

Assessment Strategies

Cornerstones units focus on three areas critical to English literacy – word identification, word knowledge and story comprehension. The following strategies and tools support assessment in these areas and can be customized to address individual goals and objectives for each student. They are designed to assess students' learning throughout a unit to help you fine-tune your instruction and determine where students' knowledge and skills are developing.

Although it could take place concurrently, we encourage you to assess word identification and word knowledge separately. Although Cornerstones did not focus on reading comprehension directly, our three areas of focus are strongly related to it and we suggest that you assess your students in this area as well.

Word Identification and Word Knowledge

There are a variety of ways in which you can assess your students' knowledge of words. It can be a simple activity of matching a picture with a word or a complex task where the student is expected to complete a creative writing activity.

Focus on the aspects of words that are most appropriate for your students. What aspects of words do you expect your students to learn? Keep in mind that you can pick and choose from the variety of activities and dimensions of words found in the Lesson Guide. You should decide which dimensions you'd like to expose your students to prior to teaching a lesson. This will then provide you with a guideline to follow when assessing the progress your students are making.

Graphical Organizers

You may choose to use one of the graphical organizers or semantic maps that were developed during a class lesson. Take out the words and phrases discussed during the lesson and ask students to fill it in and see how much they have learned.

Writing

There are many suggested writing activities in the Lesson Guide which provide opportunities to assess students' understanding and use of target vocabulary words.

Flashcards

You can ask students to identify words in print, as you show them flashcards of each word, one at a time. Make sure you define beforehand what constitutes correctly identifying a word.

If your students are oral, this can be simply speaking the word aloud. Remember, however, that a child may be able to articulate a word without knowing its meaning so you may want the child to indicate some understanding as well.

If your students sign, you can accept any sign that maps to the word in print, or you can ask for more meanings. You can decide whether to ask for two or more meanings based on the dimensions you covered in your daily lessons.

If your students are ASL (American Sign Language) users, identifying words can be tricky. In *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*, there is a phrase ‘fasten his suspenders.’ The sign for FASTEN in this phrase is different from the sign for FASTEN in the phrase ‘fasten your seatbelt.’ You will need to communicate to your students the desired type of response to the word in print.

Clipart

You can also use the Cornerstones clipart images and ask your students to match a picture with a vocabulary word. This can be done individually or in small groups. Ask your students to categorize the vocabulary words into nouns, verbs and adjectives. Next ask them to match the images with the printed words.

You might also want to make worksheets for some of the words and dimensions that you have been teaching. Using the Cornerstones clipart images provided in Teacher Resources, place several pictures at the top half of the worksheet and provide a list of corresponding target words at the bottom half of the worksheet. Ask students to match each picture with the appropriate word in print. Some examples are:

For basic meaning in *The Fox and the Crow* – students can match a picture of a large, black bird with the word ‘crow.’



For basic meaning in *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* – students can match a picture of a man’s necktie with the word ‘tie.’



To teach an additional dimension of the word ‘tie’, you might also point out that ‘necktie’ is a compound word (neck + tie). Have the students match a picture of a ‘bow tie’ with the word in print. Explain that this is another kind of tie that can be worn around the neck.



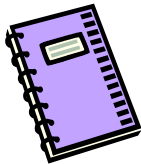
bow tie

For basic meaning in *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* – students can match a picture of a memo or note with the word ‘note.’



note

To teach additional dimensions of the word, you might also point out that ‘notebook’ is a compound word (note + book). Have the students match a picture of a musical note with the word in print.



notebook



musical note

Shared Reading and Guided Reading

During shared reading and guided reading, encourage your students to decode the words, asking them to look at spelling patterns and analyze word structure (attending to a prefix or suffix, for example) or to use contextual clues to determine the meaning of an unknown word.

After reading the story, ask students to point out the target vocabulary words and then provide the basic meaning of the word in that story. Next, ask them to elaborate and give another meaning or use of that word that is unrelated to its meaning in the story. Ideally, the types of responses you will get from your students are the ones that you taught in previous word building lessons.

Make note of the responses your students give by using the checklists provided on pages 5-10. You can help build your students’ knowledge of words in so many ways by focusing on multiple meanings, figurative language (idioms), synonyms, antonyms, compound words, verb tenses, plurals and categories.

Contextual Clues

To show the different meanings of words, you can put words in sentences and/or phrases using a different context from that of the Cornerstones stories. Ask students what the word means in that sentence. If your students sign and/or use ASL, you can also have them sign the sentence, thereby allowing them to convey its meaning by using the correct sign. For example:

Vocabulary word from *The Fox and the Crow* — QUEEN

- The queen bee is busy in the hive.
- He won the game with a queen of hearts.

Vocabulary word from *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* — FAIR

- The boy had very blonde hair and very fair skin.
- We will have fair weather tomorrow.
- He ate cotton candy at the fair.

Vocabulary word from *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* — STRIKE

- The player got a strike in bowling.
- Baseball players do not like to strike out.
- You should be careful when you strike a match.

A variation of this activity is for you to read aloud (or ask individual students to read aloud) sentences using the words in a variety of meanings. Provide a list of possible meanings and let the student choose which meaning applies to that particular sentence. This could also be done as a paper and pencil activity. On one half of a worksheet, create a number of sentences and phrases using the words in multiple meanings or idiomatic expressions. On the other half of the worksheet, list the meanings. Ask students to match the sentence/phrase with the corresponding meaning.

We suggest using printed sentences that students can respond to both individually and in a group. The group assessment can be repeated over the course of the unit, alternating which students get which words, so that most students can respond to most of the words.

Checklists

You can use the following checklists to 1) keep track of which word dimensions you have focused on in lessons, and 2) assess which dimensions the students are able to correctly identify, during class discussions and through individual/group assessment.

Vocabulary Assessment Checklist – Part I

The Fox and the Crow

KEY WORD	Basic Meaning in the Story	Multiple Meanings	Synonyms & Antonyms	Figurative Language (Idioms)	Compound Words
crow					
bird					
beak					
mouth					
swallow					
tree					
woods					
piece of cheese					
tasty					
delicious					
smell					
fox					
flatter					
flatterer					
flattery					
beware of					
learn					
lesson					
proud					
pride					
queen					
open					
drop					
sing					
beautiful					
gorgeous					
tiny					
easy					
very					

Vocabulary Assessment Checklist – Part II

The Fox and the Crow

KEY WORD	Verb Tenses	Plurals	Categories	Attributes, Features and Characteristics
crow				
bird				
beak				
mouth				
swallow				
tree				
woods				
piece of				
cheese				
tasty				
delicious				
smell				
fox				
flatter				
flatterer				
flattery				
beware of				
learn				
lesson				
proud				
pride				
queen				
open				
drop				
sing				
beautiful				
gorgeous				
tiny				
easy				
very				

Vocabulary Assessment Checklist – Part I

Joseph Had a Little Overcoat

KEY WORD	Basic Meaning in the Story	Multiple Meanings	Synonyms & Antonyms	Figurative Language (Idioms)	Compound Words
old					
worn					
overcoat					
jacket					
vest					
scarf					
necktie					
handkerchief					
fasten					
suspenders					
button					
city					
lost					
fair					
nephew					
sister					
married					
wedding					
danced					
sang					
chorus					
drank					
glass					
hot tea					
lemon					
nothing					
something					
shows					

Vocabulary Assessment Checklist – Part II

Joseph Had a Little Overcoat

KEY WORD	Verb Tenses	Plurals	Categories	Attributes, Features and Characteristics
old				
worn				
overcoat				
jacket				
vest				
scarf				
necktie				
handkerchief				
fasten				
suspenders				
button				
city				
lost				
fair				
nephew				
sister				
married				
wedding				
danced				
sang				
chorus				
drank				
glass				
hot tea				
lemon				
nothing				
something				
shows				

Vocabulary Assessment Checklist – Part I

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

KEY WORD	Basic Meaning in the Story	Multiple Meanings	Synonyms & Antonyms	Figurative Language (Idioms)	Compound Words
farm					
farmer					
barn					
type					
typewriter					
note					
sincerely					
problem					
believe					
impossible					
electric blankets					
to go on strike					
closed					
busy					
to grow impatient					
to run a farm					
furious					
demand					
neutral					
party					
ultimatum					
emergency meeting					
gather					
snoop					
knock					
hand					
exchange					
decide					
a good deal					
pond					
boring					
diving board					

Vocabulary Assessment Checklist – Part II

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

KEY WORD	Verb Tenses	Plurals	Categories	Attributes, Features and Characteristics
farm				
farmer				
barn				
type				
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to go on strike				
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busy				
to grow impatient				
to run a farm				
furious				
demand				
neutral				
party				
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emergency meeting				
gather				
snoop				
knock				
hand				
exchange				
decide				
a good deal				
pond				
boring				
diving board				

Story Comprehension

Role Play

Have students role-play the story, taking the role of various characters in the story. Some students may copy another student's role-play, however, so you should monitor for imitation.

Have students take turns reading the story aloud. Pause along the way to ask comprehension questions, since some students may be able to 'read' the text, but not necessarily understand the print that they have read aloud.

Story Map

Ask the student to fill out a blank story map. Any map or diagram can be used that includes prompts for filling in the title, setting, character(s), problem, solution and conclusion.

Sequencing

Create 10-12 sentences of events that took place in the story. Students can complete this activity individually or as a whole class. If you choose to do this as a class activity, write the sentences on cardboard strips and display them, in random order, on the blackboard (or on the classroom floor). Students take turns reading aloud the sentences and placing them in the correct order as they occurred in the story. Instead of using sentence strips, you may also choose to have the students work independently. You can develop a worksheet using the same 10-12 events that took place in the story. Ask the students to cut and paste the sentences in the appropriate sequence as they happened in the story.

Character Match-Up

For *The Fox and the Crow* and *Click, Clack Moo: Cows That Type*, use the Character Match-Up Activity provided in the printable games section of the Teacher Resources. This will help you assess if students can correctly identify characters and facts from the story.

Retell

Ask students to rewrite or retell the story. You may also choose to videotape students' retellings at different points throughout the unit. Note which parts students are including, which parts they may be eliminating or forgetting to include, and which parts need expanding to show comprehension.

Comprehension Questions

Remember that there are three types of comprehension questions, and your students should be exposed to all types.

“What did the crow have in her beak?”

The answer is *explicit* in the text. The text says, “The crow had a piece of cheese in her beak.”

“Why did the crow drop the cheese?”

The answer is *implicit* in the text and requires critical thinking. The students must think about what happened just before the crow dropped the cheese and determine what caused her to open her mouth.

“How did the crow feel about losing her cheese?”

The answer is not in the text but is in our *experience*. The word ‘unfortunately’ provides a clue in the text. Maybe the students have lost something or had to give something up because they were tricked. They can remember how they felt or imagine how they would feel in such a situation.

You may choose to read aloud the questions and/or write the questions on a worksheet for students to read and respond. The following pages offer a list of possible questions and answers for each story.

Comprehension Questions for *The Fox and the Crow*

Q: Who are the characters in the story?

A: Fox and crow.

Q: Where does the story take place?

A: In the woods.

Q: What did the crow have in her beak?

A: Cheese/a piece of cheese.

Q: What did the fox want?

A: The piece of cheese.

Q: Why did the fox tell the crow she was beautiful?

A: To begin to trick her/to flatter her.

Q: Why did the crow puff herself up with pride?

A: She thought she was beautiful/she liked what the fox said about her.

Q: How could the crow become the queen of all birds?

A: Sing.

Q: Why did the fox want the crow to sing?

A: To make her open her mouth and drop the cheese.

Q: How did the fox get the cheese?

A: The crow dropped it into the fox's mouth.

Q: How did the fox feel at the end of the story?

A: Happy.

Comprehension Questions for *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*

Q: Who is the main character in the story?

A: Joseph.

Q: What are some places that Joseph visits?

A: The fair, a wedding (his nephew's wedding), the city (to visit his sister).

Q: Joseph's overcoat is old and worn. That is a problem for Joseph. Why?

A: He couldn't wear the coat anymore. He didn't want to throw it out.

Q: After the overcoat becomes old and worn, what is the first thing that Joseph does with it?

A: He makes a jacket.

Q: Tell me the clothing and things that Joseph makes. Tell me as many as you can and try to say them in order.

A: Overcoat, jacket, vest, scarf, necktie, handkerchief, and button.

Q: Joseph makes a button out of the handkerchief. What does he do with the button?

A: He uses it to fasten his suspenders.

Q: Every time Joseph makes something new, how does he feel?

A: If the student says "happy," probe by asking, "How do you know?"
He goes to fun places and celebrates. In the pictures he is smiling.

Q: Joseph makes new clothing and other things from old ones. Why?

A: Joseph wants to do something useful with each thing rather than throw it away. Joseph is creative and thinks of a way to use the old, worn item.

Q: Why does Joseph write a book?

A: He wants to tell the story of how you make something from nothing.
He had nothing left and a story was all he could make.

Comprehension Questions for Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

Q: Who are the characters in the story?

A: Farmer Brown, cows, hens, and Duck.

Q: Where does the story take place?

A: On a farm or Farmer Brown's farm.

Q: Farmer Brown couldn't believe his ears and his eyes. Why not?

A: He heard the cows typing and they wrote him a note.

Q: Why do the cows want electric blankets?

A: The cows are cold.

Q: When the cows go on strike, what do they do?

A: They refuse to give milk.

Q: Why is Farmer Brown mad when the cows and hens refuse to give milk and eggs?

A: Farmer Brown needs milk and eggs in order to run a farm.

Q: Why does Farmer Brown finally give electric blankets to the cows and hens?

A: Because they will give back the typewriter.

Q: Was it a good idea for Farmer Brown to accept the cows' deal/offer?

A: Either yes or no is an acceptable answer but students have to provide a good reason either way. Yes, because now the cows and hens will give milk and eggs again. No, because now all the animals will want something.

Q: How does Duck help the cows and the farmer in this story?

A: Duck carries messages between the cows and the farmer.

Q: The ducks write a note to Farmer Brown. What do they ask for?

A: A diving board.