



# assessing reading

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MULTIPLE MEASURES 2nd Edition  
*for kindergarten through twelfth grade*

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 CORE CONSORTIUM ON READING EXCELLENCE, INC.

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# C O N T E N T S

Introduction to Assessing Reading . . . . .	5
Assessment Sequences . . . . .	12
Diagnostic Plans . . . . .	14

## M U L T I P L E M E A S U R E S — 2 N D E D I T I O N

---

### Phonological Awareness

---

<b>CORE Phoneme Deletion Test</b> (GRADES K–3) . . . . .	19
• Initial Sound (LATE KINDERGARTEN, GRADE 1)	
• Final Sound (GRADE 1)	
• First Sound of a Consonant Blend (GRADE 2)	
• Embedded Sound of a Consonant Blend (GRADE 3)	

<b>CORE Phonological Segmentation Test</b> (GRADES K–1) . . . . .	25
• Sentences into Words	
• Words into Syllables	
• Words into Phonemes	

<b>CORE Phoneme Segmentation Test</b> (GRADES 2–12) . . . . .	30
---	----

<b>CORE Spanish Phonemic Awareness Test</b> (GRADES K–2) . . . . .	34
• Phoneme Oddity, KINDERGARTEN	
• Phoneme Oddity, GRADES 1–2	
• Phoneme Deletion	

---

### Decoding and Word Attack

---

<b>CORE Phonics Surveys</b> (GRADES K–12) . . . . .	41
• CORE Phonics Survey	
• CORE Spanish Phonics Survey	

<b>CORE Graded High-Frequency Word Survey</b> (GRADES K–4) . . . . .	63
--	----

<b>San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability</b> (GRADES K–II) . . . . .	68
--	----

<b>Spelling</b>	<b>CORE Spanish Spelling Inventory</b> (GRADES K–6) . . . . .73
<b>Fluency</b>	<b>MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures</b> (GRADES I–6) . . . . .77
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>CORE Vocabulary Screening</b> (GRADES I–8) . . . . .120
<b>Comprehension</b>	<b>Critchlow Spanish Verbal Language Scale</b> (GRADES K–8) . . . . .147
	<b>CORE Reading Maze Comprehension Test</b> (GRADES 2–10) . . . . .150

**A P P E N D I X**

<b>CORE Reading Assessment Profile Forms</b> . . . . .A2
• CORE Reading Assessment Profile, GRADE K
• CORE Reading Assessment Profile, GRADE I
• CORE Reading Assessment Profile, GRADE 2
• CORE Reading Assessment Profile, GRADE 3
• CORE Reading Assessment Profile, GRADES 4–8
• CORE Reading Assessment Profile, GRADES 9–12
<b>CORE Reading Assessment Class Records</b> . . . . .A8
• CORE Reading Assessment Class Record, GRADE K
• CORE Reading Assessment Class Record, GRADE I
• CORE Reading Assessment Class Record, GRADES 2–3
• CORE Reading Assessment Class Record, GRADES 4–8
• CORE Reading Assessment Class Record, GRADES 9–12
Performance Criteria for Fluency and Fluency Scores: A Discussion . . . .A18
<i>Howell et al.</i>
Assessment-Driven Instruction: A Systems Approach . . . . .A22
<i>Linda Diamond (from IDA Perspectives, Vol. 31, No. 4, Fall 2005, pp. 31–37)</i>
Resources for Assessing Reading . . . . .A27

# Introduction to Assessing Reading

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## Phonological Awareness

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- CORE Phoneme Deletion Test
  - CORE Phonological Segmentation Test
  - CORE Phoneme Segmentation Test
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## Decoding and Word Attack

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- CORE Phonics Survey
  - San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability
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## Vocabulary

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- CORE Graded High-Frequency Word Survey
  - CORE Vocabulary Screening
- 

## Comprehension

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- CORE Reading Maze Comprehension Test
- 

## Fluency

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- MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measure
- 

## Assessments in Spanish

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- CORE Spanish Phonemic Awareness Test
  - CORE Spanish Phonics Survey
  - CORE Spanish Spelling Inventory
  - Critchlow Spanish Verbal Language Scales
- 

**R**EADING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL TAUGHT IN school. For many students, however, it is neither easy nor straightforward. *Assessing Reading: Multiple Measures* contains a collection of formal and informal reading assessments for use with students in Grades K–12. These assessments assist the teacher in targeting areas of strength and weakness, in monitoring student reading development, and in planning appropriate instruction.

Unlike large-scale achievement tests, the majority of these assessments can be administered individually. Each assessment was selected because it measures an important research-based reading skill and because it is quick, reliable, and easy to use. Each assessment provides clear and accurate individual student information.

The assessments included in this book are informal assessments designed to measure specific skills critical to successful reading. Some of the assessments are curriculum-based, while others are criteria-based, depending on the purpose of the assessment. Similarly, some assessments target specific skills, some are instruments for broader screening, and some can be used for both types of assessment. Spanish assessments are provided for the early grades where many students may still be in bilingual programs or may be receiving Spanish primary language instruction before transitioning to English programs. Profile Forms and Class Records found in the Appendix provide an easy way for teachers to summarize assessment results.

In an effective reading program, assessment informs instruction. This is true for large groups as well as for individuals. Different assessment instruments serve different purposes. The specific purpose determines the particular instrument selected and when in the instructional sequence it is used.

In the primary grades, reading instruction includes teaching discrete skills. These specific skills and strategies tend to be “enabling” skills, providing the foundation for long-term outcomes such as fluency and comprehension. Because of the need for mastery of these underlying skills, effective reading assessment in the primary grades is frequent and specific.

In Grades 4–12, assessment plays a role in monitoring progress as well as in identifying causes of reading difficulties, especially for struggling adolescent readers. Unlike primary grade assessment, which begins with the most discrete skills, reading assessment for older students often starts broadly and then becomes more discrete in order to pinpoint particular reading subskills that might cause reading difficulty. As a result, assessment becomes increasingly more specific in nature.

To meet students’ various assessment requirements, schools should organize their assessment toolkits around four broad types of assessment: screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic (specific skills) assessment, and outcome assessment. In all cases, teachers need to understand the expected targets of mastery for individual skills in order to identify students at risk of difficulty and to tailor instruction to meet identified needs.

## Types and Frequency of Effective Assessment Systems

	Screening	Progress Monitoring	Diagnostic Assessment	Outcome Assessment
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning of year, middle of year, and end of year</li> <li>• Can be the same tool used for progress monitoring</li> <li>• Often curriculum-based like DIBELS or AIMSweb</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least three times a year</li> <li>• More frequent, to guide ongoing modification of the curriculum, particularly for students falling behind peers</li> <li>• Curriculum-based measurement and curriculum-embedded measurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If student fails to reach progress monitoring benchmarks</li> <li>• Tools that identify specific skill gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At end of year or major instructional sequence</li> <li>• State or district assessments</li> <li>• Can be same tools used for screening</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning of year and up to three times yearly</li> <li>• Can be the same tools used for progress monitoring</li> <li>• Often curriculum-based like DIBELS or AIMSweb</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least three times a year</li> <li>• More frequent, to guide ongoing modification of the curriculum, particularly for students falling behind peers</li> <li>• Curriculum-based measurement and curriculum-embedded measurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If student fails to reach progress monitoring benchmarks</li> <li>• Tools that identify specific skill gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At end of year or major instructional sequence</li> <li>• State or district assessments</li> <li>• Can be same tools used for screening</li> </ul>
<b>Grades 2 and 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning of year and up to three times yearly</li> <li>• Can be the same tools used for progress monitoring</li> <li>• Often curriculum-based like DIBELS or AIMSweb</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least three times a year</li> <li>• More frequent, to guide ongoing modification of the curriculum, particularly for students falling behind peers</li> <li>• Curriculum-based measurement and curriculum embedded measurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If student fails to reach progress monitoring benchmarks</li> <li>• Tools that identify specific skill gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At end of year or major instructional sequence</li> <li>• State or district assessments</li> <li>• Can be same tools used for screening</li> </ul>
<b>Grades 4 through 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning of year and beginning of term</li> <li>• Can be the same tools used for progress monitoring</li> <li>• For Grades 6 through 12, use prior year ending assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 2 to 3 times a year</li> <li>• More frequent, to guide ongoing modification of the curriculum, particularly for students falling behind peers</li> <li>• Curriculum-based measurement and curriculum embedded measurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If student fails to reach progress monitoring benchmarks</li> <li>• Tools that identify specific skill gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At end of year or major instructional sequence</li> <li>• State or district assessments</li> <li>• Can be same tools used for screening</li> </ul>

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## Types of Assessment

The Effective Assessment Systems chart on the previous page describes the types and frequency of assessments that should occur.

### SCREENING

*Screening* tests provide information about the knowledge and skill base of the student. They are useful for determining the most appropriate starting point for instruction and for planning instructional groups. Screening tests usually include formal and informal measures with clear mastery targets. In this book, there are screening tests for phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. Testing systems such as DIBELS and AIMSweb provide assessments that are both screening tests and progress monitoring tools. For older students, tests such as the *Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency* (Pro-Ed) may function similarly.

### PROGRESS MONITORING

*Progress monitoring* is ongoing. Examples of progress monitoring assessments are teacher observations, informal or formal tests, and curriculum tasks. Progress monitoring is used to determine whether students are making adequate progress, and also to determine whether instruction needs to be adjusted. Progress monitoring measures include curriculum-embedded assessments such as unit tests, which measure the extent to which students have learned the material taught in a specific reading program. They also include general or external measures for assessing critical reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary or comprehension, or for predicting success in meeting grade-level standards by the end of the year. Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) is an assessment tool that is often used for progress monitoring because it emphasizes repeated measurement over time. DIBELS and AIMSweb are some examples of ongoing progress monitoring systems. Ongoing progress monitoring may also include diagnostic tests that pinpoint the causes of a particular screening test result or a particular observed reading problem.

Progress monitoring serves to guide the specific focus of instruction. These tests are given at least three times a year to all students



in the primary grades. It is recommended that students who are beginning to fall behind their peers be assessed at least monthly, while students who have fallen considerably behind be assessed more frequently—every two weeks or even weekly. As with many progress monitoring instruments, further diagnostics may be necessary to inform accurate interpretation of results from these assessments.

#### DIAGNOSTIC (SPECIFIC SKILLS) ASSESSMENT

*Diagnostic (specific skills) assessment* can also be used for screening or progress monitoring. These tests identify students' specific strengths and weaknesses. Specific skills assessments should be given whenever a student is suspected of having difficulty learning what is being taught. Many of the tests in this book can serve as specific skills assessments.

#### OUTCOME ASSESSMENT

*Outcome assessment* is often used at the end of major units of instruction and at year's end. It provides data about exiting accomplishments and is useful for planning the next major segment of instruction and for determining changes to a school's curriculum. It also provides programmatic information for large groups of students. Outcome assessment usually leads to outcome evaluation, which represents a final judgment about a school's curriculum or about an individual student.

### Why Assess?

Reading is a complex process. Fluent reading is made up of two major domains: (1) the ability to decode or recognize individual written words, and (2) the ability to comprehend text as a whole unit. In order to identify student progress, to prevent reading difficulty from becoming entrenched, and to provide help to students with reading difficulties, teachers need to utilize assessments that isolate these two major components.

Many students fail to develop the decoding skill necessary for automatic word recognition because they are not aware that spoken words are composed of units of sound, or phonemes (Torgesen 2002). Because phonemic awareness is a strong correlate of reading skill, it is the basic (precursor) skill to be assessed in beginning readers (Ehri et al. 2001; Bishop 2003). Decoding skill

can also be directly assessed through tests of real and pseudowords (Share and Stanovich 1995; Carver 2003). Assessing student knowledge of high-frequency words is also useful, because recognition of words that appear often in printed text is crucial for comprehension (Zeno et al. 1995). According to Adams (1990), poorly developed word recognition skills are the most pervasive and debilitating source of reading difficulty.

Research consistently supports the relationship between reading fluency, which is the accurate reading of text at a conversational rate with appropriate prosody and reading comprehension (Rasinski 2004; Hudson et al. 2005). Slow, laborious reading taxes the reader's capacity to construct an ongoing interpretation of the passage. For this reason, fluency tests, which measure both rate and accuracy, are critical assessment measures.

Tests of reading comprehension measure comprehension of passages and whole text—the ultimate goal of reading. Such tests measure higher-order skills through the use of multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, or maze passage techniques. To demonstrate comprehension, the student must bring to bear word recognition proficiency, syntactic knowledge, background knowledge, comprehension monitoring, and reasoning skills. Finally, vocabulary warrants assessment because it is so closely correlated with comprehension. Studies of reading comprehension conducted in 15 different countries show that the correlation between vocabulary and reading comprehension ranges from .66 to .75 (Thorndike 1973; Joshi 1995; Biemiller 2005; Nagy 2005).

## When to Assess

The Assessment Sequence for Students in Grades K–3 begins with assessments of the most discrete skills. In contrast, the Assessment Sequence for Students in Grades 4–12 begins with the most global skills. The Diagnostic Plan for Upper Grades provides a diagnostic sequence for identifying sources of reading difficulty as well as instructional recommendations. The Assessment Sequence charts on the following pages are guidelines for a suggested testing schedule. It should be noted that many of the mea-

asures on the charts can be replaced by teacher observation, informal checklists, and materials that come with a basal reading series. Also note that not all students will need all assessments.

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## Assessment Sequence for Primary Grade Students (Grades K–3)

*See Diagnostic Plan for Grades 2–3 on page 14.*

	Kindergarten			Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3		
	Early	Mid.	Late	Early	Mid.	Late	Early	Mid.	Late	Early	Mid.	Late
Choose 1 of the following: ▶ <b>CORE Phoneme Deletion Test</b> ▶ <b>CORE Phonological Segmentation Test</b> ▶ <b>CORE Spanish Phonemic Awareness Test</b>									Only if indicated			Only if indicated
▶ <b>CORE Phoneme Segmentation Test</b>									Only if indicated			Only if indicated
▶ <b>CORE Phonics Survey</b> ▶ <b>CORE Spanish Phonics Survey</b>						Every 4–6 weeks until mastery; more frequently for at risk			Every 4–6 weeks until mastery; more frequently for at risk			Only if indicated
▶ <b>CORE Spanish Spelling Inventory</b>			Late			3 times a year			3 times a year			3 times a year
▶ <b>CORE Graded High Frequency Word Survey</b>			Middle			Every 4–6 weeks until mastery			Every 4–6 weeks until mastery			Every 4–6 weeks until mastery
▶ <b>San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability</b>									If desired			If desired
▶ <b>Critchlow Spanish Verbal Language Scales</b>						Every 4–6 weeks until mastery			Every 4–6 weeks until mastery			Every 4–6 weeks until mastery
▶ <b>CORE Vocabulary Screening</b>						2 times a year			3 times a year			3 times a year
▶ <b>MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measure</b>						Winter and Spring; at least 2 times per month for at risk			3 times a year; at least 2 times per month for at risk			3 times a year; at least 2 times per month for at risk
▶ <b>CORE Reading Maze Comprehension</b>	n/a					n/a			3 times a year			3 times a year

## Assessment Sequence for Upper Grade Students (Grades 4–12)

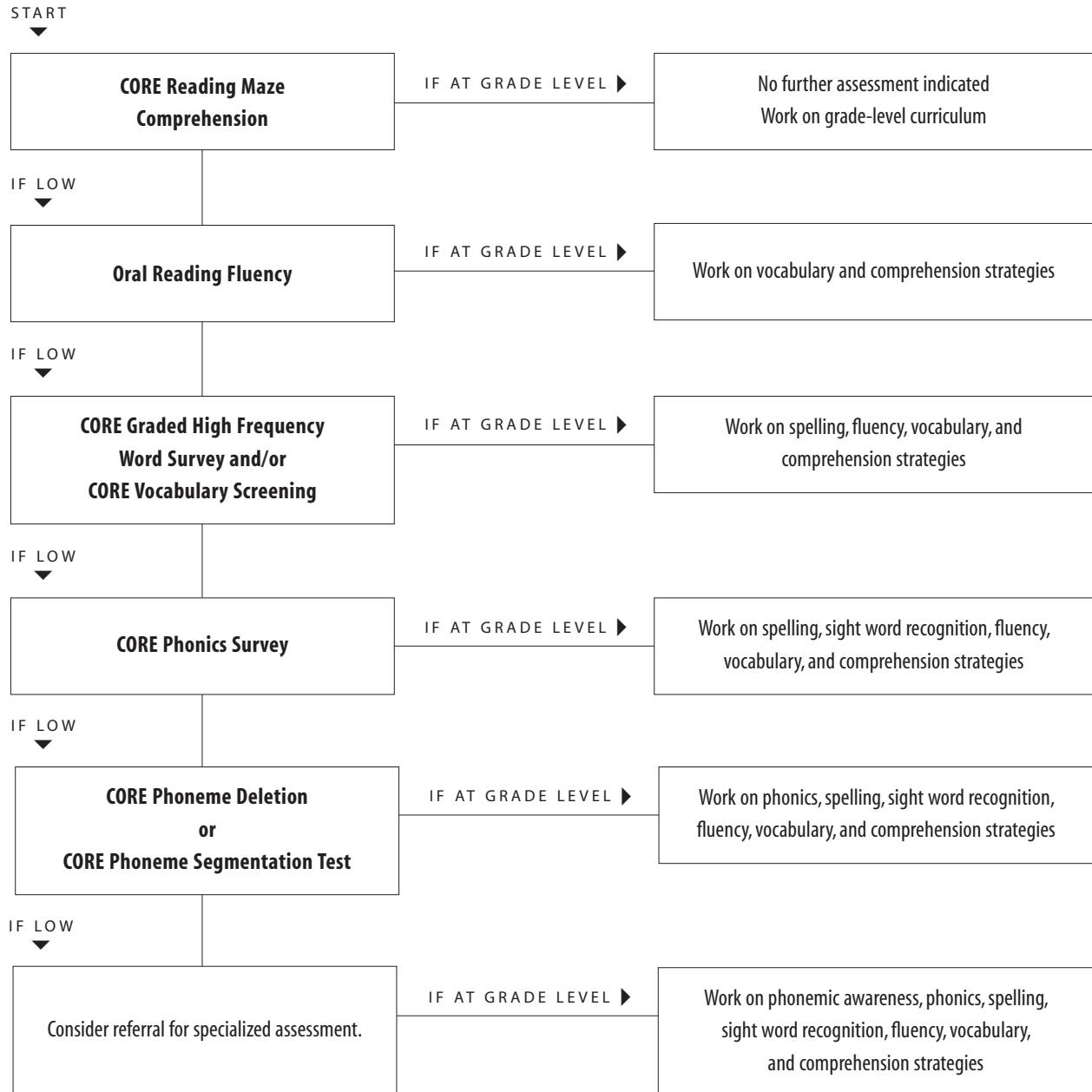
*See Diagnostic Plan for upper grades on page 15.*

	<b>Grade 4–6</b>	<b>Grade 7–8</b>	<b>Grade 9–12</b>
	Early Mid. Late	Early Mid. Late	Early Mid. Late
▶ <b>CORE Reading Maze Comprehension</b>	3 times a year 	As indicated, or to screen	As indicated, or to screen
▶ <b>MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measure</b>	Only if indicated	n/a	n/a
▶ <b>CORE Vocabulary Screening</b>	3 times a year 	Only if indicated by low Maze or other comprehension scores	Only if indicated by low Maze or other comprehension scores
▶ <b>Critchlow Spanish Verbal Language Scales</b>	Only if indicated	Only if indicated	Only if indicated
▶ <b>San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability</b>	Only if indicated	Only if indicated	Only if indicated
▶ <b>CORE Graded High-Frequency Word Survey</b>	Only if indicated	Only if indicated	Only if indicated
▶ <b>CORE Spanish Spelling Inventory</b>	Only if indicated	Only if indicated	Only if indicated
▶ <b>CORE Phonics Survey</b>	Only if indicated	Only if indicated	Only if indicated
▶ <b>CORE Phoneme Segmentation Test</b>	Only if indicated	Only if indicated	Only if indicated

## Diagnostic Plan for Primary Grade Students (Grades 2–3)

For Grades K and 1, follow the assessment sequence for primary grade students on page 12.

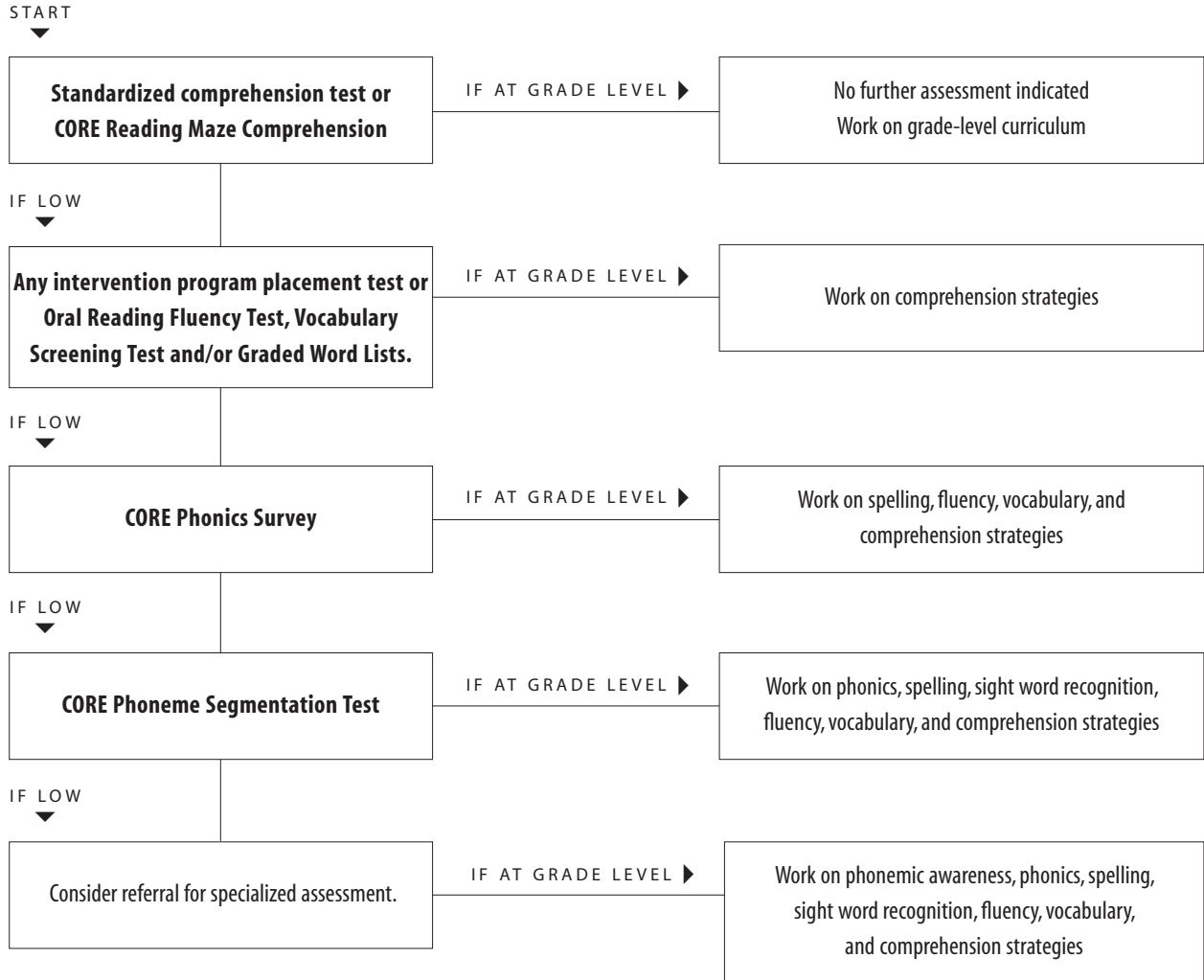
For Grades 2 and 3, use the following diagnostic plan.



**NOTE:** Although it is not included in this Diagnostic Plan, the *San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability* is also available as a measure of out-of-context word recognition.

## Diagnostic Plan for Upper Grade Students (Grades 4–12)

*For Grades 4 through 12, use the following diagnostic plan.*



**NOTE:** Although it is not included in this Diagnostic Plan, the *San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability* is also available as a measure of out-of-context word recognition.