

Assessment Strategies for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Age levels: 5 -7; 8- 10; 11+



1 Sustained Attention Reading Task



Sustained Attention Reading Task

2 Listening Comprehension Test



Listening Comprehension Test

3 Task Completion & Observation



Task Completion & Persistence Observation

4 Multi-Step Instruction Following Test



Multi-Step Instruction Following Test

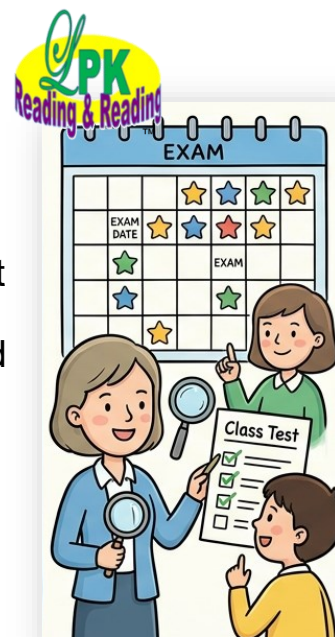
5 Reading Speed & Accuracy Check



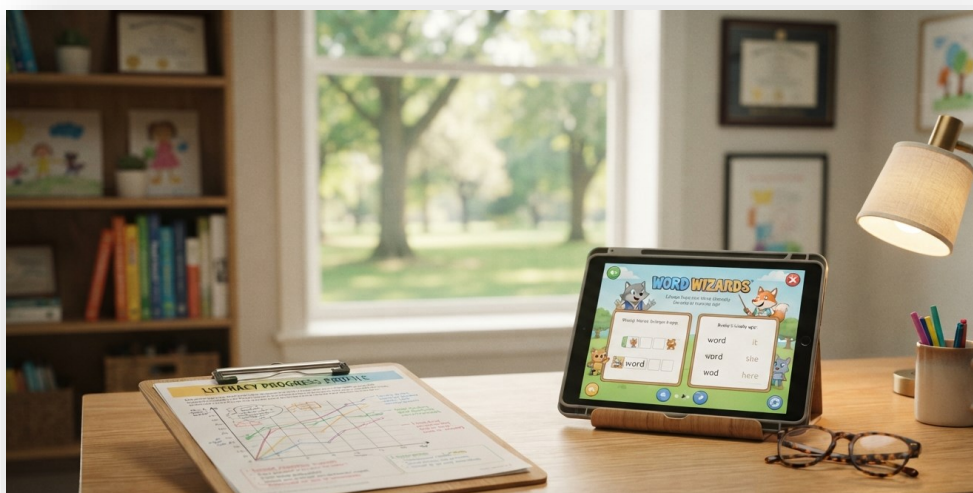
Reading Speed & Accuracy Check

Assessment Strategies for ADHD & Literacy

Assessing reading and literacy skills in students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) requires an approach that accounts for variations in sustained focus, working memory, and executive functioning. Traditional, long-form assessments often capture a student's level of fatigue or distractibility rather than their actual reading comprehension or decoding ability.



The purpose of targeted ADHD literacy assessments is to evaluate core reading skills through structured, high-engagement formats that minimize cognitive overload. For the **creative resource teacher**, these tools provide clear, actionable data to tailor classroom accommodations and instructional strategies.



For the **learning student**, they reduce anxiety and offer manageable, clear benchmarks where they can demonstrate their true abilities. For the **hopeful parent**, these transparent assessment methods provide intuitive insights into their child's progress, making it easier to support learning strategies at home without frustration.

Assessment Strategies



1. Sustained Attention

Measures how long a student can maintain active focus on a short reading passage before off-task behaviors or loss of comprehension occur.

Early Childhood (Ages 5–7): "Focus Stopwatches"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Set a timer while the student reads a 3–4 sentence illustrated story. Mark the point where the student loses place, fidgets significantly, or stops.
- **Parent Connection:** Parents use a similar 2-minute "story burst" at home, praising the child for staying on the page until the timer dings.

Elementary (Ages 8–10): "Chunk & Check"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Provide a page broken into 3 distinct, visually separated paragraphs. The student reads one paragraph and places a sticker on it before moving to the next.
- **Parent Connection:** Parents can use bookmark strips at home to cover up future paragraphs, helping the child focus solely on the active section.

Middle/High School (Ages 11+): "Interval Sprint Tracks"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Have the student read a passage using a 5-minute Pomodoro-style interval, tracking how many words or paragraphs they accurately process per sprint.
- **Parent Connection:** Parents encourage study sessions split into 10-minute focus blocks followed by 2-minute movement breaks.

Assessment Strategies



2. Listening Comprehension Test

Assesses the ability to process, retain, and recall spoken language without the added cognitive load of decoding written text.

Early Childhood (Ages 5–7): "Read & Draw"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Read a short 3-sentence scenario aloud. Ask the child to draw the main character doing the specific action described.
- **Parent Connection:** Parents read a bedtime story line and ask their child to act out or draw what just happened.

Elementary (Ages 8–10): "Story Detective Cards"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Read a short passage aloud. Give the student 3 visual picture cards representing key plot events to arrange in correct chronological order.
- **Parent Connection:** While listening to an audiobook or story on a ride home, parents ask 2–3 "Who, What, Where" quick-check questions.

Middle/High School (Ages 11+): "Podcast & Note-Dotting"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Play a 3-minute educational audio clip. Students use a bulleted template to jot down 3 main facts while listening.
- **Parent Connection:** Parents listen to a short news article or podcast snippet with their teen and ask for a 30-second summary.

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Assessment Strategies



3. Task Completion & Persistence Observation

A structured observational checklist to track independent work habits, tool management, and task follow-through.

Age Level	Observational Focus	Teacher Assessment Tool	Parent Home Strategy
Early Childhood (Ages 5–7)	Getting started quickly & staying in seat during a short literacy task.	A 3-icon visual checklist (Start - Read - Done) marked with stamps upon completion.	Use a simple picture chart at home for evening reading time routines.
Elementary (Ages 8–10)	Managing distractions and completing a full worksheet page.	A 5-item tracking rubric monitoring start time, break requests, and final task delivery.	Set up a clear workspace at home free of visual clutter with a simple task-completion checklist.
Middle/High School (Ages 11+)	Self-monitoring, pacing, and completing multi-page reading assignments.	A self-assessment rubric where the student predicts task duration and logs actual completion time.	Review weekly assignment planners together to celebrate completed reading goals.

Assessment Strategies



4. Multi-Step Instruction Following Test

Evaluates working memory and executive functioning when executing sequential reading and writing directions.

Early Childhood (Ages 5–7): "Color, Circle, Cover"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Give 2-step oral/visual tasks (e.g., *"Circle the word 'cat' in green, then cover it with a blue counter."*).
- **Parent Connection:** Practice 2-step daily directions at home (e.g., *"Grab your book, then open to page 5."*).

Elementary (Ages 8–10): "Text Detective Quests"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Provide a printed card with 3 written instructions (e.g., *1. Underline the main character. 2. Box the action verb. 3. Star the ending.*).
- **Parent Connection:** Have the student highlight steps on homework instruction sheets before starting the task.

Middle/High School (Ages 11+): "Protocol Checklists"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Provide a multi-step analytical reading checklist (e.g., *Read - Annotate main argument - Identify 2 supporting details - Summarize in margin*).
- **Parent Connection:** Prompt teens to use check-boxes on long-term project outlines to track completed sub-tasks.

Assessment Strategies



5. Reading Speed & Accuracy Check

Monitors decoding fluency and tracks tracking errors, such as skipped words, dropped lines, or misread endings.

Early Childhood (Ages 5–7): "Pointer-Pacing Fluency"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Use a finger tracker or high-visibility tracking tool while the child reads a 20-word passage to observe tracking precision and missed words.
- **Parent Connection:** Guide reading at home using a bright bookmark or finger pointer under each word.

Elementary (Ages 8–10): "Timed Paired Reading"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Conduct a 1-minute oral reading cold check, noting skips or insertions, followed by a warm-read re-check to measure accuracy improvements.
- **Parent Connection:** Have the child read a short paragraph aloud once, pause for a quick high-five, and read it a second time for smoother flow.

Middle/High School (Ages 11+): "Self-Correction Audio Logs"

- **Teacher Implementation:** Student records themselves reading a 200-word passage aloud, then listens back while following the text to mark their own skipping or misread errors.
- **Parent Connection:** Encourage teens to use text-to-speech tools to listen back to their written work or follow along with audiobooks.

Assessment Strategies

Conclusion



Assessing literacy in students with ADHD requires balancing rigor with adaptability. By breaking reading tasks into manageable intervals, integrating multi-sensory formats, and tracking persistence alongside comprehension, educators can obtain an accurate picture of a student's capabilities.

When teachers and parents align using these easy-to-understand, structured assessment strategies, students with ADHD receive the consistent support they need to build confidence, improve focus, and develop strong, lifelong reading skills.

