

# Pre-Tutoring Assessment for Sam Weston Ronald Dennis

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**Date of Testing:** April 27th, 2018  
**Date of Birth:** December 29th, 2008  
**Age at Time of Test:** 9 years, 3 months.  
**Grade Level at Time of Test:** 3.

## Introduction:

An important part of our personalized tutoring service is our assessment of each new student. This suite of tests allowed me to interact with Sam and observe, not only his performance, but also how he tackled each one. These tests assess a range of skills, from the ability to segment words, to advanced vocabulary comprehension.

## Executive Summary:

After our parent conference and processing Sam's assessments, Sam's listening comprehension was found to be good, but his reading comprehension is being challenged by his obvious decoding and fluency difficulties. Sam would appear to have what is termed a double deficit; affecting both phonological and phonemic awareness, and fluency. A student that demonstrates deficits in both these areas can find the remediation process a challenge, and progress may be slower as a result. More practice is required to make the same progress as a student with a deficit in just one of these areas. However, there is no reason he cannot

learn to read, write, and spell, with sufficient effort from him and those who are supporting him.

Despite these challenges Sam is a super young man with some great strengths; not least his spatial and kinesthetic skills. He is curious and highly verbal, and his desire to lead should be encouraged. I plan to leverage these strengths to develop his weaker academic skills.

Appendix 2 is a checklist of the specific teaching that should be covered.

## **Tests Conducted:**

### **Phonological Awareness**

The ability to distinguish individual words, syllables and phonemes<sup>1</sup> is an important component of fluent reading. In Sam's case, the morphological (meaning) pathway is reasonably developed, but the phonological path is weak and is hampering Sam's ability to decode words and encode them for spelling.

### **Decoding Surveys**

These measured Sam's ability to read a selection of real and nonsense words. They provide insight into his sight word vocabulary, knowledge of graphemes, and pronunciation choices.

### **Graded High Frequency Words, and San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Level.**

These survey the student's ability to decode a set of words that are in common use at each grade level. This demonstrated that Sam is an independent reader at a 1st grade reading level, but 2nd grade reading text is currently too challenging and would cause him a lot of frustration if he were left to read it alone.

The Graded High Frequency words again demonstrated that Sam was at a benchmark level for 1st grade words, but words presented to him at a second and third grade level require some support to enable him to learn them successfully.

### **MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures**

Using oral reading of passages calibrated to reflect the difficulty of each grade level, it is possible to obtain an objective measure of fluency in terms of correct and incorrect words per

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<sup>1</sup> Phonemes are the approximately 44 basic sounds that make up the entirety of English words.

minute. This in turn provides an estimate of which material would be too easy or too challenging for a student.

## **RAN/RAS**

Rapid Automatized Naming/Rapid Alternating Stimulus tests measure how quickly our minds can recognize and name common objects, colors, numbers, and letters. A deficiency in this skill makes reading an exhausting exercise, and can seriously impair fluency.

## **Phonics Survey**

The ability to sound out unfamiliar or new words is an essential part of being an accomplished reader. Sam has a number of gaps in his knowledge in terms of consonant sounds and the short vowel sounds. This is impacting his ability to even sound out simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words.

## **Core Vocabulary Screening**

This is an assessment of word meaning that involves selecting the best synonym for a given word, from three possible choices. The test is untimed, and so provides another measure of reading ability in terms of grade level.

## **Reading Maze**

This timed test measures a student's silent reading fluency and comprehension, using passages in which every 7th word is replaced by a choice of three words in parentheses. The student should circle the word that makes the most sense in the context of the text. Passages are provided that reflect different grade levels.

The results are calculated by counting the number of correct word choices made in 3 minutes.

## **Unaided Writing**

Students are asked to spend five minutes putting their thoughts on paper, from a choice of topics. Parents can help with discussion beforehand, but the writing needs to be all their own work.

The assessment is based on quantitative measurements, as you will see in the results, but this can provide information on multiple levels: Letter formation, spelling, the ability to plan a sentence mentally and then commit it to paper, punctuation, capitalization and grammar, to name a few.

# Interpretation of Results and Tutoring Plan

This is just intended to be an overview of the tutoring plan. More detail will be provided in the Scope and Sequence documents.

Each lesson will incorporate some of the following, at least in the beginning. As we progress I may alternate some of the following to make the best use of lesson time and Sam's ability to remain focused. One-to-one teaching can be exhausting:

- Phonemic awareness, blending and segmentation. The tests indicated where Sam has some challenges: Segmentation of words into syllables, and syllables into phonemes. I will aim to provide 10 minutes of instruction and practice in this area at the start of each lesson. He can further practice these skills at home using the "HearBuilder" program.
- Reading (Decoding). We will start by developing knowledge of the consonant and short vowel sounds, recognizing syllables, and the blends that occur at the beginning and ends of words. Some simple rules such as the Cat/Kite Rule will be covered at this level. We shall then move to the third column of the *Suggested Order & Checklist for Phonemes, Rules and Patterns* and then on to the *Scope and Sequence for Orton-Gillingham Level 1*, when Sam is ready to deal with syllabication and multi-syllable words.
  - As Sam's phonic knowledge is built I will present him with connected text (decodable readers suitable for his age and reading ability) to help him practice that knowledge.
  - Sam should also practice his "ear reading" using the services of *Learning Ally* so he can read books at his grade level and build his fluency, vocabulary and comprehension skills.
  - I will supply you with a copy of all these scope and sequence documents, and they each will be available in his tutoring folder. We will also be practising reading irregular words.
- Spelling (Encoding). Reading and spelling are not bidirectional skills. If you can spell a word, you can read it, but the ability to read a word does not imply it can be spelled correctly. Sam will follow the same progression for this as for reading. Words that don't follow the common phonetic rules, I'll be teaching as "Red Words."
- Writing. I'll work on Sam's reversals using the *Reversing Reversal* resources.

- I recommend the inexpensive *Handwriting Without Tears* **Wet Dry Try** app to practice correctly forming the lower and upper case letters. I will use many of the hands-on *Handwriting Without Tears* (HWT) materials to practice letter formation but most of the practice will need to take place at home.
- After this we will move to working through the HWT print book for practice, and at the same time Sam can start the *Keyboarding Without Tears* program.
- From the outset, Sam will be asked to spell words and write short dictated sentences during our sessions. It is during these times I will ask him to review correct capitalization, his handwriting, spacing, reversals, punctuation, and spelling.

I will provide exercises to reinforce these concepts outside of lesson time, but I do understand that Sam's schedule is already crowded, especially while school is in session.

Little and often is most effective. A good target is 20 minutes per day, at least for the repetitive parts.

# Appendix 1: Test Results

## Phonemic Awareness

Test Name	Raw Score	Notes
Rhyming	16/16	Sam is good at rhyming, although he thought carefully before giving me an answer, so automaticity was an issue.
Onset and rime	8/8	
Phoneme blending	8/8	3 sounds such as /t/, /a/, /p/.
Phoneme deletion: Initial sound	4/5	Grade 3+ Intensive help required in this area.
Phoneme deletion: First sound of consonant blend.	0/5	Grade 3+ Intensive help required in this area. Sam removed both parts of the beginning blend or refused to attempt this.
Phoneme deletion: Final sound	5/5	
Phoneme deletion: Embedded sound in consonant blend.	3/5	Grade 3 + Intensive help required in this area. For example "best" without /s/ should be "bet."
Segmentation tests: Part 1, providing a count of number of words/syllables/ phonemes.	Sentences->words: 5/5 Words->syllables: 8/8 Words into phonemes: 8/10	Sam scored at a strategic level for first grade. He would benefit from work at the syllable and phoneme level.
Segmentation tests: Part 2 identifying individual phonemes in words.	10/15	Some intensive remediation is required. This is important for making spelling choices.

## Decoding Surveys:

Beginning Survey: Sam failed to read enough words correctly on this survey to meet the benchmark for his grade. He read 34 words correctly out of a possible 50 words. 48 correct words represents benchmark.

## Approximate Reading Level Assessment using the San Diego Quick Assessment.

Grade Level of Words	Score out of 10	Competency
Preprimer	9	Independent
Primer	10	Independent
Grade 1	9	Independent
Grade 2	3	Frustration

## RAN/RAS

The raw score is the time taken to name all 50 items in the test. This is then ranked using a detailed set of tables for each age range. The number of errors made is not taken into account unless it is severe, in which case the examiner should probably be running a different test altogether. The results indicate Sam has a delay recalling letters and digits which will impact his reading speed and fluency.

Test	Time in seconds	Percentile Rank	Descriptive Rating
Objects	59	8	Poor
Colors	53	23	Below Average
Digits	39	14	Below Average
Letters	42	6	Poor
Letters and digits	42	23	Below Average
Letters, digits, colors	44	27	Average

## MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures

Sam was asked to read a passage at a Grade 1 level, out-loud. The test allows calculation of words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) and words-incorrect-per-minute (WIPM) and provides a measure of reading accuracy. Sam answered some comprehension questions following the reading of this passage. The 3rd grade passage was also read to Sam, he then answered some comprehension questions.

The results are tabulated below.

Level	WCPM	WIPM	Accuracy	Notes
1	56	7	89% (frustration)	Sam made a number of words plural by appending an 's', or dropping the plural 's' when it was present, and he added the suffix '-ing' in one case. He tended to ignore punctuation and when he didn't know a word he often substituted it for one that began with the same initial letter. Despite all this, he was attending to the meaning of what he was reading and was aware when his substitution did not make sense.

Sam's reading speed is around the 10th-25th percentile range for a First Grade reading level. He often hesitated and sounded out many words while reading this passage. His reading rate and decoding ability are impacting his ability to *read for information*. That said, I was surprised how much meaning he got from this passage, despite his obvious difficulties. When Sam was read the 3rd grade passage, he had no difficulty answering questions about the text and beyond it. He demonstrated good background knowledge. That said he, along with **almost all** elementary school students, will gain additional meaning from listening while simultaneously reading along with the text.

### Spelling Dictation.

Sam has major difficulties making the correct grapheme choices when spelling. His spelling is around a First Grade level. I can also see that his phonemic weaknesses play a part in this area. While spelling by sounding out is the weakest driver for spelling choices, it is still important in selecting the correct vowels, and consonant blends. Sam is unaware of any of the basic spelling rules. I won't highlight all the errors he made, but I have used them in



selecting the foundational spelling rules in the checklist in Appendix 2. I also noted while Sam was undergoing this assessment, he mixed capitals and lower case letters in his writing, as well as not correctly spacing his words. He forms many of his letters incorrectly from the bottom up. He didn't angle his paper, which makes it hard to write in a straight line. His pencil grip appears to be good, but he doesn't always use his free hand to steady the paper.

## Phonics Survey

The ability to sound out unfamiliar or new words is an essential part of being an accomplished reader. Sam has many gaps in his knowledge in this area. I did not complete the whole survey for this reason.

### Letter Names

Sam is comfortable with all the consonant names.

### Consonant Sounds

Sam made a number of mistakes in this area, which I have noted in Appendix 2 under the Grapheme to Phoneme Checklist.

### Vowel Sounds

Sam knew his long vowel sounds but short vowel sound discrimination and knowledge was really lacking. The subsequent test of short vowels in closed consonant vowel consonant (CVC) syllables further confirmed this difficulty. Explicit teaching is necessary to correct this.

## Core Vocabulary Screening

This is an assessment of word meaning that involves selecting the best synonym for a given word, from three possible choices. Scores of 23 and above are considered *benchmark*, meaning a student can access material at that level with a reasonable chance of making sense of it. A score of 15-22 (*strategic*) means they may have some difficulty without receiving additional input. Scores of 14 and below require intensive help.

Grade Level	Score	Rating
1	7/30	Intensive

## Reading Maze

This timed test measures a student's silent reading fluency and comprehension, using passages in which every 7th word is replaced by a choice three of words in parentheses.

For each grade, a calibration table indicates whether the student is reading at or below benchmark.

The results are tabulated below.

Grade level	Words correct in 3 minutes	Performance
2	3	Intensive

The results indicated that at 2nd grade, below Sam's limit of comprehension, his decoding and reading fluency will present a challenge in a time-limited situation. For these situations, he should be using assistive technology such as the services that Learning Ally provide, or some other form of text to speech.

## Unaided Writing

The raw results from this exercise are tabulated below, after which I have listed some additional observations:

Measurement	Score	Notes
Total words written (TWW)	40	
Total letters written (TLW)	130	26 letters per minute: Performing at a first grade level in terms of writing fluency.
Words spelled correctly (WSC)	19	
Correct writing sequences	0/41	A complex measurement involving accuracy of spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation.
Spelling accuracy	48%	
Average word length	3.25	News reports average around 5 characters/word.
Overall accuracy	0%	Considering spelling, punctuation and usage.

Students with dysgraphia face several hurdles with writing: Not just letter formation, but also that the cognitive effort required leaves little working memory available for sentence composition, spelling, and grammar.

Handwriting remediation involves teaching the correct start points and sequences plus *lots* of practice. Sam really struggles in this area with mixing upper and lower case letters and spacing his words. The problem is that unless the practice is repetitive and cognitively simple, it is hard to develop automaticity.

# Appendix 2 Specific Tutoring Checklist

## Grapheme to Phoneme Checklist

This is a list of the graphemes that Sam will benefit from knowing in order to successfully sound out an unfamiliar CVC word.

Grapheme	Sound Choices
a	Sam gave a long e sound for this letter in a cvc word.
e	Sam confused the short e sound with the short i sound. In cvc words Sam sometimes gave a long e sound for this letter.
i	Sam gave a short o sound for this letter in a cvc word.
o	Sam confused the short o sound with the short u sound.
u	Sam gave the sound /yuh/ made by consonant y. He also gave a short o and i sound for this letter in cvc words he was presented with.
g	Sam gave the /j/ sound for this consonant.
q	Sam gave the sound /puh/ for q, which demonstrates a reversal issue.
l	Sam gave the short vowel sound /i/ for the consonant l.
f, v	I noted he added the /uh/ sound to the following phoneme sounds f, and v. We shall work on clipping his sounds.

## Spelling Rules

I shall endeavor to teach these essential, reliable and simple rules. Sam will learn far more than these as we progress through Orton-Gillingham Level 1, but this will be our starting point.

c/k/ck rules	Whether to use 'c', 'k', or 'ck' is well defined, with few exceptions. (Cat/Kite Rule & the 'soldier rule.')
ch/tch rule	Also known as the 'soldier rule'.
FLOSS rule	The letters 'f', 'l', 's', and 'z' are almost always doubled at the end of closed single syllable words.
Recognizing, spelling, and handling some simple suffixes.	

## **Punctuation and Capitalization**

I will cover basic punctuation, and capitalization. Grammar is covered by the Basic Writing Skills course which follows O-G Level 1.