

Wold Sentence Copying Test

Some children are able to write the alphabet by rote memory but are unable to do so without extreme effort. In the classroom, speed becomes very important if the child is to keep up with his/her classmates. Also, many tasks depend on the ability to rapidly and accurately copy material from one position to another, either on the paper or in the workbook. Some children are accurate but slow, whereas others are quick but inaccurate.

The sentence copying test can be utilized to determine if the child has the ability to rapidly and accurately copy a sentence from the top to the bottom of a page. Although the task itself may appear to be easy, many children have extreme difficulty with it.

INSTRUCTIONS

"On the top of this page there is a sentence. I want you to copy it down here (*point to lines below*) as neatly and as quickly as you can. Be very careful. Ready -- go." If the child asks whether s/he is to write it or print it, tell him/her to "do it any way you want."

Start timing the child as s/he begins to write the first letter. Stop timing when s/he is finished. Record the time in minutes and seconds. The test requires that s/he copy 110 letters. Thus 6600 divided by the time it takes him/her to copy the letters (in seconds) will give his/her copying rate in letters per minute.

Norms for the Wold Sentence Copying Test were recorded in the literature for grades 2 through 8 in 1966. The norms were updated by Maples in 2003 for grades 1 through 5. Both tables are given below. The Maples article is included in the Test kit for your further reference.

The following observations should be made:

Posture: How does the child hold his/her pencil? How close is his/her head to the paper? Is there a head tilt? How does s/he hold his/her paper? At what angle does s/he hold the paper? Is there a persistent motor overflow? Does s/he move closer to the paper as the test continues?

Number of fixations: Can s/he remember and reproduce a whole word or phrase with one fixation? Does s/he have to look back to the stimulus word after each letter? After only two or three letters? Does s/he get lost often?

Spacing (figure-ground): Does s/he space the letters properly? Do the words run together? Does s/he miss some of the letters in a word? Does s/he skip words? Are the words in the proper order?

Vocalization or subvocalization: Does s/he have to say each letter to him/herself or out loud before writing it? Does s/he have to say each word out loud or to him/herself before writing it?

Speed: Is s/he very slow? Too quick? Does s/he get lost often?

Concentration, attention and fatigue: Does s/he tire rapidly? Does s/he keep leaving the task by looking around the room? Does s/he constantly have to be reminded to keep working? Do the background sounds constantly attract his/her attention?

Formation: Does s/he form the letters correctly?

Frustration level: Does s/he get upset with him/herself? Does s/he have to erase often? Does his/her work get sloppy towards the end? Is s/he happy with his/her final product?

RATE OF HANDWRITING		
Grade	Freemen Letters/minute	Ayres* Letters/minute
2	30	39.7
3	40	42
4	50	45.8
5	60	50.5
6	67	54.5
7	74	58.9
8	80	62.8

* speed and legibility

Means and SD for the Wold Sentence Copy Test (Symbols/Minute) Based upon Two Evaluations (Fall=f & Spring=s) (Pooled = both genders combined)									
Grade N	Mean Pooled	SD	N	Female	SD	N	Male	SD	P
1 F	15.7	9.7	117	16.2	10.0	127	14.7	9.3	0.091
1 S	27.0	14.1	103	29.7	15.6	111	24.5	12.0	0.006
2 F	35.0	13.8	161	37.1	13.6	177	33.2	13.7	0.010
2 S	54.4	22.0	151	57.1	22.3	168	51.9	21.4	0.036
3 F	58.2	22.2	183	62.0	21.9	197	54.5	22.0	0.001
3 S	65.2	22.9	177	70.2	21.9	186	60.4	22.9	< 0.001
4 F	62.1	21.0	114	65.8	21.2	139	59.1	19.6	0.011
4 S	74.1	20.3	103	77.7	18.3	134	71.4	21.3	0.017
5 F	76.6	17.7	48	81.3	16.1	61	73.0	18.1	0.015
5 S	87.9	20.2	46	91.1	18.9	49	84.8	21.1	0.036

¹Otto, W., and R.A. McMenemy, *Corrective and Remedial Teaching* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966).