

seems about appropriate for this particular story. Your beginning-of-the-year data may suggest that your students are reading at an adequate level to read the text independently.

But if your students are unable to read the text because it is beyond their reading level, you can still gather information about their strengths in each of the four skills strands if you read the text aloud to them. We all know that even though a student may struggle to decode (and therefore read harder texts), that does not mean that he or she is able to do higher-level skill work. Reading the story aloud helps ensure that student's reading levels do not get in the way of your assessment of their higher-level skills. Whether you choose to read the text aloud or allow students to read independently, it is important that each child has a copy of the text in his or her hands.

SCORING THE ASSESSMENTS

We originally planned that this would be an assessment that children could self-assess, and there certainly are many units for which self-assessment is appropriate. We've come to believe, however, that for the first two units of this year, the results will be vastly more accurate and the instruction clearer if you score this assessment and the one that follows it. This is, of course, up to you.

If your students have grown up in the traditions of the TCRWP, then using learning progressions and self-assessing will be nothing new to them. However, if your students are new to this kind of work, you might choose to do the scoring yourself, especially for the first performance assessment of the year. This will save time, and will allow you to get a bird's-eye sense of where students are in their skill development, and avoid any misassessment on students' part.

Some general advice for you about scoring your students' answers:

- Remember this is the start of fifth grade. Your students should not be doing end-of-fifth-grade level work at this point. Don't beat yourself up if most of their work is level 4 or below! And in fact, the worse your students do now, the easier it will be for them to lift the level of their work, thereby learning that with some elbow grease, they can get better and progress. They'll have time to revise their work on Day 3 of the unit, so if the work is a bit below fifth-grade level, go right ahead and score it as a fourth-grade level, knowing they'll revise.
- Spend some time with other teachers across your grade, norming your assessments of student work. Pull up one child's response, and have each person score that bit of work, doing this individually and privately. Underline the evidence in the response that supports the score. Then talk about your assessments until you come to consensus. If you can't settle on a shared judgment after five minutes, move on to another. Know that these conversations are worth their weight in gold as a vehicle for your own professional development. Even twenty minutes of this work is important.
- Study three things to help you: the rubric, the learning progression, and the sample responses. The primary difference between the rubric and the learning progression is the rubric has been made so as to be used as a scoring instrument. It tends to highlight the concrete, objective, tangible evidence rather than mind-sets and strategies. But the really important document is the learning progression.

If you can't understand the differences between one level and another, look up one more notch so that you get a sense for the direction in which the work should be headed.

- It could be that you should be scoring using the fifth- and sixth-grade rubrics, and not the fourth- and fifth grade rubrics. We tend to shift during the second half the year, but that is up to you. You could also decide to use a rubric with three levels on it. We have provided rubrics with multiple levels to help facilitate whichever scoring process you choose.
- We've created a set of sample responses to help you anticipate some of the work your students might do in response to each of the questions. Our aim is to give you examples that will help you to quickly assess your students' work as well as coach them toward revision and goal-setting. Of course, there is a wide variety of responses that would meet the criteria for each level. Your students' responses needn't and won't look exactly like ours.

DEBRIEFING THE ASSESSMENT AND SHARING FEEDBACK WITH STUDENTS

A Possible Teaching Session

It is tremendously important that you return your students' work on the performance assessments to them and help them spend a day getting to know how they did on those assessments and coming to understand the expectations on which they were assessed. We know that when children are given crystal clear goals, their progress moves into a whole new gear. The purpose of the initial assessment was really to accelerate students' growth, and for that to happen you need to return the work to them and help them feel as if they own it.

The following lesson is written as if you have assessed the students' work on the performance assessment. Plan from the start that you will devote this one day (and only this day) to showing kids your assessment of the performance assessment, to asking them to study the rubric to understand why you assessed them as you did, and to thinking about what they could do immediately to lift the level of their work (and their scores.)

There are three big goals for today. One is for as many students as possible to understand their scores by analyzing their own answers with the rubric in hand. There will be instances when you are scoring something that youngsters have never been taught (remember, this is a preassessment) so it is perfectly possible that sometimes a child won't really grasp what you would have wanted in lieu of the answer she gave, but at least she will be alerted to the fact that there's work to be done in that area.

The next thing you will want to teach kids to do is to use the learning progression to help themselves become more skilled. Last, you'll hope that students have some time to set goals and to make plans for reaching those goals.

You might also choose to give students the opportunity to self-assess. If you choose this option, you can adapt the following session. You can follow the first part of the session, in which you demonstrate how the scoring system works using an exemplar response. Then, set students up to work with a partner or in small groups to score their work, ideally organizing them by the approximate levels you think they will be.

If your students are new to reading workshop or to self-assessment, you might scaffold this experience more heavily. For instance, if you see a student giving himself a level 4 for one of his responses, you might say, “Hmm, . . . I think I would have circled level 3 for that. Why don’t you and your partner turn and try to figure it out together?” Or, “Readers, I’m noticing some of you are giving yourselves a level 5 for question number 3. Don’t forget that to score a level 5, you need to have discussed *two themes* and have given evidence that supports both.” Asking students to underline proof that they have accomplished the indicators at a certain level can be helpful, too, as it forces them to go in search of evidence to support their self-analysis. In this way, you challenge students to be extra tough on themselves as they self-assess their responses.

Getting Ready

In advance of the session, prepare:

- student rubrics—one copy per student
- one copy of the text for each student
- strands of the learning progression that match the rubrics—one copy per student
- sample scored student response, to use for demonstration
- the assessment questions, ready to display to the class using a document camera or other method.

You might start by gathering your readers and saying something like, “Readers, a few days ago I read you a story, ‘Stray,’ and then showed you a video about a Michigan football team. You answered questions about these two texts—questions that helped to reveal your strengths and next steps when it comes to the main skills we’ll be learning in this first unit of the year. Last night, I was going to sit down and assess your answers—but then it occurred to me that actually, the person who needs to look over your work, to weigh it against expectations for kids your age, and to think, ‘What’s working here? What’s not yet working? What are next steps?’ . . . is *you!*”

“So today, I thought I might ask you to switch from being students to being teachers. What I mean is that if you are willing, you will take a look at the work you did the other day and grade it. I brought all of my assessment materials into school with me, including a rubric and a learning progression that I think will be especially helpful. These materials are pretty fancy, but I think you are up for the challenge. What do you think?” We’ve found that students are always quite excited to take on this new role.

At this point, we suggest you offer to show the students *how to assess*. You’ll model looking at a bit of writing about reading, showing students how you hold it up against the indicators on the rubric. We recommend you create a quick response to one of the questions from the pre-assessment—one that has a few positive qualities but also some clear places for growth—and show students how you “grade” it using the rubric we’ve provided for you in the preassessment materials. Later, you’ll show students how to set goals for themselves using the full learning progression. Keep in mind that you will revisit these materials with the students in the days and weeks ahead, so don’t worry if they feel a bit unwieldy at first.

You might begin by saying something like this: “I’m going to show you how to score the preassessments and how to set goals from the results of that scoring.” Set students up to work with informal partnerships, asking them to remind each other who is Partner 1 and who is Partner 2. Before the partners work together to score one partner’s first answer, you’ll want to show them how to do it using the mock answer you created for this day.

“Readers, let’s work together to score Faith’s first answer,” you might say. “We’re going to use a rubric, which is a document specially designed for scoring purposes.” I held up the rubric page, and pointed to the strand Analyzing Parts of a Story in Relation to the Whole. “Then later, we’ll think, ‘What goals could Faith work on?’ For this we’ll use the learning progression because that has a lot more detail on it.” I held up the illustrated learning progression, pointing to the section on Analyzing Parts in Relation to the Whole. “Let’s practice as a class and then you’ll have a chance to work together to score Partner 1’s first answer.”

At this point, you will want to give out the rubrics and learning progressions. Children will score at different rates, and you’ll want those children who finish scoring quickly to be able to move right away to trying out the learning progression as a revision tool.

“Will you work alone to reread the first question you answered about ‘Stray’? The question was:

1. Reread lines 40–49 from “Stray” below. How is this part of the story important to the whole?

“Then read Faith’s answer.”

I think that this part of the story shows the problem. Doris wants to keep the dog but her parents won’t let her. She says things to try to change their minds.

“Think to yourself, ‘How strong is this answer?’ and then turn to the rubric for question 1. You’ll see that the first row on the rubric is for scoring part to whole questions.”

	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Analyzing Parts of a Story in Relation to the Whole	<input type="checkbox"/> When asked to talk about the importance of a part of the story to the whole story, I named the part or story element (the problem, the setting). <input type="checkbox"/> I wrote to explain how this part is important to the whole story. If it is the setting, for example, I think ‘How is this particular setting important to the story?’	<input type="checkbox"/> When asked to talk about the importance of a part of the story to the whole story, I named the part or story element (the problem, the setting). <input type="checkbox"/> I wrote to explain how this part is important to the whole story. If it is the setting, for example, I think ‘How is this particular setting important to the story?’	<input type="checkbox"/> I used literary language to write about how this part or story element is important to the whole story. <input type="checkbox"/> I discussed how this part supports a larger idea or theme in the text.

You might draw your finger across the first row of the rubric, showing students how the rubric progresses up the levels, from left to right. For students who have never used a rubric or learning progression before, you might also choose to read each indicator aloud, underlining what is new at each level.

You will want to give children a moment to work and refrain from helping them to do this work at first. If they want to score Faith higher than is merited, don't intervene. Let them go ahead and do so because this will allow you to later give a correction that some of your students will need. After a few minutes, you'll want to pause the children and give some tips in the form of voiceovers to help them assess in a way that is accountable to the rubric. Try to create an aura of great importance around this work.

"Class, I really need your attention. The work you are doing right now—as you assess Faith's work—is absolutely critical. You could look at Faith's answer and you *could* say, 'Did she write about how this part connects to a theme in the story? Nah, not really, but hey, she seems smart, she probably *could have done that*, and she sorta did it,' and then you could check her off as level 5. But Faith *didn't* actually do that work. You can't underline any evidence that shows she did that and did it super well. Here is my point. You do Faith no favors by saying 'Check, level 5,' even when actually it is not at that level. Because then Faith wouldn't have the opportunity to set a realistic goal for herself and see her work improve. You'd be denying her a chance to get smarter—to learn to do the best reading work she is capable of."

Then you may want to discuss Faith's work on the rubric a bit more, as a class, noting what she did and didn't do. You'll want to once again emphasize the importance of evidence. That is, when a child says, "She used the language of story elements," ask that child to back up his or her claim with evidence. You might have the whole class underline the part where Faith writes that this moment will be the "problem" in the story, for instance. Or, "Doris wants to keep the stray puppy but her dad probably won't let her" could serve as evidence that Faith considered how this one part might affect the rest of the story. In the end, most students will likely decide that Faith's answer is a level 3.

As students move to working in partnerships, encourage them to keep up the pace and to continue underlining or annotating evidence. Remember, the most important thing you can do is to help each of your students finish this assessment within today's workshop. Once they are done with the first question, they can move onto scoring others, in different categories. If you feel students need more help, you might choose to score another of Faith's answers as a class before asking partners to score their own. This will take more time, however, so you'll want to allow students to do this work independently as soon as they are able. Alternately, if students take on the scoring themselves, you'll want to circle around the meeting area or room and use the rubrics to give students tips about what to be looking for. For instance, when assessing Faith's response to question 2, which relates the strand Analyzing Author's Craft, you might give students a few reminders.

2. The author could have just written that Mr. Lacey decided to bring the dog back home. Instead, she wrote the scene she did. Explain why the author likely decided to write the story in this way. Use what you know about author's craft techniques and goals to support your response.

Faith's response to question 2:

The author stretched out this scene to surprise the reader. I thought that Mr. Lacey was taking the dog to the pound when the trunk slammed. But he brought it back! This is important because Doris gets to keep the dog.

Consider helping students along with a tip: "As you read Faith's response, don't forget that to be a level 3, a response has to note when an author does something that stands out and discuss *why* an author may have written in that way. Right now, check to see if you and your partner think she did that." The students might agree that Faith's use of the words *we think* points to her thinking about why Rylant may have written the text in that way. Then, continue on, "For a level 4, it is important for the reader to write about the craft the author uses, thinking about the author's purpose and to consider the goal the author may have been trying to achieve by using that craft technique. Talk to your partner. Do you think Faith did this?" Most students will signal negatively or suggest that she has only gestured at this. "Looks like Faith gets a level 3 for author's craft, too!"

You might take this opportunity to help students establish realistic expectations for their own work. Chances are, many of them will not even score in the level 4 range. As mentioned above, this does not mean that they *can't*, but simply that they didn't just yet. "Level 4s are pretty good for the start of the year," you might say. "That means that Faith is doing end-of-the-year fourth-grade work without *any* reminders or teaching."

Later, it will be invaluable to give students the opportunity to revise their initial responses using the learning progression. The opportunity to revise one or two of their preassessment responses will go a long way toward helping students understand the expectations you have for them. Students may not have time to revise all of their work. In fact, most will not. Don't worry: you will revisit this skill work and these progressions many times across this unit.

While the performance assessment will certainly help you anticipate small-group and individual needs across the upcoming unit, as well as measure student growth across the unit, we can't underscore the importance of ongoing, formative assessment throughout the unit. You'll find more on this in each day's conferring and small-group session.