



Republic of Zambia
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION



READING PERFORMANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS for GRADES 1 - 4

RTS Learner Assessment Series # 2



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Creating the conditions of success for every child.

INTEGRATING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSING



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MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

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**READING PERFORMANCE LEVEL
DESCRIPTORS**

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Preface

The Ministry of General Education (MOGE) is committed to the goal that all Zambian children should become competent readers starting in Grade 1. To achieve this goal, the MOGE and its education partners have trained teachers, provided reading materials, and launched revised new curriculum to guide the development of reading programs.

All of these programs underline two important principles: (1) teachers must understand *expectations* for learners at each stage of literacy development, and (2) teachers must also understand *how to assess* learners' performance as they are learning, so they can modify their instruction and increase each learners' chances of success.

In order to help teachers apply these principles, the MOGE has adopted the system of performance standards, or descriptions of performance levels achieved by learners, described as "outstanding," "desirable," "minimum," and "below minimum." At each grade level, all learners should achieve at least minimum performance levels in the skills contained in the revised new curriculum. This document describes the specific competencies each child must acquire in order to achieve minimum performance levels. These descriptions are called Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs). Here is an example of a PLD:

Example of a Performance Level Descriptor

Skill: Read a timed passage

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is able to read less than 20 words in 1 minute.	The learner is able to read at least 20 words in 1 minute.	The learner is able to read at least 25 words in 1 minute.	Learner is able to read at least 30 words in 1 minute.

Each PLD describes the minimum performance level for a given skill by the end of the year. For example, in the example above, each Grade 1 learner should be able to read at least 20 words in one minute in order to reach the minimum performance level.

PLDs are important for two different reasons. First, they help you, the teacher, understand the minimum performance expectations for each learner, and therefore help you plan your lessons so that all children can achieve this level, or higher. Second, PLDs help you track your children's progress toward these goals throughout the year. So for example if you assess your children at the end of the second term and find that only half of them can read 20 words per minute, you know that you must organize your lessons in the third term to provide more support to these learners so that they can achieve at least the minimum standard by the end of the year.

These standards and PLDs were developed on the basis of the revised new curriculum, and are in line with the 1996 policy on education requiring learners to attain key reading competencies at each level. It is the hope of the MOGE that these PLDs will serve as a useful tool to help you plan instruction and assess learning so that all your children have a chance to succeed as new readers.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and flourishes, likely representing the name Chishimba Nkossa.

Chishimba Nkossa
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of General Education

Acknowledgements

The development of the Proficiency Levels (PLs) and Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) was a product of extensive consultative work involving stakeholders from Universities, Colleges of Education, class teachers, Head teachers, curriculum specialists, examinations specialists, standards officers and Ministry of General Education (MOGE) in-service officials such as DRCCs and PRCCs. The task was led by the Directorate of Standards and Curriculum in collaboration with the Examination Counsel of Zambia.

Special thanks go to the USAID/Read to Succeed (RTS) Project for the financial and technical support during the conceptualization and development process. Under the guidance and leadership of the MOGE, RTS played a significant role in organizing and facilitating series of workshops that led to this product. On behalf of the RTS, Dr. Mark Lynd, President of the School to School International, a subcontractor to Creative Associates International on the RTS Project, and Mr. William M. Kapambwe, Performance Monitoring Advisor on the RTS Team jointly facilitated the series of workshops and that led to this product. Dr. Lynn Evans, Reading Specialist at Creative Associates International Home Office made expert reviews and realigned the PLDs to the National Literacy Framework and the revised primary curriculum.

We also recognize the technical support of Mr. Godfrey Chimfutumba, Literacy Specialist from Room to Read, Carrie Lewis, Deputy Chief of Party and Teacher Professional Development Specialist, Time to Learn (TTL) and Angel Mulilo, Curriculum Development Specialist (MOGE/CDC).

Last but not the least, we express our thanks to the two typists, namely Ms. Cecilia Mubukwanu and Mrs. Dorothy Kasanda for typing the draft PLDs; a well as Mr. Nephas Hindamu, USAID Zambia/Read to Succeed Project – Communication & Knowledge Management Specialist for the cover designing and formatting of the document.



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1. Introduction to PLD Document

1.1 Purpose:

This document contains Performance Level Descriptors (PLDS) for determining learners' achievement of the key reading skills in the National Literacy Framework and the syllabus. It also includes tips for teachers to easily determine whether learners have achieved a reading skill and for planning for reading instruction.

1.2 Structure:

The document is organized by grade levels 1-4 and contains seven Skill Areas:

- i) Phonemic Awareness - *of individual sounds and manipulating sounds*
- ii) Phonics - *connection between the written form and the sound of letters*
- iii) Fluency - *reading orally with accuracy, expression, and speed*
- iv) Vocabulary - *knowing word meanings and using words*
- v) Comprehension - *understanding the meaning of what is read or heard*
- vi) Orientation to Print - *understanding of how print works*
- vii) Writing – *communication using letters, words and sentences*

At each grade level and for each Skill Area, reading skills are identified. For each reading skill, an Assessment Tip tells what the learner should be able to do and how the teacher can assess how well the learner can do it. Each PLD has four descriptions of what learners are able to do: Outstanding, Desirable, Minimum and Below Minimum.

1.3 How to Use PLDS

The first way teachers can use PLDs is to help in planning instruction. If you know what the goal is, e.g., what learners are expected to be able to do at the end, it's easier to plan ahead so they actually achieve the goals. Then, you can assess learners using just one of the PLDS as an activity during the reading class. Just choose the one that you want to use on a given day and have your learners do the task; then record how well each learner performs. To assess, you choose the description that best fits the learner's performance on the task: Outstanding, Desirable, Minimum or Below Minimum. This will help you know which learners have achieved the skill, which ones need more practice, and which ones are struggling and need help from the teacher, friends, and relatives before they fall behind.

Although the PLDS are organized by grade level, you can use PLDS from another grade. Suppose, for example, that you are a Grade 2 teacher and you are revising the sounds in phonics. The children were taught these sounds in Grade 1, so you can go back to the Grade 1 PLDS in Phonics and use the skill assessments there. Or, since the scope and sequence of sounds in the Zambian languages vary, you may move to Grade 2 Phonics (blends) before the end of Grade 1 in your language. It's fine to use PLDS in this way if it will help you to assess what your learners are able to do---that's the whole point!

2. Guidelines for PLD Use

What are PLDs? PLDs are Performance Level Descriptors - descriptions of a learner's performance level for a given skill. PLDs are based on the national curriculum, and in fact, are the curriculum, but organized in a different way.

Why do we use PLDs? For two reasons: PLDs help us to *teach better* because they organize learning skills in a sequence that we can use when we plan our lessons. PLDs also help us *measure learning better*. With PLDs, we know not only *if* our learners are learning certain skills, but *how well* they are learning them.

How do we use PLDs to assess learner performance? Let's take an example. In the National Syllabus, a Grade 1 reading skill is "Reading Comprehension: Retell a story." If we want our learners to be able to retell a story, what exactly do we want them to be able to do?

The PLDs provide four types of answers to this question. "Outstanding" is the most we hope for, "desirable" is still very good, "minimum" is acceptable performance, and "below minimum" means the learner is still struggling. If a learner scores below minimum on most PLDs by the end of the school year, he/she is not ready to move on to the next grade.

Here are the PLDs for this skill. As you can see, they are simply descriptions of what a learner should be able to do at each of these levels.

Skill: Reading Comprehension: Retell a story

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to retell the story with difficulty or only retell part of the story.	Learner is able to retell the story and include the main points.	Learner is able to retell the story and include the main points and a few details.	Learner is able to retell the story and include the main points and many details.

Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)

What do these categories mean? These PLDs provide four levels of skill acquisition. Of course we would like all our learners to be desirable – why not outstanding? But our main job is to ensure they are all at least at the minimum level. Those who are below minimum will require additional support from us, their friends, and their family members.

How should we conduct the assessment? There are two main steps to assessing learners using PLDs:

- a) **Identify the task.** When we decide on a task, we think about three things:
- **Task:** what the child will do in the assessment
 - **Content:** the content with which they must work, and
 - **Difficulty:** the level of difficulty of the task.

For this task, we might ask the child to read a story with sentences, then retell the story. For the content and level of difficulty, we will base our decision on what we are teaching our students when we do the assessment. For example, if it's in the second term of Grade 1, we might ask the child to read a short sentence; if it's later in the school year, we might ask the child to read a longer sentence, or two sentences.

- b) **Develop the procedure.** Once we have an idea for a task, we decide which steps to follow. For example,
- i. Ask each learner to come to the front of the class, one at a time.
 - ii. Show the learner a 3-sentence story you have written and ask him/her to read it. If the learner is not able to read the story, thank him/her and mark "below minimum."
 - iii. After the learner has read the story, ask him/her to re-tell it: what were the main ideas?
 - iv. After the learner retells the story, mark outstanding, desirable, minimum or below minimum based on his/her performance according to the PLDs.

Important: We can repeat the instruction, but we cannot provide answers or clues to the learner. He/she must retell the story.

- v. Call the next learner and begin the procedure again.

How should we score the learner's performance? We can simply write the word "outstanding," or give a score – for example, "outstanding" = 4, "desirable" = 3, "minimum" = 2 and "below minimum" = 1. The system we use should be approved by the Head Teacher, and should be used consistently for all children throughout the school year in order to avoid confusion.

Important: The scores from these assessments *are not to be included in the child's end-of-term or end-of-year score*. Their purpose is to help you as a teacher know which learners are excelling, so you can provide additional encouragement or challenges for them, and which children are failing (below minimum), so you can provide additional support for them.

How do we use PLDs to improve instruction? We can use PLDs to plan our lessons as well. As noted above, PLDs provide a sequence of difficulty for each skill. This sequence enables us to plan our instruction so that we can start with those parts of a skill that are easier, then gradually add tasks that will help our learners achieve the skill at the highest level possible.

Backward planning: If PLDs can help us teach better, why did we discuss assessment first? Because by "starting at the end" we know what we want all learners to ultimately achieve. This gives us a direction toward which we can plan our instruction. This is sometimes called "backwards planning," or starting with the end goal in mind, then planning backwards from there and asking: "What should the sequence be to arrive at that end goal?" That is, what's the first, easiest step, then the next more difficult step, etc. I can use the PLDs as a reference: for example, I might start by asking my learners retell a story any way they wish, then by asking them to state the main points, then by asking them to add more and more details. In this way, I will be taking them from minimum to desirable to outstanding.

In planning my instruction, I ask myself what content and skills they need to succeed in this assessment. If they learn these things, they will perform well on the assessment – for example:

- a) Content:
 - Vocabulary (words to be used in the assessment)
 - Sentences (sentences the same length, structure, and difficulty as in the assessment)
- b) Skills:
 - The ability to read three sentences fluently.
 - The ability to retell a story, providing main ideas and details

Finally, I will organize this content and these skills in a series of learning activities or lessons in the form of tasks and strategies:

Task	Strategy
Explain vocabulary words	Define them orally
	Use them in a sentence
	Draw a picture of them
Read sentences	Choral reading
	Individual reading
	Silent reading
Read a text fluently	Timed reading
	Fluidity (linking words)
	Use of expression
Retell the stories they have read	Ask learners to retell a story
	Ask others to add what they heard
	Ask learners to dramatize a story
	Guide learners in their retelling (they can only retell things that were in the story)

PLDs and the SBA scheme: As we have been discussing, PLDs can be used both for improving teaching and for structuring our assessments. When use for assessment purposes, PLDs can be used at all four levels of the SBA scheme:

- **Daily** – e.g., observe whether learners are understanding the main points of the story, or their task of retelling them
- **Weekly** – e.g., ask learners to name the main character in the story
- **Monthly** – e.g., ask learners to retell a “mini-story” of 1 sentence
- **End-of-term** – e.g., ask learners to retell a longer story of 2-3 sentences.

PLD Summaries

At the beginning of each section, you will find a summary all the PLDs for that grade. Each of these summaries presents the core competencies your learners should acquire in at each performance level. These summaries are intended to provide you with a snapshot of the competent learner – what we expect each child to know or be able to do by the end of each grade.

Each summary provides “a ladder of competencies” to help you, the teacher, support your learners, especially the ones who are struggling below the minimum standard, so they can climb to greater levels of competency over the course of the year. This ladder provides a source of information for you to help learners take those next steps so they all can become successful learners.

3.0 Summary of Grade 1 Reading Progressions

<p>Outstanding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Break up all given 4-letter words into 4 sounds2. Say all of the sounds of the alphabet3. Break down 4-syllable words4. Read at least 30 words in 1 minute5. Answer literal and inferential questions (reading comprehension) with full sentences or explanations6. Retell a story, including the main points and details, in correct order
<p>Desirable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Say the first, middle, and last sound of words2. Clap or count the syllables in familiar 3-syllable words3. Blend sounds and say 3-syllable words4. Break down and recombine 3-syllable words5. Read at least 25 words in 1 minute6. Name given objects in the classroom orally using complete sentences7. Answer literal and inferential questions after reading a text8. Retell a story and include the main points and some details9. Write dictated words and sentences10. Draw a picture and write a sentence to describe it
<p>Minimum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Say the first sound of words2. Say the sounds of the alphabet3. Break 2- and 3-letter words into sounds4. Blend sounds and say 1-2 syllable words5. Break down and recombine 2-syllable words6. Describe what is happening in a picture using phrases7. Read simple words and non-words8. Read at least 20 words in 1 minute9. Answer literal and inferential questions from a text read orally10. Read and retell a story, including the main points11. Know how to hold and open a book, where to begin reading on a page, direction of reading
<p>Below minimum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Associate some letters with sounds2. Match some capital and small letters3. Identify some letters, syllables4. Read some familiar words5. Answers literal questions from an oral text6. Write some letters and words legibly

3.1 GRADE 1 Performance Level Descriptors (PLDS)

LEGEND for SCORING ITEMS:

All correct = 100%

Most correct = more than half

Some correct = half or less / 2 or more, up to half

Not able = 1 or none correct

a) **SKILL AREA: PHONEMIC AWARENESS:**

Definition: *Phonemic awareness is awareness of individual sounds (phonemes) and manipulating sounds.*

NOTE: Phonemic awareness activities involve listening and speaking; no written sounds or words are used in this Skill Area.

i) **Skill:** Identify initial sounds (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word, the learner is able to say the initial sound.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the first sound of given words.	Learner is able to say the first sound of <i>some</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the first sound of <i>most</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the first sound of <i>all</i> given words.

ii) **Skill:** Identify middle sounds (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word, the learner is able to say the middle sound.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the middle sound of given words.	Learner is able to say the middle sound of <i>some</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the middle sound of <i>most</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the middle sound of <i>all</i> given words.

NOTE: The middle sound can be any sound except the first and last sounds. The teacher will emphasize the correct middle sound when saying the word.

iii) **Skill:** Identify ending sounds (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word, the learner is able to say the last sound.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the last sound of given words.	Learner is able to say the last sound of <i>some</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the last sound of <i>most</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the last sound of <i>all</i> given words.

iv) **Skill:** Identify the syllables in a word (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word, the learner is able to identify the syllables by clapping or counting them.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to clap or count the syllables in familiar given words OR can only clap 1-syllable words, e.g., ma = /ma/	Learner is able to clap or count the syllables in familiar 2-syllable words, e.g., tata = /ta//ta/	Learner is able to clap or count the syllables in familiar 3-syllable words, e.g., batata = /ba/ /ta/ /ta/	Learner is able to clap <i>or</i> or count the syllables in familiar 4-syllable words. e.g., icimuti = /i/ /ci/ /mu/ /ti/

v) **Skill:** Break up a word into its sounds (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word, the learner is able to break up the word into sounds by making the individual sounds.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to break up given words into sounds.	Learner is able to break up <i>some</i> given 2-letter words into 2 sounds (e.g., ma = /m/ /a/)	Learner is able to break up <i>most</i> 3-letter words into 3 sounds (e.g., ana = /a/ /n/ /a/)	Learner is able to break up <i>all</i> given 4-letter words into 4 sounds (e.g., zata = /z/ /a/ /t/ /a/ kaha = /k/ /a/ /h/ /a/)

b) SKILL AREA: PHONICS

Definition: *Phonics is the connection between the written form and the sound of letters; letter-sound associations.*

i) **Skill:** Recognize sounds of the letters of the alphabet (Zambian languages) (phonics)

Assessment Tip: When shown capital or small letters, the learner is able to say the sound.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the sounds of the alphabet.	Learner is able to say <i>some</i> of the sounds of the alphabet.	Learner is able to say <i>most</i> of the sounds of the alphabet.	Learner is able to say <i>all</i> of the sounds of the alphabet.

ii) **Skill:** Recognize letters (Phonics)

Assessment Tip: Using capital and small letters written on cards, the learner is able to match capital and small letters of the alphabet (Zambian languages).

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to match capital and small letter sounds given.	Learner is able to match <i>some</i> capital and small letters given.	Learner is able to match <i>most</i> capital and small letters given.	Learner is able to match <i>all</i> capital and small letter sounds given.

iii) **Skill:** Blend sounds to read syllables (Phonics)

Assessment Tip: When shown written syllables, the learner is able to blend sounds to read syllables.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to blend sounds and say syllables.	Learner is able to blend sounds and say 1-syllable words.	Learner is able to blend sounds and say 2-syllable words.	Learner is able to blend sounds and say 3-syllable words.

iv) **Skill:** Put syllables together to make and read words (phonics)

Assessment Tip: Using a syllabic chart or syllables written on the chalkboard or flash cards, the learner is able to combine syllables to make and read the words.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to make words by putting syllables together, and read the words.	Learner is able to make words by putting 2 syllables together, and read <i>some</i> of the words.	Learner is able to make words by putting 2 syllables together, and read <i>most</i> of the words.	Learner is able to make words by putting 3 syllables together, and read <i>all</i> the words.

v) **Skill:** Read (decode) non-words (phonics)

Assessment Tip: From a list of non-words composed of sounds and syllables taught, learner is able to blend syllables to read the non-words.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to read non-words from a list.	Learner is able to read <i>some</i> non-words from a list.	Learner is able to read <i>most</i> non-words from a list.	Learner is able to read <i>all</i> non-words from a list.

vi) **Skill:** Break words into syllables (phonics)

Assessment Tip: Given a whole word, the learner is able to underline or say the syllables.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to break down words into syllables.	Learner is able to break down 2-syllable words.	Learner is able to break down 3-syllable words.	Learner is able to break down 4-syllable words.

c) SKILL AREA: ORAL READING FLUENCY

Definition: Oral Reading Fluency is reading aloud with accuracy, appropriate expression and at a good rate.

i) **Skill:** Read familiar words (fluency)

Assessment Tip: Given a list of familiar words containing 2-syllable, 3-syllable and 4-syllable words, the learner is able to read the words.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is <i>not able</i> to read words on a familiar words list.	The learner is able to read <i>some</i> of the words on a familiar words list.	The learner is able to read <i>most</i> words on a familiar words list.	Learner is able to read <i>all</i> words on a familiar words list.

ii) **Skill:** Read a timed passage (fluency)

Assessment Tip: Given a reading passage at Grade 1 level, the learner is able to read a timed passage at a rate of 20 words or more per minute.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to read less than 20 words in 1 minute.	The learner is able to read at least 20 words in 1 minute.	The learner is able to read at least 25 words in 1 minute.	Learner is able to read at least 30 words in 1 minute.

d) SKILL AREA: VOCABULARY

Definition: Word knowledge; knowing word meanings and using the words

i) **Skill:** Use vocabulary in speech/name objects (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher points to objects in the classroom from a list, the learner is able to name them.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is <i>not able</i> to name most objects in the classroom orally.	The learner is able to name <i>most</i> given objects in the classroom orally using words or phrases, e.g., "pointer."	The learner is able to name <i>most</i> given objects in the classroom orally using complete sentences, e.g., "It is a pointer."	The learner is able to name <i>all</i> given objects in the classroom orally using complete sentences, e.g., "It is a pointer."

ii) **Skill:** Use vocabulary in speech/Give oral descriptions (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher shows a picture, the learner is able to describe what is happening.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is able to describe what is happening in a picture by using single words, e.g., “water,” “boy,” when prompted.	The learner is able to describe what is happening in a picture using phrases, e.g., “carrying water,” “going home,” when prompted.	The learner is able to describe what is happening in a picture in complete sentences, with some (2-3) details.	The learner is able to describe what is happening in a picture in complete sentences, with many (4 or more) details.

e) **SKILL AREA: COMPREHENSION**

Definition: *Understanding the meaning of something. There are two types: listening comprehension and reading comprehension.*

NOTE: Comprehension questions can be literal or inferential.

Literal - Answers to literal questions are stated in the story. For example, if the story says, “When the girl fell down, she cried,” a literal question might be, “When the girl fell down, what she did?” (She cried.)

Inferential - Answers to inferential questions are not stated explicitly. The reader must *infer* the answer based on what is stated. For example, if the story says, “When the girl fell down, she cried,” an inferential question might be, “Why did the girl cry?”

The reader can infer that she cried because she got hurt when she fell down. Another inferential question may be, “How did the girl feel when she fell down?” The reader can infer that she was unhappy. Importantly, the learner must be able to support her answer with evidence from the text and her own reasoning. The teacher must ensure that evidence is being used, and must judge whether the learner’s reasoning is sound.

- i) **Skill:** Comprehend a spoken text/answer literal questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: When read a short story by the teacher, the learner is able to answer simple, literal questions orally.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer less than 3 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 4 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 5 of 5 literal questions correctly.

- ii) **Skill:** Read a sentence and answer inferential questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a sentence, the learner is able to answer inferential questions.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is <i>not</i> able to answer any inferential questions.	Learner is able to answer 1 of 3 inferential questions.	Learner is able to answer 2 of 3 inferential questions.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 3 inferential questions.

- iii) **Skill:** Read a simple story and answer literal questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to read a simple story of 3 sentences and answer literal questions.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is <i>not</i> able to answer any literal questions.	Learner is able to read a simple story and answer 1 of 3 literal questions.	Learner is able to read a simple story and answer 2 of 3 literal questions.	Learner is able to read a simple story and answer 3 of 3 literal questions.

- iv) **Skill:** Retell a story (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to read a simple story of 3 sentences and retell it orally.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to retell the story or can only retell part of the story.	Learner is able to retell the story and include the main points.	Learner is able to retell the story and include the main points and a few details.	Learner is able to retell the story and include the main points and many details, in correct order.

f) SKILL AREA: ORIENTATION TO PRINT

Definition: Understanding of how print works, e.g., that print is speech written down, how to open a book, where to start reading and direction of reading.

- i) **Skill:** Use printed materials correctly (orientation to print)

Assessment Tip: The learner will be able to demonstrate:

- how to hold and open a book
- where to begin reading on a page
- direction of reading (left to right)
- what to do when the end of a line is reached

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to demonstrate 0-1 tasks.	Learner is able to demonstrate 2 of 4 tasks.	Learner is able to demonstrate 3 of 4 tasks.	Learner is able to demonstrate all 4 tasks.

g) SKILL AREA: WRITING

Definition: Communication through a set of symbols such as letters, words and sentences.

- i) **Skill:** Use writing tools (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to use a pencil to write letters according to grade-level expectations.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is <i>not able</i> to use a pencil to write letters legibly.	The learner is able to use a pencil to write letters with some difficulty but letters can be read.	The learner is able to use a pencil to write letters with acceptable accuracy.	The learner is able to use a pencil to write letters with correct form.

ii) **Skill:** Write words and sentences (writing)

Assessment Tip: When dictated by the teacher, the learner is able to write words and simple sentences using capitalization, spacing and full stops, according to grade appropriate levels.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to write <i>some</i> dictated words correctly but cannot write sentences.	Learner is able to write dictated words and sentences using capitalization, spacing and full stops, with no more than 2 errors per sentence.	Learner is able to write dictated words and sentences using capitalization, spacing and full stops, with no more than 1 error per sentence.	Learner is able to write dictated words and sentences using capitalization, spacing and full stops, with no errors.

iii) **Skill:** Write sentences based on a picture (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to draw a picture and then write sentences to tell about it.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to draw a picture but cannot write a word to describe it.	Learner is able to draw a picture and write a word to describe it. Meaning is understood.	Learner is able to draw a picture and write 1 sentence to describe it. Meaning is understood.	Learner is able to draw a picture and write 2 sentences to describe it. Meaning is understood.

4.0 Summary of Grade 2 Reading Progressions

<p>Outstanding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read at least 60 words in 1 minute2. Summarize a story by giving all of the main ideas and no extraneous details3. Tell the theme of a passage and explain it completely4. Tell whether a passage is fact or opinion and explain why5. Write a dictated sentence legibly, with correct use of capital letters, spacing and punctuation6. Write a compound sentence7. Write a complex sentence
<p>Desirable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read at least 40 words in 1 minute2. Say the sounds made by most given 2-letter blends3. Form 2-syllable words4. Use a given word in a sentence5. Recall all main events in a story6. Answer literal and inferential questions from a Grade 2 text7. Construct a sentence using a subject, a verb and an object8. Tell whether a passage is fact or opinion9. Write a short story of 3 sentences, with meaning10. Write a dictated sentence legibly with errors
<p>Minimum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read 25 words in 1 minute2. Say the blend in some given words3. Form 1-syllable words4. Spell simple words of up to 4 letters5. Answer literal questions from a Grade 2 text6. Tell the theme of a passage and explain it partially7. Construct a sentence using a subject and a verb8. Write one complete sentence with 4 words
<p>Below Minimum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tell the theme of a story but cannot explain it or provide details2. Read less than 25 words in 1 minute3. Recognize some unblended letters and sounds4. Write some words and sentences but with errors5. Form syllables but not words

4.1 Grade 2 Performance Level Descriptions (PLDS)

LEGEND for SCORING ITEMS:

All correct = 100%

Most correct = more than half

Some correct = half or less / 2 or more, up to half

Not able = 1 or none correct

a) SKILL AREA: PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Definition: Phonemic awareness is awareness of individual sounds (phonemes) and manipulating sounds.

NOTE: Phonemic awareness activities involve listening and speaking; no written sounds or words are used in this Skill Area.

i) **Skill:** Identify initial sounds/2-letter blends (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher asks which sound is heard at the beginning of a word, the learner is able to say the sound of the blend.

NOTE: Blends are sounds that blend together, such as /kh/, /ch/, /zh/, /nd/. Blends will vary by language. Teacher asks, "What sound do you hear at the beginning of _____?"

Learners may respond by saying the sound of the blend or the syllable that contains the blend.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the blend in given words.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>some</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>most</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>all</i> given words.

ii) **Skill:** Identify 2-letter blends within words (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher asks which blend is contained in a series of words, the learner is able to say the sound of the blend.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the blend in given words that contain the blend.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>some</i> given words that contain the blend.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>most</i> given words that contain the blend.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>all</i> given words that contain the blend.

iii) **Skill:** Identify initial sounds/3-letter blends (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word that begins with a 3-letter blend, such as /ndw/, /mbr/, /mpy/, /phw/, the learner is able to say the blend.

NOTE: Blends are sounds that blend together, such as /ndw/, /mbr/, /mpy/, /phw/. Blends will vary by language. Teacher asks, "What sound do you hear in _____, _____ and _____?"

Learners may respond by saying the sound of the blend or the syllable that contains the blend.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the initial blend in given words.	Learner is able to say the initial blends in <i>some</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the initial blends in <i>most</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the initial blends in <i>all</i> given words.

iv) **Skill:** Identify 3-letter blends within words (phonemic awareness)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher asks which blend is contained in a series of words, the learner is able to say the sound of the blend.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the blend in given words.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>some</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>most</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the blend in <i>all</i> given words.

b) SKILL AREA: PHONICS

Definition: *Phonics is the connection between the written form and the sound of letters; letter-sound associations.*

- i) **Skill:** Recognize the sounds made by specific letters (2-letter blends) (phonics)

Assessment Tip: When 2-letter blends + a vowel are written on the chalkboard or flash cards, the learner is able to say the sounds they represent, e.g., /fwa/, /kwe/, /mfu/.

NOTE: Learners may respond by saying the sound of the blend or the syllable that contains the blend.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Recognize some unblended letters and sounds	Learner is able to say the sounds made by some given 2-letter blends.	Learner is able to say the sounds made by <i>most</i> given 2-letter blends.	Learner is able to say the sounds made by <i>all</i> given 2-letter blends.

- ii) **Skill:** Recognize the sounds made by specific letters (3-letter blends) (phonics)

Assessment Tip: When 3-letter blends + vowel are written on the chalkboard or flash cards, the learner is able to say the sounds they represent, e.g., /mfwa/, ndya/, /mpwa/.

NOTE: Learners may respond by saying the sound of the blend or the syllable that contains the blend.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the sounds made by given 3-letter blends.	Learner is able to say the sounds made by <i>some</i> given 3-letter blends.	Learner is able to say the sounds made by <i>most</i> given 3-letter blends.	Learner is able to say the sounds made by <i>all</i> given 3-letter blends.

- iii) **Skill:** Blend sounds to make syllables and words (phonics)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher writes single letters and 2- and 3-letter blends on the chalkboard or flashcards, the learner is able to make syllables and words.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner forms syllables but not words.	Learner is able to form 1-syllable words.	Learner is able to form 2-syllable words.	Learner is able to form words with more than 2 syllables.

iv) **Skill:** Read (decode) non-words (phonics)

Assessment Tip: From a list of non-words composed of sounds and blends, the learner is able to blend the sounds to read the non-words.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is able to read less than 10 non-words in a minute.	The learner is able to read 10-14 non-words in a minute.	The learner is able to read 15-19 non-words in a minute.	The learner is able to read 20 or more non-words in a minute.

c) **SKILL AREA: ORAL READING FLUENCY**

Definition: *Oral Reading Fluency is reading aloud with accuracy, appropriate expression and at a good rate.*

i) **Skill:** Read familiar words (fluency)

Assessment Tip: Given a list of familiar Grade 2-level words, the learner is able to read the words aloud accurately.

NOTE: Time limit = 1 minute

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to read words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>some</i> of the words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>most</i> of the words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>all</i> words on the familiar word list.

ii) **Skill:** Read a timed passage (fluency)

Assessment Tip: Given a passage at Grade 2 level, the learner is able to read a timed passage within 1 minute.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to read less than 25 words in 1 minute.	Learner is able to read at least 25 words in 1 minute.	Learner is able to read at least 40 words in 1 minute.	Learner is able to read at least 60 words in 1 minute.

d) SKILL AREA: VOCABULARY

Definition: *Word knowledge; knowing word meanings and using the words*

- i) **Skill:** Know the meaning of words (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word aloud, the learner is able to use the word in a sentence. Use words appropriate for Grade 2.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to use the given word in a sentence.	Learner is able to use the given word in a sentence, but the sentence does not demonstrate the meaning of the word.	Learner is able to use the given word in a sentence that demonstrates the meaning of the word.	Learner is able to use the given word in a sentence that demonstrates the meaning of the word and define it.

- ii) **Skill:** Spell simple words (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word, the learner is able to sound out and spell the word orally or by writing. Words should be simple words for Grade 2 learners.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is <i>not able</i> to spell simple words.	The learner is able to spell simple words of up to 4 letters.	The learner is able to spell simple words of up to 6 letters.	The learner is able to spell <i>simple</i> words of up to 8 letters.

e) SKILL AREA: COMPREHENSION

Definition: *Understanding the meaning of a passage. There are two types: listening comprehension and reading comprehension.*

NOTE: Comprehension questions can be literal or inferential.

Literal - Answers to literal questions are stated in the story. For example, if the story says, "When the girl fell down, she cried," a literal question might be, "When the girl fell down, what she did?" (She cried.)

Inferential - Answers to inferential questions are not stated explicitly. The reader must *infer* the answer based on what is stated. For example, if the story says, “When the girl fell down, she cried,” an inferential question might be, “Why did the girl cry?” The reader can infer that she cried because she got hurt when she fell down. Another inferential question may be, “How did the girl feel when she fell down?” The reader can infer that she was unhappy. Importantly, the learner must be able to support her answer with evidence from the text and her own reasoning. The teacher must ensure that evidence is being used, and must judge whether the learner’s reasoning is sound.

- i) **Skill:** Comprehend a spoken text and answer literal questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher reads a passage appropriate for Grade 2 learners, the learner will listen to the passage and answer literal questions.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer 0-2 of 5 literal questions correctly	Learner is able to answer 3 of 5 literal questions correctly	Learner is able to answer 4 of 5 literal questions correctly	Learner is able to answer 5 of 5 literal questions correctly

- ii) **Skill:** Comprehend a spoken text and answer inferential questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher reads a passage appropriate for Grade 2 learners, the learner will listen to the passage and answer inferential questions.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer 0-2 of 5 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 5 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 4 of 5 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 5 of 5 inferential questions correctly.

- iii) **Skill:** Read a text and answer literal questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 2-level short passage or story of 3 paragraphs, the learner will answer explicit questions orally.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer 0-2 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer 3 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer 4 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer 5 of 5 literal questions correctly.

iv) **Skill:** Read at text and answer inferential questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 2-level short passage or story of 3 paragraphs, the learner is able to answer inferential questions orally.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer 0-1 of 5 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer 2 of 5 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer at least 3 of 5 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer 5 of 5 inferential questions correctly.

v) **Skill:** Read a text and summarize the main ideas (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 2-level story, the learner will be able to summarize the main ideas of the story. NOTE: Learner should not give extraneous details (ones that are not important), only the main ideas.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to give the main ideas of the story.	Learner is able to give <i>some</i> of the main ideas but includes some extraneous details.	Learner is able give <i>most of</i> the main ideas but includes a few extraneous details.	Learner is able to summarize a story by giving <i>all</i> of the main ideas and no extraneous details.

vi) **Skill:** Read a text and recall events in chronological order (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 2-level story, the learner will be able to identify and recall in chronological order a series of events.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to recall main events in chronological order.	Learner is able to recall <i>some</i> main events in chronological order.	Learner is able to recall <i>all</i> main events but some are out of chronological order.	Learner is able to recall all main events in chronological order.

vii) **Skill:** Read at text and locate details (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 2-level story, the learner is able to locate details about the story when asked.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>able</i> to locate 1 or no details about the story.	Learner is able to locate 2 of 4 details about the story.	Learner is able to locate 3 of 4 details about the story.	Learner is able to locate 4 of 4 details about the story.

viii) **Skill:** Read a text and identify a theme (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 2-level passage or story, the learner is able to give the theme.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to tell the theme of a story but cannot explain it or provide details.	Learner is able to tell the theme of a passage and explain it partially, with some errors.	Learner is able to tell the theme of a passage, and explain it partially, without errors.	Learner is able to tell the theme of a passage and explain it completely.

ix) **Skill:** Read a text and distinguish between fact and opinion (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 2-level passage, the learner is able to tell whether the passage is fact or opinion and explain why.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner does not understand the difference between fact and opinion	Learner is understands fact vs. opinion but cannot tell whether a passage is fact or opinion	Learner is able to tell whether the passage is fact or opinion	Learner is able to tell whether the passage is fact or opinion and explain why.

f) **SKILL AREA: WRITING**

Definition: Communication through a set of symbols such as letters, words and sentences.

i) **Skill:** Use capitals, spaces, and punctuation (writing)

Assessment Tip: As the teacher dictates sentences, the learner is able to write sentences in which they:

- write words legibly in manuscript form
- use capital letters as needed
- put spaces between words to differentiate one word from another.
- use full stops or question marks at the end of the sentence, as appropriate.

NOTE: “Errors” refers *only* to errors about legibility, capitalization, spacing and punctuation. Do not count other errors such as spelling; this is a different and complex skill and should be assessed separately.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to write a dictated sentence legibly or learner has more than 2 errors per sentence.	Learner is able to write a dictated sentence legibly, with correct use of capital letters, spacing and punctuation, with 2 errors per sentence.	Learner is able to write a dictated sentence legibly, with correct use of capital letters, spacing and punctuation, with no more than 1 error per sentence.	Learner is able to write a dictated sentence legibly, with correct use of capital letters, spacing and punctuation, with no errors.

ii) **Skill:** Write simple sentences (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to construct simple sentences using the pattern: Subject + verb + object + object.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to construct a sentence.	Learner is able to construct a sentence using a subject and a verb.	Learner is able to construct a sentence using a subject, a verb and one object in a sentence.	Learner is able to construct a sentence using a subject, a verb and 2 objects in a sentence.

iii) **Skill:** Write compound sentences (writing)

Assessment Tip: Given a model, the learner is able to construct compound sentences. A compound sentence is two simple sentences joined by a conjunctive such as “and,” “or,” or “but.” Example: The dog is black, and he is big.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to write a compound sentence.	Learner is able to write one complete sentence but the other is an incomplete sentence.	Learner is able to write a compound sentence with 2 complete sentences but makes an error on the conjunction.	Learner is able to write a compound sentence with no errors.

iv) **Skill:** Write complex sentences (writing)

Assessment Tip: Given a model, the learner is able to construct complex sentences. A complex sentence is a simple sentence and a clause. Example: I walked a long way before I got to school.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to write a complex sentence.	Learner is able to write a complete sentence with 4 words OR a clause.	Learner is able to write a complete sentence and a clause but makes an error in combining them.	Learner is able to write a complex sentence without errors.

v) **Skill:** Write a short story (writing)

Assessment Tip: Given a story starter (first sentence or phrase) by the teacher, the learner is able to write a short story.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner writes words, but not in sentence form, or without correct punctuation.	Learner is able to write a short story of 2 sentences.	Learner is able to write a short story of 3 sentences, with meaning.	Learner is able to write a short story of 4-5 sentences, with meaning.

5.0 Summary of Grade 3 Reading Progressions

Outstanding

- Read at least 70 words in 1 minute
- The correctly spell at least three 3-syllable words from a Grade 3 familiar word list
- Scan and locate details about the story, quickly and easily
- Write a paragraph of more than 7 or more sentences to describe something, with details
- Write an informal letter that includes all 5 parts

Desirable

- Read at least 60 words in 1 minute
- Say the synonym for most given words
- Say the antonym for most given words
- Write sentences using similes to compare things using “like” and “as”
- The correctly spell at least three 2-syllable words from a Grade 3 familiar word list
- Tell whether the passage is fact or opinion with explanation
- Write a 3-part paragraph: an introductory sentence, a well-developed body, and a closing sentence

Minimum

- Read at least 40 words in 1 minute
- Make 1 pair of sentences that shows the different pronunciations of homographs
- Make 1 pair of sentences that shows the different meanings of homonyms,
- Form plural words from some regular and irregular singular words
- Write 1 sentence using a simile to compare things (“like” or “as”)
- The correctly spell 1-syllable words from a Grade 3 familiar word list
- Answer literal and inferential questions
- Give some of the main ideas and details in a story
- Tell whether the passage is fact or opinion
- Write a dictated sentence legibly with correct use of capital letters, spacing and punctuation
- Construct a sentence using a subject and verb

Below minimum

- Read less than 40 words in 1 minute
- Answer some literal questions
- Write a dictated sentence
- Write one or two sentences, with errors
- Write some parts of an informal letter

5.1 GRADE 3 Performance Level Descriptors (PLDS)

LEGEND for SCORING ITEMS:

All correct = 100%

Most correct = more than half

Some correct = half or less / 2 or more, up to half

Not able = 1 or none correct

a) SKILL AREA: ORAL READING FLUENCY

Definition: Oral Reading Fluency is reading aloud with accuracy, appropriate expression and at a good rate.

i) Skill: Read familiar words (fluency)

Assessment Tip: Given a list of familiar Grade 3-level words, the learner is able to read the words aloud.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to read words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>some</i> words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>most</i> words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>all</i> words on the familiar word list.

ii) Skill: Read a timed passage (fluency)

Assessment Tip: Given a passage at Grade 3 level, the learner is able to read a timed passage with speed, accuracy and proper expression.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to read less than 40 words in 1 minute.	Learner is able to read at least 40 words in 1 minute.	Learner is able to read at least 60 words in 1 minute.	Learner is able to read at least 70 words in 1 minute.

b) **SKILL AREA: VOCABULARY**

Definition: *Word knowledge; knowing word meanings and using the words*

i) **Skill:** Show the different pronunciations of homographs (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to make sentences using words with the same spelling but different pronunciations, to show their different meanings, e.g., “read” (present) and “read” (past), or, in Tonga, “Kabanda” meaning “grave of a child” OR “plain.” The sentences must show the difference between the words. Learners can make sentences orally, or they can write and read the sentences.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to make a pair of sentences that shows the different pronunciations of homographs.	Learner is able to make 1 pair of sentences that shows the different pronunciations of homographs.	Learner is able to make 2 pairs of sentences that show the different pronunciations of homographs.	Learner is able to make 3 pairs of sentences that show the different pronunciations of homographs.

ii) **Skill:** Show the different meanings of homonyms (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to make sentences using words with the same spelling and same pronunciations, but different meanings, e.g., “fast,” or in bemba, “mailo,” meaning “tomorrow” or “yesterday.”

The sentences must show the difference between the words. Learners can make sentences orally, or they can write and read the sentences.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to make a pair of sentences that shows the different meanings of homonyms.	Learner is able to make 1 pair of sentences that shows the different meanings of homonyms,	Learner is able to make 2 pairs of sentences that show the different meanings of homonyms.	Learner is able to make 3 pairs of sentences that show the different meanings of homonyms.

iii) **Skill:** Identify synonyms (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word aloud, the learner is able to state the synonym. Use words appropriate for Grade 3.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the synonym for given words.	Learner is able to say the synonym for <i>some</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the synonym for <i>most</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the synonym for <i>all</i> given words.

iv) **Skill:** Identify antonyms (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word, the learner is able to state the antonym. Use words appropriate for Grade 3.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to say the antonym for given words.	Learner is able to say the antonym for <i>some</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the antonym for <i>most</i> given words.	Learner is able to say the antonym for <i>all</i> given words.

v) **Skill:** Form plurals from regular singular words (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: Learners are able to form plural words from regular singular words, e.g. “Mphunzitsi”-“Aphunzitsi” and “Mnyamata”-“Anyamata.”

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to form plural words from less than 2 regular singular words.	Learner is able to form plural words from 2 of 5 regular singular words.	Learner is able to form plural words from 3 of 5 regular singular words.	Learner is able to form plural words from 4-5 of 5 regular singular words.

vi) **Skill:** Form plurals from irregular singular words (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: Learners are able to form plural words from irregular singular words, e.g., in Nyanja, “Mwana-Ana.”

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to form plural words from less than 2 of 5 irregular singular words.	Learner is able to form plural words from 2 of 5 irregular singular words.	Learner is able to form plural words from 3 of 5 irregular singular words.	Learner is able to form plural words from 4-5 of 5 irregular singular words.

vii) **Skill:** Use similes to compare things (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to make sentences that show an understanding of similes.

NOTE: Similes are comparisons using “like” or “as.” Learners can make sentences orally, or they write and read the sentences.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to write a sentence to compare things using a simile (“like” or “as.”)	Learner is able to write 1 sentence using a simile to compare things (“like” or “as.”)	Learner is able to write sentences using similes to compare things: 1 sentence using “like” and 1 sentence using “as.”	Learner is able to write sentences using similes to compare things: 2 sentences using “like” and 2 sentences using “as.”

viii) **Skill:** Spell words (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word from a Grade 3 word list, the learner is able to sound out and spell the word orally or by writing. Spelling words should be appropriate for Grade 3 learners.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
The learner is able to spell two or fewer 1-syllable words from a Grade 3 familiar word list.	The learner is able to correctly spell at least three 1-syllable words from a Grade 3 familiar word list.	The learner is able to correctly spell at least three 2-syllable words from a Grade 3 familiar word list.	The learner is able to correctly spell at least three 3-syllable words from a Grade 3 familiar word list.

a) SKILL AREA: COMPREHENSION

Definition: *Understanding the meaning of something. There are two types: listening comprehension and reading comprehension.*

NOTE: Comprehension questions can be literal or inferential.

Literal - Answers to literal questions are stated in the story. For example, if the story says, “When the girl fell down, she cried,” a literal question might be, “When the girl fell down, what did she do?” (She cried.)

Inferential - Answers to inferential questions are not stated explicitly. The reader must *infer* the answer based on what is stated. For example, if the story says, “When the girl fell down, she cried,” an inferential question might be, “Why did the girl cry?” The reader can infer that she cried because she got hurt when she fell down. Another inferential question may be, “How did the girl feel when she fell down?” The reader can infer that she was unhappy. Importantly, the learner must be able to support her answer with evidence from the text and her own reasoning. The teacher must ensure that evidence is being used, and must judge whether the learner’s reasoning is sound.

i) **Skill:** Answer literal questions (Comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After the teacher reads a passage appropriate for Grade 3 learners, the learner is able to answer literal questions. NOTE: For literal questions, the answers are stated explicitly in the story.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer less than 2 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 2 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 4-5 of 5 literal questions correctly.

ii) **Skill:** Answer inferential questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After the teacher reads a passage appropriate for Grade 3 learners, the learner is able to answer inferential questions. NOTE: For inferential stories, the answer is not stated explicitly. The reader must *infer* the answer based on what is stated.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is unable to answer inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 1 of 3 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 2 of 3 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 3 inferential questions correctly.

iii) **Skill:** Answer literal questions (reading comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a short passage or story appropriate for Grade 3 learners, the learner is able to answer literal questions. NOTE: For literal questions, the answers are stated explicitly in the story.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer less than 2 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer 2 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer 3 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to read a passage and answer 4-5 of 5 literal questions correctly.

iv) **Skill:** Answer inferential questions (reading comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 3-level short passage or story, the learner is able to answer inferential questions orally. NOTE: For inferential stories, the answer is not stated explicitly. The reader must *infer* the answer based on what is stated.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is unable to answer inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 1 of 3 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 2 of 3 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 3 inferential questions correctly.

v) **Skill:** Summarize main ideas (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 3-level story of up to 50 words, the learner will be able to summarize the main ideas of the story.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to give the main ideas of the story.	Learner is able to give some of the main ideas but includes some extraneous details.	Learner is able to give <i>most</i> of the main ideas but includes a few extraneous details.	Learner is able to summarize a story by giving <i>all</i> of the main ideas and no extraneous details.

vi) **Skill:** Locate details (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 3-level story, the learner is able to scan the story and to locate details.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to read the story OR learner is <i>not able</i> to locate details about the story.	Learner is able to locate <i>some</i> details about the story, with hesitation.	Learner is able to scan and locate details about the story.	Learner is able to scan and locate details about the story, quickly and easily.

vii) **Skill:** Distinguish between fact and opinion (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 3-level passage, the learner is able to tell whether the passage is fact or opinion and tell why.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to tell whether the passage is fact or opinion.	Learner is able to tell whether the passage is fact or opinion but cannot explain why.	Learner is able to tell whether the passage is fact or opinion with explanation but explanation is weak or unclear.	Learner is able to tell whether the passage is fact or opinion and explain why.

a) SKILL AREA: WRITING

Definition: Communication through a set of symbols such as letters, words and sentences.

i) **Skill:** Punctuate sentences and short paragraphs (writing)

Assessment Tip: As the teacher dictates sentences, the learner is able to write 3 sentences or a short paragraph in which they:

- write words legibly in manuscript form
- use capital letters as needed
- put spaces between words to differentiate one word from another.
- use full stops, question marks or exclamation points at the end of the sentence, as appropriate.

NOTE: “Errors” refers *only* to errors about legibility, capitalization, spacing and punctuation. Do not count other errors such as spelling; this is a different and complex skill and should be assessed separately.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not</i> able to write a dictated sentence legibly OR learner has more than 2 errors per sentence.	Learner is able to write a dictated sentence legibly, with correct use of capital letters, spacing and punctuation, with 2 errors per sentence.	Learner is able to write dictated sentences, legibly, with correct use of capital letters, spacing and punctuation, with 1 error per sentence.	Learner is able to write dictated sentences legibly, with correct use of capital letters, spacing and punctuation, with no errors.

ii) **Skill:** Write sentences (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to construct sentences using the pattern: Subject + Verb + finish the sentence.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to construct a sentence.	Learner is able to construct a sentence using a subject and verb only.	Learner is able to construct a sentence using a subject and a verb and add 1 more word.	Learner is able to construct a sentence using a subject and verb, and finish the sentence with 2 or more words.

iii) **Skill:** Write paragraphs (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to write a paragraph with 3 parts:

- an introductory sentence
- body of the paragraph (3 sentences)
- a closing sentence.

The parts of the paragraph should relate to each other.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not</i> able to write a paragraph.	Learner is able to write a paragraph that includes 2 of the 3 parts.	Learner is able to write a paragraph that includes all 3 parts but the parts do not relate to each other.	Learner is able to write a paragraph that includes all 3 parts: an introductory sentence, a well-developed body, and a closing sentence. The 3 parts all relate to one another.

iv) **Skill:** Write descriptive paragraphs (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to write a paragraph describing something.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to write a paragraph of 3-4 sentences to describe something.	Learner is able to write a paragraph of 3-4 sentences to describe something, with details.	Learner is able to write a paragraph of 5-6 sentences to describe something, with details.	Learner is able to write a paragraph of more than 7 or more sentences to describe something, with details.

v) **Skill:** Write letters (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to write an informal letter to a friend. Letters should include 5 parts:

- heading
- greeting
- body
- closing
- signature

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to write an informal letter that includes 0-2 of the 5 parts.	Learner is able to write an informal letter that includes 3 of the 5 parts.	Learner is able to write an informal letter that includes 4 of the 5 parts.	Learner is able to write an informal letter that includes all 5 parts.

6.0 Summary of Grade 4 Reading Progressions

Outstanding

- Read at least 100 words in one minute
- Identify and use both a preposition and a prepositional phrase in a sentence
- Describe a character's role, feelings, motivations
- Write in cursive, joining letters in words and sentences
- Write a paragraph of with all 3 parts, and ideas are clear and logical (connected)

Desirable

- Read at least 80 words in one minute.
- Spell 10 complex or compound words from a grade 4-level word list and use them in a sentence
- Describe a character – e.g. , what he looks like, sounds like, walks like – and what he does
- Provide 1 or 2 details about where and when a story takes place
- Punctuate sentences and short paragraphs using capital letters, full stops, question marks, and commas

Minimum

- Read words on a familiar word list
- Read at least 60 words in 1 minute
- Write a sentence using a conjunctive or a disjunctive
- Spell simple words from a grade 4-level word list
- Put words that begin with different letters in alphabetical order (e.g. apple, boy, cat)
- Answer literal and inferential questions
- Identify the main character(s) in a passage
- State where a story takes place
- Punctuate sentences using capital letters, full stops, and question marks
- Write individual letters in cursive legibly, a – z
- Write a paragraph consisting of introduction, exposition, closing

Below minimum

- Learner can provide minimal description for a story
- Learner states letters in words but not sounds
- Learner reads text but cannot answer comprehension questions
- Learner makes shapes or letters but cannot write cursive legibly
- Learner writes words but does not punctuate correctly or connect words in a story or paragraph

6.1 GRADE 4 Performance Level Descriptors (PLDS)

LEGEND for SCORING ITEMS:

All correct = 100%

Most correct = more than half

Some correct = half or less / 2 or more, up to half

Not able = 1 or none correct

a) SKILL AREA: ORAL READING FLUENCY

Definition: Oral Reading Fluency is reading aloud with accuracy, appropriate expression and at a good rate.

i) Skill: Read familiar words (fluency)

Assessment Tip: Given a list of familiar Grade 4-level words, the learner is able to read the words aloud.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to read words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>some</i> of the words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>most</i> words on the familiar word list.	Learner is able to read <i>all</i> words on the familiar word list.

ii) Skill: Read a timed passage (fluency)

Assessment Tip: Given a passage at Grade 4 level, the learner is able to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to read less than 60 words in one minute.	Learner is able to read at least 60 words in one minute.	Learner is able to read at least 80 words in one minute.	Learner is able to read at least 100 words in one minute.

b) SKILL AREA: VOCABULARY

Definition: *Word knowledge; knowing word meanings and using the words*

- i) **Skill:** Use conjunctives and disjunctives (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to identify conjunctives such as “and” and disjunctives such as “or” and use them in a sentence. After writing each sentence, the learner is able to underline the conjunctive or disjunctive.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to write a sentence using a conjunctive or a disjunctive.	Learner is able to write a sentence using a conjunctive <i>or</i> a disjunctive.	Learner is able to write a sentence using a conjunctive and a sentence using a disjunctive and can identify the conjunctive or disjunctive.	Learner is able to write a sentence using a conjunctive and a sentence using a disjunctive and identify both the conjunctive and disjunctive.

- ii) **Skill:** Use prepositions (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to use a preposition in a sentence containing a prepositional phrase. After writing the sentence, the learner is able to identify the preposition and the prepositional phrase, e.g., by underlining the prepositional phrase and circling the preposition.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to use a prepositional phrase in a sentence.	Learner is able to use a prepositional phrase in a sentence.	Learner is able to use a prepositional phrase in a sentence and can identify either the preposition <i>or</i> the prepositional phrase.	Learner is able to use a prepositional phrase in a sentence and identify both the preposition and the prepositional phrase.

iii) **Skill:** Spell words and use them in sentences (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: When the teacher says a word from a Grade 4-level word list of 20 words, the learner is able to spell the word and use it in a written sentence. Words should be appropriate for Grade 4 learners.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to spell words from a Grade 1-3 level word list.	Learner is able to spell simple words from a Grade 4-level word list.	Learner is able to spell 10 difficult words from a Grade 4-level word list and use them in a sentence.	Learner is able to spell more than 10 difficult words from a Grade 4-level word list and use them in a sentence.

iv) **Skill:** Arrange words in alphabetical order (vocabulary)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to put a group of 5 words that begin with the *same* letter in alphabetical order.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not</i> able to put words that begin with the same letter in alphabetical order.	Learner is able to put words that begin with different letters in alphabetical order (e.g., apple, boy, cat)	Learner is able to put words that begin with <i>the same letter</i> in alphabetical order (e.g., about, add, apple)	Learner is able to put words that begin with <i>the same 2 letters</i> in alphabetical order (e.g., man, mat, may)

c) SKILL AREA: COMPREHENSION

Definition: Understanding the meaning of a passage. There are two types: listening comprehension and reading comprehension.

NOTE: Comprehension questions can be literal or inferential.

Literal - Answers to literal questions are stated in the story. For example, if the story says, "When the girl fell down, she cried," a literal question might be, "What happened after the girl fell?" (She cried.)

Inferential - Answers to inferential questions are not stated explicitly. The reader must *infer* the answer based on what is stated. For example, if the story says, “The girl fell down, and she cried,” an inferential question might be, “Why did she cry?” The reader can infer that she cried because she got hurt when she fell down. Other inferential questions may be, “How did the girl feel when she fell down?” The reader can infer that she was unhappy.

- i) **Skill:** Listening comprehension/Answer literal questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After the teacher reads a passage appropriate for Grade 4 learners, the learner is able to answer literal questions.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer less than 3 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 4 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 5 out of 5 literal questions correctly.

- ii) **Skill:** Listening comprehension/Answer inferential questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After the teacher reads a passage appropriate for Grade 4 learners, the learner is able to answer inferential questions.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to answer any inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 1 of 3 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 2 of 3 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 3 inferential questions correctly.

- iii) **Skill:** Reading comprehension/Answer literal questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a short passage or story appropriate for Grade 4 learners, the learner is able to answer literal questions.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is able to answer less than 2 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 2 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 5 literal questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 4-5 out of 5 literal questions correctly.

iv) **Skill:** Reading comprehension/Answer inferential questions (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 4-level short passage or story, the learner is able to answer inferential questions orally or in writing.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to answer any inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 1 of 3 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 2 of 3 inferential questions correctly.	Learner is able to answer 3 of 3 inferential questions correctly.

v) **Skill:** Describe characters (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 4-level story, the learner is able to describe a character in a story, e.g.

(1) What the character looks like, (2) how they act, (3) how they feel, and (4) why they did what they did in the story.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to describe a character.	Identify the main character(s) in the passage	Describe the character – e.g., boy/girl, age, what they look like	Describe the character’s role, feelings, motivations

vi) **Skill:** Describe setting (comprehension)

Assessment Tip: After reading a Grade 4-level story, the learner is able to describe the setting of a story, e.g.

(1) Where the story takes place, (2) what the place looks like, and (3) when the story takes place.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to describe the setting of the story.	Learner is able to state where the story takes place.	Learner is able to provide 1 or 2 details about where and when the story takes place.	Learner is able to provide 3 or more details about where and when the story takes place.

d) SKILL AREA: WRITING

Definition: Communication through a set of symbols such as letters, words and sentences.

- i) **Skill:** Use punctuation and capitalization (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to punctuate sentences and short paragraphs by using full stops, commas, question marks, inverted commas and exclamation marks, and capital letters, as needed.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner is <i>not able</i> to punctuate sentences.	Learner is able to punctuate sentences using capital letters, full stops, and question marks.	Learner is able to punctuate sentences and short paragraphs using capital letters, full stops, question marks, and commas.	Learner is able to punctuate sentences and short paragraphs using capital letters, full stops, question marks, commas, inverted commas, and exclamation marks.

- ii) **Skill:** Write using cursive form (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to write legibly in cursive.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner draws shapes but cannot write the letters in cursive legibly.	Write individual letters in cursive legibly, a – z.	Write in cursive, joining the letters into words.	Write in cursive, joining the letters in words and sentences.

- iii) **Skill:** Write a short paragraph (writing)

Assessment Tip: The learner is able to write a short paragraph on a given topic, such as current events (e.g., a school event); describing a process (e.g., how to make nshima or mend a tyre); or describing activities (e.g., fishing or farming). The paragraph includes three parts:

- (1) an introductory sentence
- (2) 4 sentences of exposition
- (3) a closing sentence

The parts of the report should relate to each other.

Below Minimum	Minimum	Desirable	Outstanding
Learner writes words, but they do not connect into a paragraph.	Learner is able to write 6 sentences: introduction, exposition, closing.	Learner is able to write a paragraph with 6 sentences: introduction, exposition, closing, and ideas are clear.	Learner is able to write a paragraph with 6 sentences: introduction, exposition, closing, and ideas are clear and logical (connected).

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