

Test of Morphological Structure

The *Test of Morphological Structure (TMS)* is an “experimental measure designed to assess students’ awareness of the relations of base and derived forms” (Carlisle, 2000, p. 175). This informal assessment was used to investigate the relationship between third grade and fifth-grade students’ morphological awareness to word reading and reading comprehension. Within this study, Carlisle (2000) showed that “awareness of structure was significantly related to the ability to define morphologically complex words” (p. 169). In addition the contribution of the performance on morphology tasks to reading comprehension was significant for both third and fifth graders, although stronger for fifth than third grade students.

Although this measure has yet to be normed or standardized (as of Feb. 2013), results from this measure may provide insights into intermediate students’ morphological awareness. As found in the work of Carlisle (2000) and multiple others (Carlisle, 2010; Larsen & Nippold, 2007; Nagy, Berninger, & Abbott, 2006), determining students’ understanding of morphology may provide a link to possible causes of difficulties in comprehension, and potential solutions to supporting students’ vocabulary and comprehension development.

The assessment that follows is composed of two parts; the first (*Decomposition*) requires students to determine the root of each derived word in order to finish sentences. The second part (*Derivation*) requires students to produce a derived word to finish a sentence, which has been found to be more challenging for students. Words were carefully selected in order to balance frequency, transparency of word relation (i.e. *reason* and *reasonable*), and shift of word relation (i.e., *produce* and *production*) within and among the two parts of the assessment.

Due to the experimental nature of this assessment, grade level norms are not provided, nor should they be inferred from the results. Instead, it is recommended that users analyze the data for the following trends:

- Significant differences between skills in decomposition vs. derivation tasks
- Significant differences between accuracy of answers in transparent word relations vs. shift of word relations
- Appropriateness of incorrect answers (i.e., does the student identify and use similar roots and/or logical affixes)
- Familiarity with the meaning of high frequency derived or root words appropriate for the student’s age/grade level

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Child's Name _____ Age/Grade Level _____

Administered By _____ Date _____

Part 1: Decomposition

For the following items, read aloud the "Target Word" and then the "Target Sentence", pausing at the end to elicit the child's response of one word that completes the sentence. If the child's response does not match the correct response, record his/her response in the "Student Response" column in the chart below. If the student does not respond, ask if he/she would like the item to be repeated or if he/she would like to pass, and then return to the item later.

Directions to the Student: "I am going to read aloud a word and then a sentence with a missing word. The missing word is similar, but not the same as the first word I read aloud. Please tell me what word you think fits best in each sentence. We'll start with two practice items: *Driver*.

Children are too young to _____. A word that is similar to *driver* but not the same, and makes sense in this sentence is *drive*. Here's another practice item. This time I'd like you to try it: *Improvement. My teacher wants my spelling to _____.* What word do you think makes sense to complete my sentence? (*improve*) (If the child does not respond or is incorrect, provide the correct response and remind the student of the Target Word, *improvement*.)

For each item, remember to think about the first word I read and then a similar word that makes sense in the sentence. If you cannot think of the answer, you can say "pass" or "I don't know", and we will go on to the next item. After I've read all the items, we will return to any you passed so you can try them again. Please let me know if you need me to repeat any items."

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Part 1: Decomposition

Target Word	Target Sentence	Correct Response	Score (+ or o)	Student Response (if incorrect)
1. growth	She wanted her plant to _____.	grow		
2. dryer	Hang the wet clothes there to _____.	dry		
3. variable	The time of his arrival did not _____.	vary		
4. width	The mouth of the river is very _____.	wide		
5. density	The smoke in the room was very _____.	dense		
6. discussion	The friends have a lot to _____.	discuss		
7. famous	The actor will achieve much _____.	fame		
8. description	The picture is hard to _____.	describe		
9. fifth	The boy counted from one to _____.	five		
10. movement	He knew he had to _____.	move		
11. strength	The girl was very _____.	strong		
12. decision	The boy found it hard to _____.	decide		
13. popularity	The girl wants to be _____.	popular		
14. runner	How fast can she _____?	run		
15. publicity	His views were made _____.	public		
16. difference	Do their opinions _____?	differ		
17. originality	That painting is very _____.	original		
18. agreeable	On that topic, we do not _____.	agree		
19. courageous	The man showed great _____.	courage		
20. admission	How many people will they _____?	admit		
21. dangerous	Are the children in any _____?	danger		
22. introduction	He had three friends to _____.	introduce		

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Part 1: Decomposition (cont.)

Target Word	Target Sentence	Correct Response	Score (+ or o)	Student Response (if incorrect)
23.baker	My grandfather loved to _____.	bake		
24.division	The cake is hard to _____.	divide		
25.guidance	The map was her _____.	guide		
26.continuous	How long will the storm _____?	continue		
27.solution	The test item was hard to _____.	solve		
28.acceptance	Is that an offer you can _____?	accept		
Correct Transparent Word Relation Items (Unshaded)			/14	
Correct Shift Word Relation Items (Shaded)			/14	
Total Number Correct			/28	

Notes:

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Part 2: Derivation

For the following items, read aloud the “Target Word” and then the “Target Sentence”, pausing at the end to elicit the child’s response of one word that completes the sentence. If the child’s response does not match the correct response, record his/her response in the “Student Response” column in the chart below. If the student does not respond, ask if he/she would like the item to be repeated or if he/she would like to pass, and then return to the item later.

Directions to the Student: “I am going to read aloud a word and then a sentence with a missing word. The missing word is similar but not the same as the first word I read aloud. Please tell me what word you think fits best in each sentence. We’ll start with two practice items: The word is: *Farm*. The sentence is: *My uncle is a _____*. A word that is similar to *farm* and makes sense in this sentence is *farmer*. Here’s another practice item. This time I’d like you to try: *Help*. *My sister does lots of chores and is very _____*. What word do you think makes sense to complete my sentence? (*helpful*) (If the child does not respond or is incorrect, provide the correct response and remind the student of the Target Word, *help*.)

For each item, remember to think about the first word I read and then a similar word that makes sense in the sentence. If you cannot think of the answer, you can say “pass” or “I don’t know”, and we will go on to the next item. After I’ve read all the items, we will return to any you passed so you can try them again. Please let me know if you need me to repeat any items.

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Part 2: Derivation

Target Word	Target Sentence	Correct Response	Score (+ or o)	Student Response (if incorrect)
1. warm	He chose the jacket for its _____.	warmth		
2. teach	He was a very good _____.	teacher		
3. permit	Her father would not give _____.	permission		
4. profit	Selling lemonade in the summer is _____.	profitable		
5. appear	He cared about his _____.	appearance		
6. express	'OK' is a common _____.	expression		
7. seven	The team came in _____.	seventh		
8. remark	The speed of the car was _____.	remarkable		
9. protect	She wore a helmet for _____.	protection		
10. perform	Tonight is the last _____.	performance		
11. expand	The company planned an _____.	expansion		
12. revise	This paper is his second _____.	revision		
13. reason	Her argument was quite _____.	reasonable		
14. major	He won the vote by a _____.	majority		
15. explain	She gave a long _____.	explanation		
16. equal	Boys and girls should be treated with _____.	equality		
17. long	They measured the ladder's _____.	length		
18. adventure	The trip sounded _____.	adventurous		
19. combine	The foods were a good _____.	combination		
20. deep	The lake was well known for its _____.	depth		
21. swim	She is a strong _____.	swimmer		
22. human	The kind man was known for his _____.	humanity		

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Part 2: Derivation (cont.)

Target Word	Target Sentence	Correct Response	Score (+ or o)	Student Response (if incorrect)
23.wash	Put the laundry in the _____.	washer		
24.humor	The story was quite _____.	humorous		
25.assist	The teacher will give you _____.	assistance		
26.mystery	The dark glasses made the man look _____.	mysterious		
27.produce	The play was a grand _____.	production		
28.glory	The view from the hilltop was _____.	glorious		
Correct Transparent Word Relation Items (Unshaded)			/14	
Correct Shift Word Relation Items (Shaded)			/14	
Total Number Correct			/ 28	

Notes: