

## Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale

### PURPOSE

The *Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale* will be used to benchmark students' spelling skills and to monitor skill development across the year. Data can be compiled by individual student and by classroom. Data provides a means to monitor school progress horizontally (grade levels) and vertically (school-wide). In addition, data can be used to guide instructional plans and professional development.

### TEACHER PREPARATION before administering the *M-M Spelling Scale*

1. Carefully read this document.
2. Read, out loud, the attached word list and sentences (up to the minimum number you will be administering to your students, see chart next page). Practice read as if you were actually giving the *M-M Spelling Scale*. It is very important that you do this to rehearse your diction -- pronunciation, emphasis, pacing. Your speech should be natural.
3. Prepare student papers. See below under *Student Materials: Paper*. If you choose to have students prepare their own papers, it is recommended that you do this at least one day before the administration of the *MM Spelling Scale*. Collect these papers and proof for numbering errors.
4. Refer to this assessment as the *Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale* or the *M-M Spelling Scale*.

### STUDENT MATERIALS

#### Paper

1. Provide a sheet of lined paper -- the style of lined paper normally used during Word Study. Prepare these papers ahead: make a master with the date and numbering and print student copies. Or give each student a blank sheet to prepare with name, date, and numbering in column(s) as needed.
2. Put student's full name on the first line.
3. Put date on the second line.
4. Fold paper in two columns. Words will be written vertically in a list.
5. Number the lines in the column(s) beginning with number 1 and continuing through the number of words recommended for your grade level (chart next page).

#### Writing Tools

- Give each student two sharpened #2 pencils.  
Have a few extras ready in case a student breaks the lead of both pencils.
- Or if your students use pen in daily dictation, give them a pen.  
Have extras on hand in case one runs dry.

- If a student uses a special writing accommodation per an IEP --i.e., paper with raised lines, graph paper, typing-- this should be provided,

## NUMBER OF WORDS

There are 50 words in the list, ranging from grade 1 to post high school in spelling difficulty. The expectation is that you will dictate words that are below, at, and above students' grade level. This is necessary to obtain an accurate measure of spelling skills and to get a snapshot of how students think about words and use phonics to spell words not studied and/or above their spelling level.

The minimum number of words administered should be the same in all classes at a given grade level. However, it is not the ceiling. As long as students are writing words correctly or close to being correct, keep dictating words. Their score is determined based on number of words spelled correctly.

If you have a mixed grade classroom, dictate to all students at the same time.

Alleviate any stress by telling students, "Try to write the words even if you don't know them. But if you think you can't spell any more, you may put your pencil down quietly and rest your head on your desk until we finish."

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is not timed. It is important that you follow the directions for administration explicitly so data is not compromised.

1. There should be no deliberate preliminary coaching or pre-teaching of these words. (Note: It will not matter that some of these words may occur in reading text or word lists and will have already been learned by students through normal studies.)
2. Before beginning, remove distracting elements from student desks.
3. Follow the literal exactness of the instructions.
4. There should be no coaching or special instructions during the administration.
5. Give items distinctly, at a moderate pace, with careful attention to emphasis, and loudly enough for all students to hear without difficulty. Pronounce words and read sentences naturally.  
Illustration: Number 1. Run. The boy can *run*. Run.
6. Administer exactly the same to all students in your classroom at the same time -- regardless of age, grade, skill, or ability level differences (see Note above).
7. Monitor and make note of any unusual or unacceptable behavior, but do not distract other students with oral reprimands or cautions.

For example, note excessive copying including the name of the student whose paper was being copied. Note excessive frustration or resistance. This can be done by writing student name and your observation on a sticky note. Then add that sticky note to the student's paper after you collect it.

**ADMINISTRATION DIRECTIONS**

1. Have students clear desks.
2. Give each student their paper that has been prepared ahead and writing tools.
3. Read directions below distinctly, at a moderate pace.
4. At the conclusion, collect student papers; add any sticky note observations.

**READ THESE EXPLICIT DIRECTIONS TO THE CLASS BEFORE BEGINNING--**

We will be doing a special spelling activity today that will help me plan our Word Study lessons. It is similar to our word dictation. Listen carefully to my directions.

- I will tell you the number of the line to write on.
- Then I will say a word. I will use the word in a sentence.
- And then I will repeat the word one more time.
- Write the word the best you can. Do not write the sentence.
- Do not talk. I cannot answer questions or repeat anything.
- Some words may seem easy, others may seem hard. It is okay if you don't know how to spell a word. Just do your best.

Remember, this is a special activity that will help me plan our Word Study lessons.

**SCORING INSTRUCTIONS**

Follow the directions in the Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale to mark student papers.

**Scoring criteria**

The following are considered errors:

1. Letter reversals
2. The letters i and j if they are not dotted
3. The letter t if it is not crossed
4. Words not written as pronounced (i.e., "men" for "man," "said" for "say")
5. Words hyphenated incorrectly
6. The use of capital case and lower case is ignored.
7. If student attempts a rewrite of a word, consider the obvious rewrite for scoring.

Note concerning points 1-3: If letters are clear even though reversed, e.g., a reversed "c" doesn't look like any other letter, don't count as error. However, for those that look like another letter, e.g., "b" or "d", count off. On "i" and "j" and "t," use best judgment.

### **Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale Scores**

Follow the directions and tables in the Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale to obtain scores.

- Raw = Number of words spelled correctly
- Ts = T score
  - Ts is a type of standardized score that can be use to compare one student's work on one administration of a subtest to another administration to track growth. It is obtained from Table 2 based on the number of words correct.
  - A Raw score of 0 has a Ts of 17.
- Bs = brightness in spelling
  - T score and student's age are used to derived this score (Table 4). It can be used to compare two or more students horizontally and/or vertically in a single test administration as well as across various administrations of different subtests. A score of 50 is the mean. Kindergarten and first grade do not have Bs scores because Table 4 does not provide information for the age of these students. Use the student Bs to compare with future administrations. Use Cs to compare class to class or grade to grade.
- Gs = grade status in spelling
  - A Gs is obtained from Table 2 based on the number of words correct. It represents a grade level and the month of instruction in that grade level: the first number is the grade, the second is the month. So 3.7 = 3rd grade, 7th month of the school year; A student with a 3.7 can be said to be spelling at the level typical of the average student in grade 3, month 7.
  - A Raw score of 0 has a Gs of 1.0.
- Cs = classification in spelling
  - The Cs is the Gs with an adjustment (months added or subtracted) based on the time of the year the test is administered. The months added or subtracted are based on Table 5. The Cs makes it possible to compare individual students and whole classes horizontally and vertically from subtest to another subtest. In PS147 records, the grade and month of the class at the time this test was administered is noted in parentheses. If it is a multigrade class, an underscore is used for the grade.

For the Tables and more information about the scores and how they are calculated, see the Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale Direction, pages 3-7. The norms for the M-M Spelling Scale were established in 1923 based on 57,337 students, grades 2nd - 9th.