

Tips for Virtually Administering Decoding and Spelling Assessments using EL Education

Assessment overview

This activity was developed by Krysta Muspratt, Reading/Language Arts Specialist at Downtown Denver Expeditionary School during the spring of 2020 as part of an NCII community of practice focused on virtual intervention delivery. Please note that NCII does not endorse specific intervention programs. As such, any programs noted in these documents are used for illustrative purposes only, or as potential resources for source materials (e.g., sample text, graphic organizers). While this resource was developed using [EL Education’s](#) Decoding and Spelling assessments, these tips may be applicable for other assessments.

- Grade levels: K–2
- When to administer: Beginning, middle, and end of the school year
- Time commitment: 15–20 minutes per student
- Targeted skills: Decoding, spelling

Decoding skills assessment

Purpose. This informal assessment examines a student’s ability to decode words with accuracy. This assessment is not timed. Results of this assessment may help educators to identify which phonics patterns students have mastered and where students need additional supports.

What teachers will need	What students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online platform for meeting individually with students (e.g., Zoom, Google Hangouts) • One decoding assessment packet per student (printed) • Decoding assessment PowerPoint slides • Pen for grading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the online platform • Blank piece of paper • Writing utensil

Process for administering the assessment virtually. The educator should share their screen with students and use Present mode so that one word is displayed at a time. Remind students that this assessment is not timed and that it is more important to read the word correctly rather than quickly. As students are reading, use the reading behavior annotations provided to take notes, such as whether the student self-corrected, waited before reading the word, or had an incorrect response. Noting incorrect responses can help you identify phonics patterns or skills for which students need support. Once you finish administering the assessment, score it using the scoring guidance from the assessment provider.

Spelling assessment

Purpose. This informal assessment requires students to spell words correctly by locating the words within their memories or analyzing the phonemes within a word and choosing letters to represent those sounds. Each list in this tool becomes increasingly complex. Results of this assessment may help educators to identify students’ letter–sound connections and determine which phase (i.e., pre-, partial-, full-, or consolidated-alphabetic phase) students are in.

What teachers will need	What students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online platform for meeting individually with students (e.g., Zoom, Google Hangouts) • One spelling assessment packet per student (printed) • Pen for grading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the online platform • Blank piece of paper divided into three columns • Writing utensil

Process for administering virtually. During this assessment, stop sharing your screen, but continue to share your webcam so that students can clearly see your face. Students should divide their papers into three columns so that they are ready to complete all three parts of the assessment (i.e., partial, full, and consolidated alphabetic) if needed. Note that, depending on students’ results, completing all three parts may not be necessary. Direct students to look at your mouth so that students can see the enunciation of each word. Read the word, read the sentence using the word in context, and then read the word again. You may need to repeat the word several times so that students can hear the proper pronunciation. Have students tell you how they spelled each word so that you can determine whether to administer the next, more challenging list. After you finish administering the assessment, have students’ parents or guardians take a picture or scan students’ work so that you can score the work using the scoring guidance from the assessment provider.

Video tutorial

In the video below, Krysta walks through how to virtually implement the decoding assessment.

- [EL Skills Remote Assessment Tutorial](#)