

Nonword Reading: Instructions for Use

Although it seems to be a quirk of some clinicians to make use of letter strings which are not real words, it turns out that nonwords are a useful tool with which to assess reading, spelling and auditory processing skills. This task requires nonwords to be read aloud. The set is derived from the words used in Letter Length Reading [29]. All are monosyllabic and vary in letter length from 3 to 6 letters.

Some patients with acquired dyslexia find it impossible, or almost impossible, to construct pronunciations for unfamiliar written letter strings (see chapter 8, concerning Deep and Phonological Dyslexia, in: Ellis, A.W. & Young, A.W. (1988) **Human Cognitive Neuropsychology**. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates). Even though patients who have difficulty with nonwords may be aware that the item is not a word, they may produce a visually similar real word error, or may simply fail to make a response.

Special Points:

Ensure that the patient understands that the materials to be read aloud are not real words, even though they look as if they could be and are perfectly pronounceable. Introduce the idea by suggesting, for example, that yead and suff could be new product names or street names.

Descriptive Statistics (for 32 control subjects):

3-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 5.77	Std. Dev. = 0.71
4-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 5.89	Std. Dev. = 0.43
5-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 5.57	Std. Dev. = 0.90
6-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 5.65	Std. Dev. = 0.85

Suggestions for Where to go next: If the subject finds this task difficult, test ability to repeat the items aloud [8]. If the subject is able to repeat the nonwords aloud, yet not read them aloud, it suggests that the problem is not simply one of output, but is more specific to reading. Test performance on homophony decision [28], in which the subject is required to assemble and match pronunciations of nonword pairs that either are, or are not, homophonous. If you are interested in why the subject is unable to read aloud nonwords, a good place to begin your investigation is with Funnell, E. (1983) **British Journal of Psychology**, 74, 159 - 180.

If the subject is able to read nonwords aloud, try performance with other variables on other reading tasks (eg. Regularity [35]).

Reading Task

These are made-up words. Can you tell me how you think they should be pronounced.

ked**bem****nar****cug****fon****lat****shid****boak****doop****birl****dusp****soaf****snite****hance****hoach****smode****glope****grest****dringe****squate****churse****thease****shoave****pretech**

Nonword Reading Task:

Marking Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

3-Letter		RT(s)	Response
1	ked		
2	bem		
3	nar		
4	cug		
5	fon		
6	lat		
Total Correct			
4-Letter			
1	shid		
2	boak		
3	doop		
4	bird		
5	dusp		
6	soaf		
Total Correct			
5-Letter			
1	snite		
2	hance		
3	hoach		
4	smode		
5	glope		
6	grest		
Total Correct			
6-Letter			
1	dringe		
2	squate		
3	churse		
4	thease		
5	shoave		
6	preth		
Total Correct			