





PHONEME BLENDING TASK

Instructions for Administration and Scoring

About the Test

What is Measured	This test measures phoneme awareness, and more specifically, the ability to synthesize (blend) sounds to make real words. To test the child's phoneme manipulation skills, the test items deliberately range from very simple two-phoneme words up to more complex, longer words of four phonemes.	
Age Range	Suitable for children in Reception Year to Year 3.	
Scoring (accuracy)	Only binary (i.e., correct/incorrect) accuracy is calculated for this task. If the child produces the correct target word, s/he gains one point, otherwise zero points. The task can be administered in full (10 items in Reception Year, 24 items otherwise), however, see the note in <i>Section 3 – Conducting the Test</i> (below) for the discontinuation rule.	
Norms	Grade norms are currently available for Reception Year to Year 2.	
Materials for Administration	Recording device Training pictures - SUN, SHEEP Phoneme Blending Score Sheet	 

Test Procedure

1. Test Introduction

Administrator says:

"We're going to play a guessing game with words. I am going to say the sounds of a secret word, and you have to join the sounds into one word to figure out what I've said. I'll show you what I mean." *[Administrator presents picture of a sun on the desk.]* "What is this?"

IF child answers correctly, SUN, the Administrator says:

"That's right".

IF the child does NOT produce the correct response, SUN, the Administrator says:

"Well, this a sun, say **SUN**". *[Administrator pays attention to how the child pronounces the word in order to make the segmentation later.]*

Administrator says:

"Now the sounds of the word sun are **S-U-N**. If you say the sounds **S-U-N** more quickly [*Administrator demonstrates this, pronouncing the phonemes, not the letter names*], they make the word **SUN**. Let's try another one." [*Administrator presents picture of a sheep.*] "What is this?"

IF child answers correctly, SHEEP, the Administrator says:

"That's right".

IF the child does NOT produce the correct response, SHEEP, the Administrator says:

"Well, this a sheep, say **SHEEP**". [*Administrator asks the child to repeat the word.*]

Administrator says:

"Now the sounds of the word sheep are **SH-EE-P**. If you say the sounds **SH-EE-P** more quickly [*Administrator demonstrates this pronouncing the phonemes, not the letter names*], they make the word **SHEEP**."

2. Practice Items

Practice Item 1

Administrator says:

"Now let's try some without the picture. I'll say the sounds of a secret word and you tell me what you think the word is. Listen carefully, **B-OO-T**" [*Administrator says the phonemes at a rate of 1 per second.*] "What do you think the word is?"

IF the child says the correct word, BOOT, the Administrator says:

"Well done, you've guessed the secret word".

IF the child does NOT know, the Administrator repeats the phonemes at the same rate (1 phoneme/s).

IF the child still does NOT know or guesses the wrong word, then the Administrator says the phonemes in quicker succession, but still with audible breaks between sounds, and asks the child to guess again. IF the child then says the correct word, BOOT, the Administrator says: "Well done, you've guessed the secret word".

IF the child does NOT produce the correct response, the Administrator says: "The word is **BOOT**, do you hear? **B-OO-T**, makes **BOOT**."

Practice Item 2

“Now let’s try one more. Listen carefully, **B-OY**” *[Administrator says the phonemes at a rate of 1 per second.]*

“What do you think the word is?”

IF the child says the correct word, BOY, the Administrator says:

“Well done, you’ve guessed the secret word”.

IF the child does NOT know, the Administrator repeats the phonemes at the same rate (1 phoneme/s).

IF the child does NOT know or guesses wrong, then the Administrator says the phonemes in quicker succession, but still with audible breaks between sounds, and asks the child to guess again. IF the child then says the correct word, BOY, the Administrator says: “Well done, you’ve guessed the secret word”. **IF the child does NOT produce the correct response, the Administrator says:** “The word is **BOY**, do you hear? **B-OY**, makes **BOY**.”

3. Test Items

Administrator says:

“Now we’ll try some for real. Listen very carefully to the sounds, and try to guess what secret words they make.”

Conducting the test:

- The Administrator should refer to the **Phoneme Blending Score Sheet** for the Test Items.
- If the child requires a repetition of the word, the Administrator can provide a **maximum of TWO repetitions** per item. Only repeat in cases where the child asks you to, or has clearly misheard you, or was interrupted.
- **Discontinue after six consecutive errors with no matches at all** (i.e., no overlap between the phonemes the child utters and the target ones). For example, if for the item **M-OO-N** the child responds incorrectly **MINCE PIES**, the answer is wrong but there is an overlap of two sounds **M** and **N** and hence the test continues. Errors also include non-responses, which should be marked with an forward slash [/], and failures to blend the sounds (when the child responds by repeating the segmented phonemes) even after being prompted to ‘put the sounds together’.

Scoring:

- The Administrator should score [1] for a correct answer and [0] for an incorrect answer.



A shortened version of the first 10 items should be administered to preschool and Reception Year. The full test should be administered to children from Year 1 onward.

