator Guide) and introduces the book by reading the instructions on the Observation Guide.</p> <p>Child reads the first few paragraphs (identified on the Observation Guide) and makes a prediction about what will happen (teacher notes the student's prediction)</p>	<p>No scoring just anecdotal information.</p>
<p>Child reads the book silently (beside the teacher, or in a quiet corner, as long as no assistance is given during the silent reading).</p>	<p>No scoring.</p>
<p>Child retells the story in his/her own words, and responds to clarifying questions, specified prompts, and questions from the teacher.</p>	<p>Teacher uses the scoring guide to <u>score</u> Comprehension as YES (all boxes checked) or NO (not all boxes checked).</p>
<p>Child reads a designated section of the story aloud; teacher takes a record of oral reading, or a running record.</p>	<p>Teacher tallies errors and circles the % on the accuracy grid to <u>score</u> Oral Reading Accuracy as YES (<b>92%</b> or higher) or NO (91% or lower).</p>
<p>Teacher completes the summary box and uses the DECISION GUIDELINES (these are located on each Observation Guide or on the large Quick View Guide) to determine the next step – to continue with an additional level or BAND, or STOP.</p>	

## Procedures for BANDS C & D

<p><b>Administration: BANDS C-D</b> (Levels 24-28 &amp; 30-40) Specific directions and language to be used are listed on each Observation Guide</p>	<p><b>Scoring</b> Specific directions are described in more detail in other parts of this manual.</p>
<p>Teacher selects (using Locator Guide) and introduces the book by reading the instructions on the Observation Guide.</p> <p>Child reads the first few paragraphs (identified on the Observation Guide) and makes a prediction about what will happen (teacher notes the student's prediction)</p>	<p>BAND C – teacher notes oral reading fluency on rubric and continues if adequate or fluent. If labored, go to BAND B. This decision is flexible at BAND C and teacher may use discretion as to whether to continue with BAND C or stop and move to BAND B</p> <p>BAND D – teacher times oral reading, marks rubric and continues if the time is <b>one minute or less</b>. If it is very close to one minute another book at BAND D might be tried.</p>
<p>Child reads the book silently (beside the teacher, or in a quiet corner, as long as no assistance is given during the silent reading).</p>	
<p>Child retells the story in his/her own words, and responds to clarifying questions, specified prompts, and questions from the teacher.</p>	<p>Teacher uses the scoring guide to <u>score</u> Comprehension as YES (all boxes checked) or NO (not all boxes checked).</p>
<p>Child reads a designated section of the story aloud; teacher takes a record of oral reading, or a running record.</p>	<p>Teacher tallies errors and circles the % on the accuracy grid to <u>score</u> Oral Reading Accuracy as YES (<b>94%</b> or higher) or NO (93% or lower).</p>
<p>Teacher completes the summary box and uses the DECISION GUIDELINES (these are located on each Observation Guide or on the large Quick View Guide) to determine the next step – to continue with an additional level or BAND, or STOP.</p>	

Note: Decision Guidelines are, as the name implies, only guidelines. If, in the assessor's judgment, the student has a good chance of successfully passing a higher level or Band, It Is appropriate to try that higher level or Band even though the student did not get a YY at a lower Band.

## Records of Oral Reading

### Key Points

In this section key points will be shared regarding taking a record of oral reading (administration) as well as scoring students' oral reading accuracy.

Key points to remember when **administering** a record of oral reading:

- ◆ Check to make sure other students are not able to overhear the student reading orally.
- ◆ If the child is unfamiliar with having a record of oral reading/running record taken, say, *"I'd like you to read this part out loud, and I'm going to be writing notes while you read. Please read it so I can hear it, and do the best you can on your own"*.
- ◆ Use the Conventions Poster located on the Quick-View Guide to help you uniformly record student's oral reading behaviors. (See Appendix III)
- ◆ Be sure to make a mark for each word said.
- ◆ Have the script you are marking away from the child.
- ◆ If the child is going too fast for you, score as accurately as you can. After the session, listen to the tape and check your scoring.
- ◆ At the end of the record of oral reading it is fine to let the student know that s/he did a good job, but provide no feedback to the student **during** the oral reading.

If the child has difficulty, follow these guidelines:

Allow approximately 5 seconds of time for the student to work it out.

Don't jump in!

Don't let the child agonize!

Provide no teacher interventions (verbal OR non-verbal) other than those allowed (see below).

**ALLOWED** teacher interventions:

- If a student stops because of difficulty, and does *not* make an attempt (or asks for a word without attempting it), say, **"You try"**. (If the student is making an attempt there is no need to say, **"You try"**)
- If approximately 5 seconds go by -- and the student still makes no attempt, or is making unsuccessful attempts and is *not* continuing with the story — then say the word (this is a **"TOLD"**, and will be scored as an error).
- (Rarely) If a student is quite muddled or tangled and demonstrates clear difficulty in continuing with the story (difficulty with more than just a few words), you can say, **"Try that again"**.

## Scoring Records of Oral Reading

The following are counted as errors:

1. substitutions
2. multiple errors on the same word (e.g., "tired" read as "tried" in three different locations in the same story = 3 errors)
3. omissions
4. insertions
5. words "told" by the teacher (unless a proper noun --see below)
6. "Try that again" If the teacher needed to say, "*Try that again,*" (because of a major tangle), count the first attempt as one error, and then score the second attempt as usual.

The following are not counted as errors:

7. mispronunciations, articulation variations, or dialect variations (idear/idea, frew/through, etc.)
8. repetitions (or re-readings)
9. self-corrections made by the student

Special scoring rules apply when a student:

10. makes repeated errors on a proper noun. Count the error only once (the first time).
11. needs to be told a proper noun. Count it as an error *the first time only*.
12. makes multiple attempts at a single word (e.g., "wet/where/what" for "went"). Only count as one error.
13. makes errors involving contractions (either "it is" for "it's", or "it's" for "it is"). Count as *one* error.
14. makes errors on hyphenated words (e.g., "golden-brown"). Consider as two words.
15. makes transpositions (e.g. "went on" for "on went") count as 2 errors.
16. skips a line of print. Each word omitted = 1 error.
17. skips page(s) of text (e.g., turns two pages instead of one, and doesn't self-correct). Do not count the words missed as omissions, but do subtract the # of words omitted from the total when calculating the accuracy rate. For example, if the student skipped pages 4 & 5 in level 8, subtract the 24 omitted words from the total listed on the accuracy grid (86-24= 62). Then calculate the accuracy rate by dividing the words correctly read (e.g., 56) by the total # of words (62). In this example, the accuracy rate (56 divided by 62) would **come** out to be 90%. Keep in mind that you can always have the child try a different book.
18. Reminder: Replay the tape later, if needed, to help in scoring.

## Retelling/Comprehension Administration

### Key Points

1. Provide an encouraging atmosphere for the student. Communicate interest, but not approval or disapproval of the content of student responses.
2. Remember that this is assessment, **not** instruction.
3. Check to make sure other students are not able to overhear the student's retelling, (if a student does inadvertently overhear, schedule his/her assessment on a later date in May .)
4. Make sure the tape recorder is **turned on again** after the student reads silently.
5. Before the child starts the retelling take and close the book. Have the Observation Guide in front of you, but held so that the child is unable to see the marks you make.
6. Follow the language on the Observation Guide exactly, (e.g., "*Now start at the beginning and you tell me that story*".)
7. If needed general clarifying questions/prompts should be asked in order to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate what they have understood. Allowable clarifying prompts/teacher interventions include: "*Tell me more about that.*" "*I didn't understand what you just said.*" "*You said, '(child's exact words)' tell me more about that.*" "*You said 'he'. Who is he?*" It's okay to assertively ask for clarifying information during OR after the retelling, but be sure to include NO additional information. Taking notes during the retelling will help ensure that you use the student's words and do not inadvertently add additional information.
8. When the child appears to be finished with the retelling, say, as indicated on the Observation Guide, "*Tell me more*". (THIS MUST BE ASKED)
9. Then say, "*Is there anything you forgot to tell me?*" (THIS MUST BE ASKED.)
10. Specific questions that are listed **MUST** be asked, even if it appears that the student has already answered them.
11. Don't say "CAN you tell me more?" (student often answers yes/no.)
12. Don't say "Tell me more about that story" or "What do you remember about the story?" Use the EXACT words on the Observation Guide.
13. Give each child an equal opportunity to respond. Similar wait time (5-10 seconds during the retelling) across students is essential for the assessment to be equitable. Do not rush students but don't let them agonize either.
14. Encourage students by looking and sounding interested.
15. Make sure the responses are the child's own -- not a joint endeavor.
16. Do not ask children any questions other than the ones provided or allowable clarifying questions. Do not use any prompts that introduce any information or content.

## Scoring Retellings

1. The information given during the picture walk in Bands A1 and A2 is used to contribute to the scoring of the student's comprehension. Boxes and circles may be checked as the student comments on the pictures. The student is not penalized for assumptions made during the picture walk that later, are not substantiated by the text.
2. As the student retells, listen carefully and mark what the student includes — checking boxes and circles as you go. The boxes are the "big ideas" of the story; it is expected that most students will include much more than these ideas in their retellings. You are making an informed judgment as to whether the child has communicated the critical story element or "big idea" represented by the box. The student does NOT need to use the exact words in order to have the box or circle marked .
3. *All of* what the student says may be used as information to check boxes: what is said during the retelling itself, what is said in response to the specific prompts "Tell me more", etc.) AND what is said in response to the questions. Please note that the purpose of the specified questions is not to have the child provide a "right answer"; the questions provide another opportunity for the child to communicate his/her understanding of the key ideas from the story.
4. Circles represent detail information that MAY be used to infer the child's understanding of the "big idea" of the box. If the information from the child's retelling/and or responses to the specified questions relates to the circle(s) and clearly implies that he/she understood the big idea of the box, mark the circles, and draw an arrow from the circle (or question) to the box. Then check the box. In some cases, however, the child may have recalled detailed information listed by the circles, but may not communicate that he/she has understood the "big idea". In that case, mark the circle(s), but do not draw an arrow to, or check, the box. In other words, checking all of the circles is NOT necessary for checking the box. Checked circles can -- but do not necessarily — indicate that the idea of the box has been understood.
5. Scoring tips are included at each level to help make scoring more consistent. They provide one way for the student to get the box, but not the only way. In some cases, a scoring tip says, "If the child gets one (or two, three, etc.) of the circles, automatically check the box. This does NOT mean that the child must get the circle in order to have the box checked. The child can get the box directly by communicating an understanding of the big idea. Scoring tips are to be applied exclusively to the specified boxes. Do not generalize scoring tips.
6. Replay the tape later, if needed, to help in scoring.
7. When the retelling is completed, circle Y on the Summary Box if all boxes have been checked, N if all boxes have **NOT** been checked. Once both accuracy and comprehension have been evaluated, follow the guidelines listed after the Summary Box or on the Decision Guidelines — to determine what to do next. Add additional comments about student's comprehension (use of vocabulary, sequence of retelling, etc.) as appropriate.

## **Fluency Procedures for BANDS C and D**

Research confirms the importance of achieving fluency and automaticity in oral reading by grade 3. Fluency is in evidence when the child reads "**in a way that makes meaning clear.**" Because fluency grows developmentally, it is not expected to be fully evident until students "achieve the standard with honors." At earlier bands, expectations for fluency are either developing (BANDS A1, A2 and B) or flexible (BAND C).

Fluency is in evidence when a child reads:

- with phrasing that preserves the intended syntax/meaning of the author, and that reflects natural language patterns
- and at a rate that indicates relatively automatic processing of print.

## **Flexible Guideline for Fluency in BAND C**

Students meeting the standard should generally read with some phrasing of at least three or four words but may still be developing fluency, particularly when encountering unfamiliar text. In **BAND C** the introductory paragraph read **is not** timed, but the assessor should mark the rubric on the Observation Guide, assessing the fluency of the student's oral reading of the introductory passage. If the reading is very labored, stop at the **end** of the passage and go to BAND B unless a YY has already been found. If the reading is somewhat labored, use discretion and continue according to teacher judgment.

## **Firm Procedure for Fluency including Rate of Reading in BAND D**

Students achieving the standard with honors will read in meaningful phrase groups, at a rate of more than 70-85 words/minute. (70-85 words/minute is NOT a "standard" for rate of reading for third grade. The rate has been selected to be used in BAND D of the VT-DRA because it is intended to provide (along with phrasing) a **minimum expectation** of fluency for second grade students who can independently read text commonly used at the third grade level or above.) The introductory paragraph read **is timed and must** be read in one **minute or less**. The assessor should mark the rubric in the appropriate places but use the timing guidelines as the determining factor in whether to continue with the level. If the student takes more than 60 seconds stop at the end of the introductory paragraph read and go to BAND C unless a YY has already been found. In some cases, the assessor may have the child continue with the rest of the book (e.g. the child was close on the fluency time and the assessor wanted to go back and listen later using the tape), but if the time was over 60 seconds the assessor **SHOULD NOT** mark that level as successful and another level must be achieved.

## **Finding the Highest BAND: figuring out where to stop**

Finding the highest band will involve finding the highest level of proficiency at which the child reads with *both* accuracy and comprehension (YY, or YES for accuracy and YES for comprehension) *and* continuing to try the next BAND until:

- the student exceeds the allowed number of errors for accuracy (Must achieve at least: 90% accuracy for BANDS A1 and A2; 92% for BAND B; 94% for BANDS C and D);
- the student's comprehension does not meet the criterion on the scoring guide (one or more boxes is not checked).

Decision Guidelines are found below the scoring box on each Observation Guide. They are also found on the Quick View Guide handout that accompanies this manual. Decision Guidelines are intended to make the assessment efficient. If, in the assessor's judgment, a student has a strong chance of passing a higher level or BAND even though s/he did not get a YY, it is appropriate to try that level.

### **Special Considerations**

If at any level, as the child is beginning to read the first few paragraphs, and it is obvious the text is **clearly** too difficult, the assessment of that level can stop. Once the student has read the introductory passage the assessor can suggest that another book may be a better choice.

If YY is found in BAND D — for statewide assessment purposes, the assessor should stop. Although it is not a part of the Vermont Statewide Assessment Program, individual teachers may, however, decide to continue testing students on higher levels within the BAND in order to determine more closely a student's appropriate reading level for instructional purposes. Those levels do not need to be reported to the state or recorded.

The assessor may always continue on to the next level if s/he has reason to believe that a student may perform better on a higher level book.

## **Putting It All Together**

### **Before the Assessment**

Read this Manual, all of the stories, the book introductions and other directions provided in the Observation Guides.

Model and provide retelling experiences (with OTHER books, not the DRA books) and give students opportunities to record and hear their reading on tape so they are familiar with the procedure.

Explore VT-DRA conference procedures, and how to set up "practice" administrations of the VT-DRA Assessment with at least one THIRD grader. You might want to tape record these practice sessions to review your administration of the assessment, perhaps with a colleague. Use the Administration Rubric (handout) to check your administration.

As a primary team, decide how many students each assessor will assess, and how/when the assessment might take place. Then, decide which particular students each assessor will assess. Identify the appropriate BAND (or, in BANDS A1 and A2 -- which stage within the BAND) to start for each child. This kind of planning, along with the Locator Guide, will help assessors determine which books will be needed, and how many photocopies of specific Observation Guides need to be made. In general, assessors will need more copies of Levels 16, 24 and 30, and fewer of other levels, particularly below Level 10. Remember to set aside one copy at each level as non-consumable.

After estimating which levels will be used, make photocopies of Observation Guides. It will help to organize these by BANDS and levels in a set of folders or hanging files.

Try out the tape recorder (well in advance of the assessment), checking batteries and quality of recording. Work out how the tape recorder, and space for assessment, will be shared with other teachers.

Each book (Levels 16-40) should have a pen/pencil mark to indicate where the child stops reading for the introductory paragraph.

Prior to assessing the child place the student's ID stickers on the audiotape, Individual Student Data Form and the first Observation Guide to be used. **Make sure that each child's number (printed on label sets) is the same on all parts of the assessment.**

### **Getting the Assessment Started**

Turn on the tape recorder and have the child say a few words (not identifying information). This helps get past the leader on the tape and the child can hear how loud or quiet they sound. Remember that the tape is only off during the silent reading portion of the assessment.

Have the VT-DRA book, Observation Guide, and Quick-View Guide in front of you.

Make sure the student knows why s/he is doing this. Read (and tape record) the VT-DRA Introduction located at the beginning of the Observation Guides. (It is also on the Quick View Guide.)

Read the introduction and all other directions VERBATIM from the Observation Guide. What the teacher is to **say** is printed in **bold**. What the teacher is to *do* is printed in *italics*.

If, during the student's reading of the first paragraph or two, it is very clear that a book is too easy for a student (see chart which follows), you may skip to the next BAND by saying, "*Let's try a different book first*". Don't say "harder book".

If, as seen from the reading of the first paragraphs, the book is clearly too hard, you may say the same thing, and move to a lower BAND.

If the student encounters difficulty during the introductory reading, follow the administration rules for the Record of Oral Reading regarding allowable teacher interventions and guidelines for wait time, tolds, and try that again.

During the introductory reading of the first few paragraphs, you might find a book to be:

TOO EASY IF:	TOO DIFFICULT IF:
<p>The student reads VERY fluently and accurately with ease/expressiveness, suggesting that the story is being clearly understood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The student makes MANY errors and is frustrated.</li> <li>•The student labors over MANY words, reads with little fluency and the reading takes a VERY long time.</li> <li>•There’s clear evidence that meaning is being lost.</li> </ul>
<p>MOVE TO A HIGHER BAND</p>	<p>MOVE DOWN A BAND</p>

For **BANDS C and D**, use the fluency guidelines. Remember, you **MUST STOP** after the introductory paragraph in **BAND D** if the reading takes more than **60 seconds**.

### **During Comprehension**

See "Key Points for Retellings/Comprehension" on page 12 of this manual.

### ***During Records of Oral Reading, or Running Records***

See “Key Points for Records of Oral Reading” on page 10 of this manual.

### **After the Assessment is Completed**

At this point the highest BAND with YY will have been found.

Thank the student and let him/her know that you enjoyed listening to him/her read.

If you are the person filling out the Individual Student Data Form (ISDF) you may want to complete that now. Organize the Observation Guides for this child for review and reflection. Organize materials for returning to the state when second graders have completed the assessment.

When all the assessments are complete follow the directions for packaging and returning the tapes, ISDFs, and teacher surveys.

# REMINDERS

## Please remember these DON'TS

Don't practice using the VT-DRA materials with any second grade or younger student. If you want to practice taking records of oral reading, running records, or retellings with second graders, or younger students, use **different** texts (trade books, stories from a basal reader etc.)

During the students' retellings, do not ask any probing questions which add content. (But, do ask clarifying questions as needed.)

Don't "tell" a word before 5 seconds have elapsed.

Don't provide any prompts other than "You try" (if the child has not attempted the word) or (rarely) "Try that again". (Non-allowable prompting includes— in addition to oral statements — pointing to words, nodding approval or other non-verbal responses as well.)

Don't provide help, or allow other students to help, during silent reading. If students request help, tell them to do their best on their own.

Don't begin a new level if you think there won't be enough time to complete it during one sitting of 45 minutes.

Don't engage in any teaching or extended conversation during the assessment.

Don't let yourself get frustrated if things don't go exactly as planned. **Do** note what was tricky, though, as well as what worked well.

# APPENDIX

	Page
Locator Guide.....	II
Record of Oral Reading Conventions.....	III
Clarifying Questions.....	IV
Sample Transcript of a Retelling .....	V
Supplementary List of Books Which Correlate with VT-DRA BANDS.....	VI
How Can the VT-DRA Conference Procedures Be Adapted For Classroom Use?.....	IX
Information for Parents	
Sample letter to parents (prior to administering VT-DRA).....	X
Sample letter to parents (after VT-DRA).....	XI
Understanding the VT-DRA Reading Levels.....	XII
Commonly Asked Questions.....	XIII
Accommodations and Alternate Assessments.....	XV
Checklist of Assessment Materials.....	XVIII
Timeline.....	XIX

Locator Guide: Where to Begin the VT-DRA

<b>BAND</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>DRA Book Title</b>	If the student is reading at the following level:	If the student is able to read and retell books such as the following:
A1	BB A 1 <b>2</b> 3 4  <b>6</b> 8	----- Can You Sing? Things that Go <b>I Can See</b> The "I Like" Game Where is my Hat?  <b>Why are We Stopping?</b> Duke	Very beginning reader      Early first grade/pre-primer	Teacher-made Books Going to School Huggles PM Starters Early Storybox Books  All by Myself Chick and the Duckling Nick's Glasses
A2	<b>10</b> 12  <b>14</b> <b>14A</b>	<b>Shoe Boxes</b> Robert's New Friend  <b>The Wagon</b> <b>A New School</b>	Primer level/ mid-first   Mid to end first grade level	Rosie's Walk Titch Just Like Daddy The Farmer's Hat We are Best Friends Put Me in the Zoo
B	<b>16</b> <b>16A</b>  18	<b>The Pot of Gold</b> <b>Monkey's Stepping Stones</b> A Giant in the Forest	Late first to mid-second grade	Hattie and the Fox Little Bear Frog and Toad
C	<b>24</b> 28	<b>The Wonderful Day</b> You Don't Look Beautiful to Me	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	Freckle Juice Arthur's Pen Pal Polk Street Aldo Stories
D	<b>30</b> <b>30A</b> 38 40	<b>Touchdown</b> <b>Tiger's Whirlwind Day</b> Trouble at Beaver Pond Old Ben Bailey Meets His Match	Third grade and beyond	Cleary books Box Car Children

## Record of Oral Reading (ROR) Conventions

Reading behavior Recorded:	How to record if Using a "script" (taking a ROR)	Running Record Conventions
Accurate Reading	w <u>an</u> t a <u>litt</u> le	✓ ✓ ✓
*Substitutions	what/went want a <u>litt</u> le	<u>what/went</u> ✓ ✓ want
Repetition	← R w <u>an</u> t a <u>litt</u> le	← R ✓ ✓ ✓
Self-correction	went/sc want a <u>litt</u> le	<u>went/sc</u> ✓ ✓ want
*Omission	w <u>an</u> t a <u>litt</u> le	✓ <u>--</u> ✓ a
*Insertion	it w <u>an</u> t Û a <u>litt</u> le	✓ <u>it</u> ✓ ✓ --
ÑSounding out	fry - end friend	<u>fry - end</u> friend
ÑSpelling	y - e - s yes	<u>y - e - s</u> yes
<b>When Teacher Interventions Occur</b>		
*Told (Child has attempted and/or wait time elapsed)	T want a <u>litt</u> le	<u>      </u> / <u>      </u> ✓ ✓ want / T
ÑAppeal (no attempt has been made)	A want a <u>litt</u> le	<u>      </u> / A (appeal) want / YT ("you try")
* Try That Again	(TTA) around reread text	(TTA) around reread text

\* Score as one error

Ñ If child says word correctly after attempt it is not an error.  
If teacher ends up giving a told it is scored as one error.

### Special Scoring Rules

- ◆ **Repeated errors (or TOLDS) on a proper noun.** Count the error only once (the first time).
- ◆ **Contractions** ("it is" for "it's", or "it's" for "it is") count as one error.
- ◆ **Transpositions** ("said dad" for "dad said") count as 2 errors.

## Clarifying Questions During Retelling Portion of VT-DRA

Allowable (and non-allowable) teacher interventions  
DURING RETELLING/comprehension

OK	NOT OK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>© Tell me more</li> <li>© Tell me more about <b><u>that</u></b></li> <li>© You said, “child’s exact words.” Tell me more about that.</li> <li>© You said, “he/it” (any pronoun) who/what is he/it?</li> <li>© I didn’t understand, please say that again?</li> <li>© I didn’t hear you clearly, please say that again?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Why . . . ?</li> <li>× When . . . ?</li> <li>× Who . . . ?</li> <li>× What . . . ?</li> <li>× How . . . ?</li> <li>× What happened next?</li> <li>× What happened at the very beginning?</li> <li>× Any other direct questions</li> <li>× adding words that were not the child’s own words</li> <li>× linking information (ex. you said. . . . and then . . . . tell me more about that)</li> <li>× communicating either verbally or non-verbally that the student is off-track</li> </ul>

T: Start at the beginning and you tell me that story.

S: A little rabbit was walking on the road and he saw a great big cabbage. He didn't believe his eyes. And then he started to believe his eyes and then he did believe his eyes. He started to take it home and he made it home but he couldn't fit it in his door. He started to cry and then he stopped crying and he started to say . . . He ran through the forest hollering to all the rabbits and he brought them to the big cabbage and said that he was having a, he was having a cabbage party and they all ate as much as they could and the oldest rabbit said thank you. They all left and Roger pushed the, pushed it, pushed the cabbage into his house and he put it on the table and started to laugh and said just the right cabbage for me. That's the whole story.

1

2

3

4

T: Tell me more.

S: Roy Roger, Roger was a rabbit and he had the best day ever that he ever had and because it was because he found he had a party and he found a great big cabbage.

T: Is there anything you forgot to tell me?

S: No.

T: What was the problem in this story?

S: Roger couldn't fit the cabbage in his house.

T: How was the problem solved?

S: By like a hundred rabbits eating the cabbage and getting it smaller and rolling it into his house.

T: Why did Roger invite the other rabbits to his cabbage party?

S: So he'd have a smaller cabbage, so he could fit it in his house.

5

## SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF BOOKS WHICH CORRELATE WITH VT-DRA BANDS

The following book titles are intended to be a helpful resource in guiding teachers in the ongoing decision making process of choosing **appropriate** level texts for individual students and small groups of students. Levels and Bands are approximate indicators of text difficulty and are intended to serve only as a guide. Individual prior experiences, exposure to text variety, book introductions, and ability to employ a variety of strategies while reading are some important factors which impact on the successful reading of these texts.

Many publishers now list reading levels that correlate with Guided Reading levels or Reading Recovery levels. These lists provide helpful resources in selecting text at an appropriate level for individual students.

Suggested titles which could correlate to:

Levels A-4	Very Beginning Reader	BAND A 1
<b>Series by Publisher:</b>		
Sunshine, Literacy 2000, Twig, Storybox Series: <b>Levels AA - D</b>		
Rigby PM Readers: Levels Starters One and Two, New PM Story Books <b>Levels 3-4</b>		
Richard C Owen : Ready to Read <b>Levels 1-4</b>		
Dominie Press Reading Corners- <b>Blue series</b>		
SRA - "Can You Do This?" Series		
School Zone - Start to Read		
Oxford –Cat on the Mat/Wood		
Windmill - Look and Listen		
<b>Trade books:</b>		
One Hunter -Pat Hutchins		
Baby Says - John Steptoe		
Now We Can Go - Ann Jonas		
Have You Seen My Duckling? - Nancy Tafuri		
Spots, Feathers and Curly Tails - Nancy Tafuri		
Roll Over - Merle Peek		
Playhouse for Monster - Virginia Mueller		
Swing, Swing, Swing - Tuchman and Dieterichs		
I Went Walking - Sue Williams		
Brown Bear, Brown Bear - Bill Martin		

<b>Levels 6-8</b>	<b>Early Reader</b>	<b>BAND A1</b>
-------------------	---------------------	----------------

<p><b>Publisher</b> -- Same as above plus:          Heath Literacy Little Readers          Dominie Carousel Readers          Steck-Vaughn          Seedling Publications          Troll First Start Books          Rookie Readers          Kaeden Corp.          PM Readers</p>	<p><b>Trade Books</b>          Five Little Ducks – Raffi          Bears in the Night – Berenstain          Hide and Seek – Brown and Carey          Blue Bug – Virginia Poulet          Chick and Duckling – Ginsberg          How Many Bugs in the Box? – Carter          Mary Wore Her Red Dress – Peek          School Bus – Crews          Sam’s Ball – Lindgren          All By Myself -- Mayer</p>
---	--

<b>Levels 10-12</b>	<b>Mid-First Grade</b>	<b>BAND A2</b>
---------------------	------------------------	----------------

<p><b>Publisher</b> -- Same as above plus:          Oxford Reading Tree          Dominie Tal-About Books</p>	<p><b>Trade Books</b>          Frog’s Lunch – Lillgard          Harry’s House – Keeter          Here Comes the Bus – Ziefert          Just Like Daddy – Asch          Lady with the Alligator Purse – Westcott          Oh Dear! – Campbell          Rosie’s Walk – Hutchins          Across the Stream – Ginsberg          Hooray for Snail – Stadler          Each Peach Pear Plum – Ahlberg          Just For You -- Mayer</p>
--	---

<b>Level 14</b>	<b>Mid to End of First Grade</b>	<b>BAND A2</b>
-----------------	----------------------------------	----------------

<p><b>Publisher</b> -- Same as above plus:          Book Bank – Wright Group          Reading Unlimited -- Foresman</p>	<p><b>Trade Books</b>          Two Bear Cubs – Jonas          Whose Mouse Are You? – Krauss          Animal Tricks – Wildsmith          Cake That Mack Ate – Robart          Cats and Mice – Gelman          Goodnight Moon – Brown          My Brown Bear Barney – Butler          Owliver – Krauss          Put Me in the Zoo – Lopshire          Teeny, Tiny Woman – Seuling          We are Best Friends -- Alik</p>
---	--

<b>Levels 16-18</b>	<b>End of First to Beginning of Second Grade</b>	<b>BAND B</b>
<b>Publishers:</b> Same as above. <b>Trade Books:</b> Are You My Mother? – Eastman Big Dog, Little Dog – Eastman Come and Have Fun – Hurd Fix-it – McPhail Green Eggs and Ham – Seuss Hattie and the Fox – Fox Just a Mess – Mayer Indian Two Feet -- Friskey		Nobody Listens to Andrew – Guilfoile This is the Bear – Hayes We're Going on a Bear Hunt – Rose Who Took the Farmer's Hat? – Nodset Bear's Bicycle – McLeod Goodnight Owl – Hutchins Henny Penny – Galdone There's a Nightmare in my Closet -- Mayer

<b>Levels 24-28</b>	<b>End of Second Grade</b>	<b>BAND C</b>
---------------------	----------------------------	---------------

<b>Trade Books:</b> Amelia Bedelia – Parrish Clifford the Big Red Dog – Bridwell Madeline – Bemelmans Cam Jansen – Adler Secret at Polk Street School – Giff Russell Series -- Hurwitz	Arthur's Pen Pal – Hoban Cordoroy – Feeman Nate the Great – Weinman Pee Wee Scouts – Delton Freckle Juice – Blume Tyler Toad and Thunder -- Crowe
--	--

<b>Levels 30-40</b>	<b>Third Grade and Up</b>	<b>BAND D</b>
---------------------	---------------------------	---------------

<b>Trade Books:</b> Horrible Harry – Kline Boxcar Children – Warner Ramona Books – Cleary Pony Pals – Betancourt Laura Ingalls Wilder -- Stine	Aldo Stories – Hurwitz Beverly Cleary Stories The Twits – Dahl Teacher's Pet – Hurwitz Story of Harriet Tubman -- McCullan
---	--

## How can the VT-DRA conference procedures be adapted for classroom use?

Select a book for the child from the classroom or school library collection (DO NOT use the VT-DRA books).

1. Introduce the new book ("In this book, a...)
2. Have the student read the first few paragraphs orally - "to see if it is a good story for you" then have the student predict what the story might be about.
3. Ask the student to read the story silently, and to let you know when finished.
4. Ask the student to retell the story. Use similar language to the VT-DRA, "Now start at the beginning and you tell me that story".
5. Have the student read a section of the story aloud, while you take a record of their oral reading (running record or photocopy of a page and use it like the VT-DRA).
6. Evaluate both the student's retelling of the story and oral reading accuracy.

Retelling:

- Did the student get the "gist" of the story?
- Did the student's retelling include story structure elements that were key to the particular story? (Circle those included):

setting

characters

goal

problem

key events

solution

other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Oral Reading:**

- How accurately did the child read? \_\_\_\_\_%
- What word identification skills and strategies were used?
- What other strategies were observed?
- How fluently did the child read?

***Sample Letter to Parents, to be sent in the fall of the year***

Dear Parents of second graders,

This year, during the month of May, every Vermont second grader will have an individual reading assessment conference. This assessment is part of Vermont's statewide, comprehensive assessment system, and provides one way for us to look at the progress students are making toward standards. To make sure the assessment is the same in all schools, teachers will be attending special training sessions during March and April. This assessment is not very different from \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g.- our current school-level assessments), which teachers are already doing with second grade students.

**What's involved in the conference?** The teacher (your child's classroom teacher or another member of our primary-level team) introduces appropriate-level books to the child. Then the child reads the book(s) and retells the story to the teacher. The child also reads part or all of the book aloud to the teacher. Meanwhile, the teacher takes careful notes about how well the child understands the story and how well he or she reads aloud.

**What can you do to help your child?** First, continue to read to your child every day. Also, when s/he is reading to you, talk about the story together. After the story is done chat about what *the problem* in the story was, and how it was *solved*. Finally, encourage your child to read, read, read. Sometimes you might ask your child to retell a story. Go to the library and enjoy books together. Let your child's teacher know if you need help.

Your child's teacher will be happy to talk with you further about this if you have questions. And, of course, after the assessment is completed, we will discuss the results with you.

Thank you, in advance, for your help with this. Early reading success is one of the most important goals we have for our students, and we know we can count on your support.

Sincerely,

## ***Sample Letter to Parents: After the Assessment***

Dear Parents,

Last spring, at the end of second grade, your son or daughter took the Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment. During the test, your child read one or more short book(s) then told a teacher what each story was about and read a part of the story out loud. This test is one part of Vermont's assessment system and gives us a way to look at the kind of progress your child is making toward meeting Vermont's Standards. We now have your child's report from this test and would like to share it with you.

To learn how your child did last spring and to talk about how your child is currently doing as a reader, please schedule a meeting with your child's teacher, or ask to see the report at parent conference time. Remember though, that no one test can tell everything about how your child is doing. Your child's daily work and other assessments should also be considered.

Thank you for your help in making sure that all of our students become and stay confident and skilled readers.

Sincerely,

School Principal

Classroom Teacher

## Understanding the VT-DRA Reading Levels

Proficiency Level	Sample Texts*	Other Titles★
<p><b>Achieved the Standard with Honors</b></p> <p>These students successfully read* and comprehended texts at a third grade level of difficulty or higher. They also demonstrated fluency in oral reading.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(*with at least 94% accuracy)</p>	<p>Filled with a proud feeling that they had accomplished something big, they jumped off their stilts and ran home with their coffee cans banging and clashing behind them.</p> <p>Ramona burst in through the back door, dropped her wet stilts with a crash on the linoleum, and announced hoarsely, "We did it."</p> <p>FROM: <u>Ramona and Her Father</u> by Beverly Cleary</p>	<p>Horrible Harry by Suzy Kline</p> <p>Boxcar Children: Snowbound Mystery by G.C. Warner</p> <p>Bunnica by D. &amp; J. Howe</p>
<p><b>Achieved the Standard</b></p> <p>These students successfully read* and comprehended texts at a late second grade level of difficulty.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(*with at least 94% accuracy)</p>	<p>Freddy went to Ms. Matson's room. The girls in the sixth grade had made his costume. They all giggled when Ms. Matson helped Freddy into it. His Green Kangaroo suit covered all of him.</p> <p>FROM: <u>The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo</u> by Judy Blume</p>	<p>Arthur's Pen Pal, by Cillian Hoban Cam Jansen by David Adler Julian's Glorious Summer by Ann Cameron</p>
<p><b>Nearly Achieved the Standard</b></p> <p>These students successfully read* and comprehended texts at a late first to mid-second grade level of difficulty</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(*with at least 92% accuracy)</p>	<p>They swam all afternoon. Frog swam fast and made big splashes Toad swam slowly and made smaller splashes.</p> <p>FROM: <u>Frog and Toad are Friends</u> by Arnold Lobel</p>	<p>Little Bear by E.H. Minarik Nobody Listens to Andrew by Elizabeth Guilfoyle There's a Nightmare in my Closet by Mercer Mayer</p>
<p><b>Below the Standard</b></p> <p>These students successfully read* and comprehended texts at a primer to mid-first grade level of difficulty</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(*with at least 90% accuracy)</p>	<p>Dad took us to the zoo. "Let's go and see the monkeys," said Dad. "Me, too!" said Rosie</p> <p>FROM: <u>Rosie at the Zoo</u> (Ready to Read Series)</p>	<p>Just for You by Mercer Mayer Whose Mouse are You? by Robert Kraus Just Like Daddy by Frank Asch</p>
<p><b>Little or No Evidence of Achievement</b></p> <p>These students either successfully read* and comprehended texts at a pre-primer level of difficulty, or responded to familiar print.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(*with at least 90% accuracy)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Look at me.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>I am reading.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">From: <u>Look at Me</u> (PM Readers)</p>	<p>The Chick and the Duckling by Mirra Ginsberg Can You Do This? (SRA) Monster Sandwich Storybox Series</p>
	<p>* Sample of texts <u>similar</u> to those used in the VT-DRA at proficiency levels.</p>	<p>★ Representative of proficiency levels.</p>

## Commonly Asked Questions and Answers

- Q** *Do all Vermont second grade students need to take part in the VT-DRA assessment?*
- A** All Vermont students in schools which receive public funds need to be accounted for through the statewide assessment program. Some students may need accommodations in the VT-DRA; sample allowable accommodations are described in the Appendix of this Manual. The VT-DRA includes procedures for students who are at very early stages of reading (Level BB) but students at this level may be better assessed through a Life Skills Portfolio. For students with disabilities that require adjustments in the assessment, accommodations or alternate assessments must be described in the student's IEP, 504, or other plan, and noted on the Special Codes column of the VT-DRA Individual Student Data Form.
- Q** *What if a parent doesn't want his/her child to be assessed?*
- A** First, reassure the parent that the assessment conference should not be a stressful event, and that the purpose of the assessment is to gain information so we can help all students meet standards. At the current time no law exists which would allow parents to opt students out of statewide assessments, so parent refusal is not an option listed on the Individual Student Data Form. If a student does not participate in the assessment, other reason should be marked in the special codes section of the Individual Student Data Form.
- Q** *Should I tape the general introduction too?*
- A** Yes. Any audible portions of the VT-DRA assessment conference are taped.
- Q** *What if a child says s/he has read a DRA book before?*
- A** Listen to the child's prediction after the introductory reading. If it is clear from the prediction that the child has read the book before, say: "Let's pick a book that you haven't read" and use the next level book within that BAND. (Later check out how that might have happened.) If it is clear from the child's prediction that s/he has not read the book before, continue with that level. In a few cases, you may have to use the book even if the child has read it elsewhere. Again, add that comment (verbally) - to explain the situation- at the end of the tape.
- Q** *What do I do when a child asks for help during the Record of Oral Reading?*
- A** Say "You try" (only if the child has not made any attempt yet) give a "told" after 4-5 seconds of "wait time"
- Q** *What if a child skips a line of print during the fluency check in Band D?*
- A** If the child is well within the 60 seconds, continue; if the timing is very close to 60 seconds, try another BAND D book
- Q** *What if I forget to turn on the tape recorder?*
- A** Start the tape recorder as soon as you remember, and continue taping from that point. At the end of the tape say that you forgot to tape a portion of the assessment.

**Q** *What if there are a lot of "told"s during the initial reading, on BAND D? Won't that help a child meet the fluency requirement?*

**A** During the initial, introductory paragraph reading in BANDS B, C, and D, it is important to follow the **same** guidelines for allowable teacher interventions that are used during the record of oral reading. This includes approximately 5 seconds of wait time before a "told". A child who needs more than a few "tolds" will, in all probability, **not** meet the fluency requirement in BAND D.

**Q** *When do I use "Try that Again?" (or TTA)*

**A** Use TTA when a child gets **quite** tangled and asks for help or just stops when tangled. How to score this: The grouping of words that the child attempted to read is counted as one error and that group of words is rescored when the child reads that section the second time.

**Q** *What do I do when a child skips a line of text?*

**A** Let the child continue (do not intervene) and count each word missed as an error.

**Q** *What do I do when a child skips a page of text?*

**A** Let the child continue and then figure out the accuracy rate at the end. The number of words that the child skips should be subtracted from the total words read (this number is printed on the Observation Guide near the scoring table). Example:

Original passage was 150 words. The child skipped a page that had 8 words. Words read = 142. The child had made 12 errors on the other pages read.

$$\frac{\text{Words read (142)} - \text{Errors (12)}}{\text{Total words read (142)}} \times 100 = 91.5\% \text{ (round to 92\%)}$$

**Q** *A child will be retained (or has been retained) in second grade. Should this child take the VT-DRA?*

**A** Yes. All second grade students must take the VT-DRA (unless an alternate assessment **is** written into the child's plan). If the classroom teacher predicts that the child (who has been retained) will read in the same BAND as they did the first time they took the assessment, try to use the other level within that BAND. (Ideally the child will be in a higher BAND). If the child ends up reading the same book, that's allowable since it has been a year since the child saw the book.

**Q** *What if the assessment conference is interrupted by a fire drill or other unforeseen event?*

**A** Use your judgment. If the interruption is of a long duration (e.g., student became ill), then, when the child returns—use the other level within the same BAND. If the interruption is short-term (e.g., fire drill), restart the assessment where the interruption occurred.

## **Accommodations and Alternate Assessments: Assessing Second Grade students with Special Assessment Needs for Statewide Assessment Purposes**

**All** students who are in schools that receive public funds must be assessed and accounted for through the statewide assessment system. There are now quite specific state and federal level guidelines as to regular, accommodated, and alternate assessments. One key point is that the data from both regular and accommodated assessments is aggregated for public reporting; data from alternate assessments is also aggregated or reported with the regular/accommodated data. At the second grade level, given the inclusive nature of the VT-DRA, very few students should have assessments that are not reportable. The Documentation of Eligibility is available to help educators/teams make decisions about appropriate alternate assessments. This tool may be obtained from Cindy Moran (802-828-0646) or Greg Wylde (802-828-1338) at the Vermont Department of Education.

### **Accommodations:**

**What are they?** Accommodations provide adjustments so that students can participate in the assessment, and demonstrate what they are able to do. Accommodations, by their nature do not change the nature of the task, modify WHAT is being assessed, or change the level of difficulty of the assessment expectations. The assessment must still meet its intended purpose – in the case of the VT-DRA – to determine the student’s accuracy of oral reading (including fluency, at the highest level) and the student’s comprehension through retelling.

**Under what circumstances may accommodations be used?** If accommodations are to be used, they must have already been listed/described in the student’s Individual Education Plan, 504 plan, or other individualized school plan. In addition, whoever administers the VT-DRA must indicate on the Individual Student Data Form (by filing in the appropriate circle) that accommodations have been used.

**What kinds of accommodations are allowed in the VT-DRA?:** (Note: These accommodations MUST have ALREADY been included in the child’s IEP/504/individualized plan – not simply added in May).

? Provide Braille or Enlarged print VT-DRA books. Braille/enlarged print VT-DRA books will be sent to schools through Mary Ann Minardo (802 828-5410) of the Vermont Department of Education, based on information received each year from the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Make sure that contact is made with Mary Ann early in the year if you have a student who needs this accommodation.

- ? Allow additional time for fluency (Band D) in cases where the student's disability is in the area of disfluency (as indicated in the student's IEP/504 plan), or for students using Braille or enlarged print. A customary guideline for such accommodations is to add 50% additional time.
- ? Provide short testing periods (one level must be completed at each sitting).
- ? Use numbered cards (e.g, 1, 2, 3, 4 ... but no words should be added) – to help students with significant organizational difficulties self-regulate their retelling of the story. (If used, this should be a practice that IS in use throughout the year.)

### **Alternate assessments**

**What are they?** Alternate assessments include modified tasks, adapted assessments, or Life Skills Portfolios.

**Under what circumstances are they appropriate?** In the case of the VT-DRA, there should be a very small percentage of students who need an alternate form of assessment, because the VT-DRA includes very simple texts as well as procedures/tasks for students at the very beginning/emergent stages of reading (Level BB). Alternate assessments should only be used in cases where students (with or without accommodations) will not be able to be successful at even the lowest levels, including Level BB. Remember that level BB includes some very simple tasks, eg, reading his/her first name. However, students who are working toward alternate standards may be considered for an alternate assessment even though they are reading at the lowest levels.

To use an alternate assessment, teachers must:

- | Make sure that alternate assessments have been described in the IEP, 504 plan, or other school plan.
- | Fill out and return the Documentation of Eligibility form to the Alternate Assessment Coordinator at the Department of Education.
- | Fill in the appropriate circle on the Individual Student Data Form to indicate that an **alternate** assessment has been used.

**What kinds of alternate assessments might be used when the VT-DRA, even with accommodations, is not appropriate for a student?**

- ◆ **Modified or adapted assessment:** (when nonstandard administration is necessary, or where an individually designed assessment is required). For example, in the case of a student who is severely hearing impaired, where signing is used, the oral reading section of the VT-DRA would need to be modified since scoring that student's oral reading would need to be done differently than the "regular administration" scoring guidelines.

- ◆ **Life Skills Portfolio:** This assessment method would be used for students with severe cognitive disabilities – who are working on an individually designed life skills curriculum.

### **What about students who have Limited English Proficiency?**

How a student with Limited English Proficiency takes part in the assessment will depend on the degree of experience the child has had with the English language. In many cases, where the child is already speaking and reading some English, the assessment can be administered uniformly.

In some cases – where the student is beginning to read in English but may have significant difficulty demonstrating understanding through retelling in English, accommodation involving translation may be appropriate and feasible. (Of course, this will only be possible where someone who speaks the child's first language is available to take part in the assessment conference). If such assistance is available, the directions and tasks may be read to the child in his/her first language, and the child may retell the story in that language as well. However, the regular VT-DRA books must be used (in English) and the oral reading must take place in English. Remember: the fact that an accommodation has been used must be noted on the Individual Student Data Form.

In other cases, if the child has very recently arrived in the country (less than one year) they are exempt from the assessment. If you have questions concerning English Language Learners please contact Jim McCobb (802 828-0185) at the Department of Education.

## VT-DRA Checklist of Assessment Materials

<b>VT-DRA Books (20 Levels)</b>	
<b>Administration Manual</b>	
<b>Quick-View Guide</b>	
<b>VT-DRA Observation Guides</b>	
<b>Individual Student Data Forms</b> <b>Identification Labels</b> <b>Audiotapes</b> (All sent, to the schools by the contractor in April.)	
<b>Summary Cover Sheet</b>	
<b>Tape recorder</b> (Check to make sure it is in good working order.)	
<b>Timer/stopwatch</b> (fluency part of assessment)	
<b>Pencils, tissues, other essential supplies...</b>	

## VT-DRA TIMELINE

### MARCH

1. VT-DRA Calibration.

### APRIL

1. Review materials from Calibration.
2. Practice VT-DRA with a third grade student (Could be done earlier).
3. Audiotapes and labels will be delivered to the school from the DOE.
4. Check and organize materials: tapes, Individual Student Data Forms, and Observation Guides. Make sure tape recorders are functioning properly.
5. Schedule who will assess whom, quiet space for the assessment, and when.

### MAY

1. Assess all second graders
2. Create a master list of who tested each child with student numbers.
3. Complete Individual Student Assessment Forms and have someone check each one for accuracy.
4. Complete Feedback Survey.

### LATE MAY

1. School returns designated audiotapes, Individual Student Data Forms, Feedback Surveys, and Transmittal Forms (keep a copy at the school) to the Department of Education.

### EARLY JUNE

1. School contact calls the Department of Education to verify data submission.

### JULY

1. A random sample of audiotapes will be reviewed at the Summer Rescoring Institute – for consistency of scoring and consistency of administration.

### DURING THE SUMMER

1. Electronic Reports become available. Analyze data; consider implications for action planning (e.g. professional development needs, curriculum changes, scheduling, etc.).
2. Make sure that third grade teachers have received the VT-DRA Observation Guides for the students in their classes. Make plans to share the information with the parents.
3. For third grade students not yet meeting the standard, consider ways to monitor their progress and intensify instruction and extra help.