Letter Recognition

Description

Students select from four options the letter named by the examiner. The test can be given to groups as well as to individuals.

Administration

To administer the Letter Recognition test to a group of students, distribute a copy of the assessment and a strip of cardboard about the size of a ruler that can be used as a marker to be placed under the line of letters being tested so that students have no difficulty focusing on a row of possible responses. Explain the purpose of the assessment. Say to students, "I want to see how many letters you know. Look at your papers. You will see rows of letters. I am going to say the name of a letter and then I'm going to ask you to make a circle around that letter. Let's do the first one for practice. Find the ball. Now put your marker under the ball. [Check to make sure all students are focusing on the sample row.] Now find the letter X and make a circle around it. Here is what the letter X looks like [write it on the board]. Find it and make a circle around it." Check to make sure that all students have drawn a circle around the X.

"Now move your marker down to the row that has a cat. Look at the letters in that row and draw a circle around the letter S. Draw a circle around the letter S." Using this same procedure, have students draw a circle around the following letters:
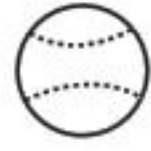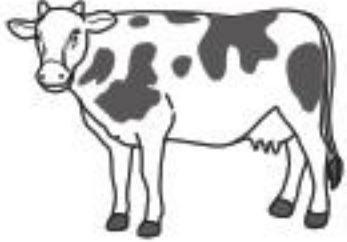
1.	S	11.	s
2.	A	12.	a
3.	B	13.	b
4.	R	14.	r
5.	M	15.	m
6.	O	16.	o
7.	T	17.	t
8.	E	18.	e
9.	G	19.	g
10.	K	20.	k

LETTER RECOGNITION

Name _____ Date _____

Uppercase score _____ /10 Lowercase score _____ /10
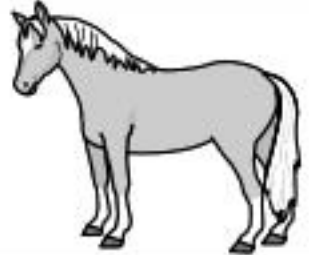
Circle the letter that your teacher says.

A		O	X	R	U
1		N	S	D	C
2		I	T	A	P
3		B	J	V	Z
4		W	G	K	R
5		X	M	H	U
6		E	O	F	L
7		Y	Q	B	T
8		S	R	E	C
9		I	G	X	Z

Figure 1.1

(continued)

10		P	W	H	K
11		n	s	d	c
12		i	t	a	p
13		b	j	v	z
14		w	g	k	r
15		x	m	h	u
16		e	o	f	l
17		y	q	b	t
18		s	e	r	c
19		i	g	x	z
20		p	w	h	k

Figure 1.1 *(continued)*
Source: Gunning, T. (2011). *Word Building, Beginnings* (2nd ed.). Honesdale, PA: Phoenix Learning Resources. Reprinted by permission of Galvin Publishing.

Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 is adequate. Eventually, of course, students will need to learn all the letters. As you assess students' performance, in addition to determining how many letters they are able to recognize, compare their performance on uppercase compared with lowercase letters. Generally students do better with uppercase letters. Also note any confusion of similar letters and consider opportunities for learning. If a student recognizes very few letters but has not been in a program in which letters were taught, he may have no difficulty learning letters.

Individual Administration

To administer the Letter Recognition test to an individual, point to the first letter in row 1 and ask the student to say the letter's name. Do this for each letter until you reach the letter *Q*. At that point you will have checked all twenty-six uppercase letters. Follow the same procedure for assessing knowledge of lowercase letters. However, discontinue testing if the student misses five letters in a row or if it is otherwise obvious that he doesn't know the letters.

When given as an individual measure, the Letter Recognition test requires that letters be *identified*, which is a more difficult task than *recognizing* the letters, which is what is involved in a group administration. If a student has difficulty identifying letters, switch to the administration that you would use with a group; ask him to draw a circle around the letter you name and see if he knows the letters on a recognition level.

Dynamic Assessment

If students experience difficulty identifying letters on the Letter Identification test, administer the Letter Recognition test. Selecting from four choices a letter named by the examiner is easier than naming a letter to which the examiner points. To determine a student's ability to learn letters, teach a series of three letters and see how many letters the student learns in the session. Use the suggestions in the Teaching Suggestions section entitled "Letter Names." Note the kinds of learning tasks that are most helpful.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The second best predictor of students' early reading achievement is phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the ability to think about and manipulate language. Although students might use language to communicate quite capably, they need to develop the ability to detect and manipulate elements of spoken language deliberately and consciously. Phonological awareness includes the ability to detect rhyme and to segment sentences into words and words into syllables and separate sounds. Detecting individual speech sounds is a form of phonological awareness known as *phonemic awareness*. Phonemes are individual speech sounds. The ability to detect the beginning sounds of words is a prerequisite for learning to read. Phonological awareness develops from larger to smaller units, from identifying the separate words in a sentence to identifying the syllables in a word, the onset and rime, and finally the separate sounds in a word.

There is also a cognitive dimension. Phonological awareness tasks are grouped into three categories: matching, segmenting (analyzing), and blending (synthesizing). *Matching* sounds includes saying that two words sound the same or supplying a word