Name: John Smith
Age: xx years, xx months (DOB xx/xx/xxxx)
Grade: xth
Evaluation Dates: xx/xx and xx/xx/xxxx
Report Date: xx/xx/xxxx

Purpose:

To assess John’s current abilities in the literacy arena – including his knowledge of phonetic concepts, reading fluency, and ability to access content from printed text – and make recommendations to support his acquisition of skills in identified areas of weakness.

Relevant History:

John was initially referred for eligibility for special education services in 2008 by his mother due to concerns regarding difficulties with reading. At that time, he was a 2nd grader attending private school in Anytown, NY. The Anytown school district conducted psychological and speech and language testing at that time.

An Initial Psychoeducational Evaluation in May of 2008, reported an IQ in the Average range (FSIQ=88, 25th percentile), with a relative strength in the non-verbal domain (Perceptual Reasoning Index = 98, 45th percentile); his Verbal Comprehension fell in the Low Average range (VCI=87, 19th percentile), largely due to weaknesses in Vocabulary and Verbal Comprehension (both SS=7, 16th percentile). Johnny’s Working Memory – or the ability to temporarily store and manipulate information utilized for complex cognitive tasks – was also found to be an area of weakness (WMI=86, 18th percentile).

In the academic realm, difficulties were noted with reading words both by sight and, in particular, through the application of appropriate phonetic strategies (Word Reading, SS=89, 23rd percentile; Pseudoword Decoding, SS=84, 14th percentile), as well as with spelling (SS=89, 23rd percentile). Reading comprehension was found to be comparable to his Word Reading scores (SS=91, 27th percentile) – albeit just reaching the Average range – in comparison with relatively weak Listening Comprehension performance (SS=85, 16th percentile). His teacher reported difficulties with reading with commensurate with these scores, citing a limited sight vocabulary and “immature word attack skills,” with “poor” phonetic knowledge and blending skills and a slow reading rate.

Speech and language testing revealed deficits in auditory and working memory and, to a lesser degree, articulation. Weaknesses were also noted with regard to phonological (sound) blending,
an auditory task. Receptive and expressive vocabulary were both found to be in the Average range (in the 34\textsuperscript{th} and 37\textsuperscript{th} percentiles, respectively)

Based on these evaluations, John was not found to be eligible to receive special education services at that time.

John was again considered for special education eligibility in early 2013, by his current school district, CurrentTown. Based on the xx/xx/xxxx Meeting Summary, the team reviewed academic and behavioral information, including teacher reports and the results of recent NWEA testing – which placed his reading, mathematics and language usage scores below that which would be expected of an x\textsuperscript{th} grader. The team determined that John met the eligibility criteria for a student with a Specific Learning Disability, and a specialized program was planned.

**Tests and Procedures:**

I had the opportunity to directly assess John in my Norwalk office during two extended sessions in August. During these sessions, the following formal and informal assessment tools were utilized:

- Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE) – Form A;
- The Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency (TOSCRF) – Form A;
- The Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF) – Form A;
- Gray Oral Reading Tests, Fifth Edition (GORT-5) – Form A;
- The Test of Written Language (TOWL-4) – Form B;
- The Wilson Assessment of Decoding & Encoding (WADE) – Form A;
- The Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5) – Fourth and Fifth Grade Narrative and Expository Passages; and
- Informal observations.

Other materials considered included:

- IEPs dated xx/xx/xxxx and xx/xx/xxxx;
- IEP Progress Report – xxxx-xxxx School Year;
- NWEA Student Progress Report – Spring xxxx-xxxx;
- Informal reading battery (Evaluator1) – xx/xx/xxxx;
- Informal reading battery ((Evaluator2, Company) – xx/xx/xxxx;
- Audiology processing evaluation (Evaluator3, Company) – April 26, 2009;
- Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) Student Report – Grade 6;
John worked extremely diligently throughout our sessions, and appeared to consistently put forth his best effort. The following is therefore believed to be an accurate assessment of his abilities.

**Direct Assessment Observations/Results:**

Based on these assessments, the following instructional strengths and needs were observed:

I. **Sound-Symbol Relationships.**

The ability to readily identify the sounds (also called phonemes) associated with letters or letter combinations (the “symbols”, also called graphemes) – and, conversely, the grapheme(s) associated with each phoneme – is critical to decoding and spelling unfamiliar words. The English language contains 44 sounds made using 26 letters, and there are numerous ways to spell a single sound (e.g., there are 9 ways to spell the /ä/ sound). Often, more than one letter together forms a single sound – for instance, /th/, /ai/ and /tch/.

In general, John was able to provide the primary sound associated with many of the most common letters and letter combinations, including several vowel teams, although he at times expressed feelings of being unsure about his responses – for instance, with j. Moreover, for the vowel teams in particular, John typically required keywords in order to retrieve the associated sounds (e.g., say for ay, see for ee, etc.), in some instances (e.g., with ild and ind) stating that he did not know the sound because he could not think of a word. Numerous errors were observed with many of the vowel teams and more advanced letter combinations. In general, his knowledge of sounds-symbol correspondences corresponded to the difficulty of the letter combination, with increasing numbers of errors noted as the level of difficulty increased. More specific observations follow:

- **Single Consonants and Consonant Digraphs/Trigraphs**
  
  John readily provided the primary sound(s) associated with most single consonants and the most common consonant digraphs (th, sh, ck, ch, and wh) – missing:
o x, the soft sounds for g (/j/ as in gem or giraffe) and c (/s/ as in cent or cereal), and the /z/ sound for s (as in his, as, nose, toys or XXXX’s); and

o The digraphs ph (phone), ch-/k/ (chorus or Christmas), and the more advanced gh, gn, kn, mn, rh and wr – plus the trigraphs tch and dge.

- Single Vowels and Vowel Combinations.
  John correctly provided the short sounds associated with the five primary vowels, although he appeared unsure of the /ê/ sound. He did not provide any long or schwa sounds associated with any single vowel, nor did he give any vowel sounds for y.
  When prompted with vowel combinations, John provided a sound – although not necessarily the primary sound – associated with several, such as ay, ee, ey, oa, oe, oy, aw, au, ow-/ow/, ea-/ã/, ew-/ũ/, ei-/ë/, igh and ei. However, as noted previously, he typically required keywords to derive these sounds. Moreover, he missed a few of the most commonly used vowel teams such as ai, ow-/õ/, ea (both /ê/ and /ë/). Other, less commonly used, vowel combinations missed included ue (he gave /ũ/) oi (/õ/), ou-/ow/, oo-/û/, eu, ew-/oô/, ui, and ie (/ī/).

- Other Letter Combinations
  John was able to provide the sounds associated with the regular “welded” sounds, such as -ank, -ang and -all, as well as a few irregular combinations (olt and old). However, he required keywords to identify certain combinations (e.g., post for ost and bolt for olt), missing two for which he stated he was unable to think of a word (ind and ild).
  He also missed the less common r-controlled sounds, providing the /yur/ sound for ir and ur, and all of the more advanced Additional Sounds presented (tion, sion, gh, gn, kn, mb, mn, rh, wr, que, ti, ci, tu and ture).

Many of these sound-symbol errors were also observed within words. For instance John provided the incorrect sound associated with ai and then misread trail as “trial” and aided/ided; similarly, he missed the ti combination and then read essential as “essentile” and patient/patent. However, at other times he was able to read word containing sounds he did not identify in isolation – for instance, he did not provide the /ow/ sound for ou, yet read could as if were phonetically regular (as “cowed”), and he did not provide the /ō/ sound for ow in isolation, yet correctly read the made-up strown.

II. Decoding and Encoding Rules/Concepts.

Three different assessment tools were used to explore John’s knowledge of decoding/encoding rules and concepts: and the Wilson Assessment of Decoding and Encoding (WADE); the Gray Oral Reading Tests (GORT-5); and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5).
Wilson Assessment of Decoding and Encoding (WADE):

The WADE systematically examines decoding and encoding (spelling) skills in isolation, without the use of context. The test’s expansive word lists encompass decodable words, both real and made-up, organized by word types of increasing decoding difficulty – beginning with single-syllable short-vowel (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. With no context provided in the WADE’s word list format, the examinee is forced to rely entirely on his phonetic knowledge to decipher words – especially the made up and otherwise unknown words. For John, the Primary (Level A) words were utilized.

For the easiest words (through List 6), John performed equivalently on the real and made-up words lists. However, as the words became increasingly complex phonetically, his performance declined considerably for the made-up words; in the final three Lists, John correctly read only 1 or 2 of the 5 words presented.

John’s errors typically involved:

- **The addition, substitution, or transposition of sounds within words** – for instance, reading contribute as “constibute”, crunch/church, spluce/splunce, squirt/skirt, sproting/sporting, and stilement/silentment; and spelling disrupt/distrupt and Atlantic/alantic). This also included confusing voiced-unvoiced combinations such as /k-g/ (crothy/grothy), and /p-b/ (plature/blätter, wribe/wripe).

- Errors in **syllabication** – for instance, reading athletic as “athtic”, bugle/buggle, flomma/floma, porcupine/porcûpine, extinge/extîinge, and plature/blätter).

- Errors involving **suffixes** – largely in terms of consonant doubling rules, such as reading stridder/strider, cluter/clutter, but also involving other spelling rules for adding suffixes (y -> i and silent-e) required to read blavies and stilement/silentment.

- **Sound-symbol errors** – for instance, reading blatian/blatan, gocial/goysal, phestion/phestin, and fligmenson/fligmenson. Specific errors were also noted involving reading and spelling words containing qu (reading squirt/skirt and spelling and squint/sqint), x (spelling expect/expext), and blends using c (spelling scraps and inspected/inspexed) – and in general confusion between the /ks/ and /k/ sounds.

- Errors involving the **silent-e syllable** in particular – for instance, reading plube/plub and especially spelling trade/traid, scrape/scrapp, athlete/athleat, and costume/costume.

The Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-5):

The GORT-5 requires the examinee to read short passages of increasing difficulty then answer five questions regarding each passage. It is the only assessment of the three to provide standardized measures of performance relative to same-age or same-grade peers. However, it is important to note that the nature and pattern of errors made by the examinee across all assessments (standardized or not) is often as important as the percentage correct or standardized score.
John made very few errors in the easiest stories, through Story 6 (approximately a 6th grade reading level). However, his errors became far more frequent beginning with Story 7, with his Accuracy score plummeting from a 5 (of a possible 5) on Story 6 to a 1 on Story 7 (and a 0 on Story 8).

The majority of John’s errors, evident both with reading and spelling, were consistent with those noted previously – involving errors in syllabication (reading pickers/pikers, nonviolence/nonviolence, permanent/per-man-ent, and invention/invineten), with suffixes (misreading the three sounds for ed (barbed/barb-ĕd) and the spelling rules for adding suffixes to words (ripened/rippen-ĕd), and sound-symbol errors (reading trail/trial, aided/ided, essential/essential, and patient/patent). Also noted was the omission or substitution of “minor” words – omitting words such as was, the, and reading at as “as”, and “that covered the ground” as “and covered the ground”.

Overall, John scored at the 16th percentile (SS=7) relative to same-age peers for reading Accuracy on the GORT-5.

The Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5):

The QRI-5 utilizes leveled, more lengthy passages. They are designed to be more curriculum-based – similar to the text a student would encounter in the classroom. For John, Fourth Grade Narrative and Expository passages and a Fifth Grade Narrative passage were utilized.

The word identification errors noted on the QRI-5 reflected those found on the GORT-5 and WADE – including the addition or omission of “minor” words, errors in syllabication (important/importânt, nonfiction/nonfiction), errors involving suffixes (spoiled/spoi-l-ĕd, ragged/ragg-d, particularly/particular, biography/biograph (twice), myths/myth, and dried/dry), and sound-symbol errors (told/toold, Patricia/Patrica, attention/attention, foundation/föndation). He was also noted to substitute visually and/or contextually similar words (divorced/discovered, searched/reached, poetry/pottery, taught/thought, lilies/lies, committed/commuted, Ohio/Iohi-Idaho, eaten/easton).

The frequency of errors made varied widely across texts, based on both time (#errors/minute) and total words (% errors) as a measure. Using time as a measure, he made between 3 and 7 errors per minute – interestingly, with the most frequent errors made on a fourth grade narrative text (Johnny Appleseed). When viewed in terms of the proportion of words misread, however, John – not surprisingly – made the most errors on the fifth grade (narrative) text, misreading approximately 7% of the words. 6% of the words were misread on the Johnny Appleseed text. Surprisingly, he made far fewer errors on the fourth grade expository texts (3-4 errors/minute with approximately 2.5% of the words misread) than on the narrative text. Many of his errors on the fourth grade text were self-corrected, as opposed to those on the more difficult, fifth grade, text.

Based on these scores, he was found to be at: the Independent level – in terms of reading Accuracy – for one of the fourth grade Expository texts; the Instructional level for the
remaining fourth grade texts (one Expository and one Narrative); and the Frustration level for the fifth grade (Narrative) text.

III. **Fluency:**

The ability to read text accurately and fluidly, with appropriate inflection and pace, is critical to comprehension. Fluent readers have learned to recognize printed words automatically, without requiring the use of significant cognitive resources, freeing up these critical resources for use in the application of specific comprehension strategies such as drawing inferences. Disfluent readers lack this automaticity with decoding, and therefore must devote so much of their attention to the word identification process that little or no capacity is available for the attention-demanding process of comprehending (Allor & Chard, 2011, p. 12); they cannot perform word recognition and comprehension tasks simultaneously, as both tasks require significant cognitive demands.

Various facets of fluency, for both oral and silent reading, were explored for John using several assessment tools: the Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-5), the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5), the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE), the Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF), and the Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency (TOSCRF).

In general, the faster John’s reading rate, the fewer the errors made, suggesting that certain texts contained words (or involved subjects) that were easier for him to read. His reading fluency varied considerably across texts, and appeared to correspond more closely to the content of the text he was reading than to its length or density (expository versus narrative).

**Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-5):**

The GORT-5 contains primarily shorter, narrative passages of increasing length and difficulty. John’s reading Rate translated into the 9th percentile (SS=6) relative to same-age peers, resulting in an overall Fluency rate (Rate plus Accuracy) at the 16th percentile (SS=7). Interestingly, his reading rate dropped considerably a few stories before drops in reading accuracy were noted – beginning in Story 5 (rougly equivalent to the 5th grade), and then more significantly at Story 7; his overall Fluency plummeted from a raw score of 9 (out of a possible 10 points) to a 2, between Story 6 and 7. Beginning at Story 7, John’s reading became noticeably laborious, with John struggling to sound out unknown words. He was noted to read with very limited inflection even on those passages he appeared to be able to read fluidly (e.g., Story 4).

**The Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5):**

As noted previously, the QRI-5 passages are considerably longer and more content-specific – similar to what would be encountered in classroom text. Fourth Grade Narrative and Expository passages and a Fifth Grade Narrative passage were utilized.

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Proficient readers typically slow down when they encounter more “dense” or confusing text – especially when numerous word reading errors are made – and reread text that does not make sense as read, conversely reading at a faster rate for more narrative text. Consequently, reading rates tend to be considerably faster for narrative than for expository texts. Although John’s reading rate was considerably faster for the two fourth grade expository texts (from 137 to 160 words per minute and 134 to 156 correct words per minute) than it was for the fourth grade narrative text (112 wpm, 105 cwpm), this could be attributable to the greater frequency of errors observed with the narrative text. Moreover, John skipped a few large portions of text in the more dense expository text (*Plant Structures for Survival*) – a whopping 45 of 278 words were skipped in the passage – without stopping to reread this missed text or the text surrounding it.

John’s reading rate was considerably slower for the fifth grade narrative text, at 72 wpm (67 cwpm). Numerous words were skipped on this passage as well. As a benchmark, an average reading rate for a 7th grader in the Spring – reading corresponding grade text – is considered to be 150 cwpm; for an 8th grader in the fall, it is 133 cwpm. (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006)²

The Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE):

The TOWRE contains word lists of comprising both commonly used sight words and made-up, phonetically regular words. A raw score is calculated for each list based on the number of words read correctly in 45 seconds.

On the Sight Word Efficiency subtest, John read 58 words correctly of 61 words attempted in the time allotted, translating into a score at the 10th percentile (SS=81) relative to same-age peers. Interestingly, despite making numerous word reading errors, his performance on the made-up words was considerably stronger – reaching the average range. He successfully read 36 of 48 words attempted, translating to the 29th percentile (SS=91) relative to peers on the Phonemic Decoding Efficiency subtest. It is important to note, however, that upon completing this final subtest he spontaneously commented “I bet I got half of them wrong.”

John’s Total Reading Fluency across subtests was found to be stronger than 13% of his same-age peers, with a standard score of 83.

The Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF) and Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency (TOSCRF):

Both the TOSWRF and TOSCRF involve strings of letters, requiring the examinee to delineate each word by drawing lines between the boundaries of as many words as possible in order to assess silent reading fluency.

The TOSWRF contains sequential words that are semantically unrelated (e.g., “ifyesgomesee”), beginning with very short and easy one-syllable words and progressing to longer and more phonetically and linguistically complex words. It was designed to measure

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the accuracy and consistency with which a student can recognize printed words – silently, and without the use of context. John correctly identified 53 words in the 3 minutes allocated, translating into a standard score of only 70 (2\textsuperscript{nd} percentile), considered to be in the Poor range. Very few self-corrections were noted on this subtest, suggesting that his weak performance was attributable to slow progress through the task.

The TOSCRF also requires the examinee to delineate individual words within a string of words; however, the individual words comprise a passage. It was designed to measure the accuracy and consistency with which a student can recognize printed words within a series of printed passages, which grow progressively more difficult in terms of content, vocabulary, and grammar. In contrast with the TOSWRF, the words are all printed in upper-case letters, (e.g., “THEBOYHASABATHEHOLDSITWITHHISHANDS”), and there is also no punctuation. The TOSCRF tends to be a more difficult task, as often there is more than one way to divide consecutive words – but only one way to do so without leaving “stray” letters (in the above example, “HASABATHHE” contains numerous word possibilities, but segmenting it incorrectly would result in extra “unassigned” letters) or creating a nonsensical sentence.

John’s performance was equivalent on the TOSCRF, and still within the poor range. He correctly denoted 41 words in the 3 minutes allocated, translating into a standard score of 73 (3\textsuperscript{rd} percentile) relative to same-age peers. John again made very few self-corrections on this assessment, and errors were noted in some of the easiest passages (e.g., “SEEF/AT/HER/WESING” versus “SEE/FATHER/WE/SING”).

IV. Comprehension:

Reading comprehension – or the ability to engage with and obtain content and meaning from text – is the ultimate purpose for reading. It is also notoriously difficult to assess, particularly given all the factors which come into play – including not only reading fluency, as noted previously, but also vocabulary, prior knowledge of a topic, and ultimately the application of specific comprehension strategies. Another complicating factor is that since it is impossible to determine what a student is thinking, it is very difficult to isolate what specific comprehension strategies are being utilized – and which are not. Finally, certain students are better able to correctly guess the answer to questions, based not only on prior knowledge of the topic but on the questions themselves, ruling out those that don’t make sense and making an educated guess among those that do.

John’s ability to access content from text was explored using two assessment tools: The Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-5), and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5). Both assessments utilize open-ended questions, requiring that the examinee independently derive and articulate responses as opposed to selecting the most appropriate response from options provided. John’s ability to recall literal facts within text was very inconsistent, and tended to be passage-specific. For instance, with certain passages he was unable to answer most literal questions despite having read the passage fluently (e.g., Story 4 on the GORT-5, about two girls who visit a farm), whereas other times he was able to recall an unexpected fact (e.g., the number of schools a character had attended as a boy in Story 8) within some very difficult
text. With at least some of those passages in which he struggled to recall literal facts his inflection was notably “flat” (especially with Story 4), suggesting that he had little interest in (or engagement with) the text.

John was also inconsistent in his ability to locate an answer to a missed question when permitted to reference the text (on the QRI-5). On a passage describing the structures developed by plants in order to survive, he was able to locate the answer to 3 of 4 literal questions; however, in some instances his response was read literally from the text, and he seemed unable to restate the answer in his own words. Not surprisingly, the ability to reference text was of little benefit for more inferential questions.

Responding to questions that required some level of inferencing was generally difficult for John – the one exception being a QRI-5 passage describing the life of a beaver, for which he appeared to have some prior knowledge and interest. On this passage, he missed only one inferential question – regarding why beavers build dams – and, interestingly, he responded based on his prior knowledge of dams in general (functioning to block water) as opposed to the information stated within the story (that beavers build them to make a pond or to live). In this same passage, the one explicit question he missed was also somewhat inferential in nature, requiring him to identify what beavers eat during the winter (trees) based on a somewhat indirect statement of this fact (“More trees must be cut down to be used as food for the coming winter”).

John also had difficulty articulating the central of a story – both with more explicit, technical text (e.g., about the adaptations of plants) or a narrative (e.g., a fable), and in both shorter (GORT-5) and more lengthy (QRI-5) text. He typically missed questions pertaining to the “main idea” or the “most important idea” stated in passages, involving the reader to determine the relative importance of various pieces of information contained within a story (e.g., the significance of an author being African American), or pertaining to the nuances of the text (e.g., predicting how a character would feel based on his circumstances).

Errors appearing to result from word reading errors were also evident at times. Some such errors were attributable at times to skipped text. There were numerous examples of this with the QRI-5 text. For instance, in the Plant Structures for Survival QRI-5 passage, John skipped a sentence about the waxy covering on pine tree leaves, then missed the subsequent question about why pine trees don’t lose water through their leaves. At other times, however, his misreading of words resulted in a wrong answer. For instance, in this same passage he misread “water lilies” as “water lies”, then couldn’t respond to a question regarding how lily pads grow large to capture sunlight.

Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-5):
As noted previously, the GORT-5 consists of a series of passages of increasing difficulty, each followed by five questions. The GORT-5, in contrast with earlier versions of the assessment, also contains open-ended (versus multiple-choice) questions, with several options provided to the examiner as examples of correct answers.
John’s score on the Comprehension component of the GORT-5 translated to the 16th percentile (SS=7) relative to same-age peers. Surprisingly, John’s performance did not appear to correspond to the complexity of the text he was reading – in terms of both the phonetic structure of words and the content. For instance, he responded correctly to only one of five questions in the fourth story, yet four of six questions in the sixth. For most passages attempted, he responded correctly to only one or two of the five questions posed.

On even the easiest passages, which John was able to read fluently, he missed questions pertaining to literal fact contained within the passage – for instance, in the story about the girls visiting a farm, citing the number of hens on the farm or two animals in the story (he only named one). Similarly, in Story 6 – depicting people in a neighborhood building a playground – he had some difficulty stating the job of each community member (e.g., that the adults built the fence), despite having read the text fluently and accurately.

Many of John’s errors appeared to reflect a lack of understanding of the central and nuances of a story, with John providing answers to questions that were technically accurate but did not capture the essence of the question. This was especially apparent in a fable regarding a very thirsty blue jay that puts stones in a jar to raise the water level. When asked how the jay felt at the end of the story, he responded with words like “happy” and “excited” – as opposed to the more accurate “proud”, “relieved”, etc. John also missed the main idea of the story, stating very literally that the bird thought she was going to die of thirst – again, as opposed to a more specific statement to the effect of brains being the key to survival, or never giving up.

Another good example of John missing the nuances of a story occurred in the passage about the visit to the farm. When asked to name two things that the farmer showed the girls how to do, John mentioned something that the girls helped the farmer to do (pick corn) – as opposed to what he actually showed them, a key distinction to make.

Beginning with Story 7 (equivalent to roughly the 7th grade level), comprehension errors appeared to stem directly from word reading errors.

The Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5):

The QRI-5 contains more lengthy passages followed by 8 questions – 4 literal (what it terms “explicit”), and 4 inferential (“implicit”). As noted previously, fourth and fifth grade text was utilized, including both expository and narrative text.

On this more lengthy text, John’s struggles with more inferential questions was especially apparent. He often did not appear to understand the central theme of a story. For instance, in the Plant Structures for Survival passage, he was unable to state the most important idea in the passage (that plants adapt to their environment) and later to define the term “adaptation.” Illustrations of this tendency of plants to adapt were evident throughout the passage, with an understanding necessary in order to respond to any of the implicit and some of the explicit questions; John missed all the implicit questions, and was able to come up with a few literal answers only when he was able to reference the text, and even then it involved directly reciting the text as it appeared within the passage.
In general, the ability to reference text – termed “lookbacks” on the QRI-5 – was of only limited value to John, and, as would be expected, only for more literal questions. For instance, in the fifth grade passage regarding an author, he was readily able to recite the names of two individuals that the author had written biographies about by “looking back” at the text. However, in the same passage he was unable to locate the text that explained why the author decided to write biographies of African American people.

Incorrect responses stemming from word reading errors were more apparent on the QRI-5 than the GORT-5. For instance, in the passage regarding the author John repeatedly misread the word “biography” (as “biograph”), and subsequently missed several questions pertaining to her classification as a biographer. Similarly, he misread “She searched” as “She reached,” subsequently missing a question regarding her search for existing biographies about African Americans. As noted previously, John also at times skipped entire sections of text (typically 10-20 words) – especially on the fourth grade scientific text (Plant Structures for Survival) – which significantly impacted his comprehension of the passage.

Overall, John scored at the Instructional level on one of the fourth grade Expository passages (about beavers) and the narrative passage (about Johnny Appleseed) for comprehension, and at the Frustration level for the remaining fourth grade Expository passage (about plant adaptations) and the fifth grade passage.

V. Written Expression:

John’s ability to express himself in writing was explored via the Test of Written Language (TOWL), focusing largely on the “mechanics” of writing – including expressive vocabulary, spelling, editing, grammar, and punctuation. Scores are standardized relative to same-age peers.

John’s performance varied considerably across subtests, ranging from Poor to solidly Average. Areas of considerably weakness were Punctuation (SS=4, 2nd percentile), Spelling (SS=5, 5th percentile), and the ability to edit an illogical sentence (e.g., The square was round) so that it makes sense semantically (Logical Sentences, SS=5, 5th percentile). Areas of relative strength included Vocabulary and the ability to integrate the meaning of several short sentences into one grammatically correct written sentence (Sentence Combining), scoring at the 16th percentile (SS=7) for both – in the Below Average range – and especially all facets of spontaneous writing assessed (Contextual Conventions and Story Composition), for both of which he scored in the Average range.

With regard to writing mechanics, a considerable area of weakness for John, it is important to note that the examinee is only penalized for spelling and grammatical errors only in the corresponding subtests; in the Vocabulary, Logical Sentences, and Sentence Combining subtests, such errors are not recorded. Across all subtests, certain patterns of errors were found to be prevalent, including:

- The use of apostrophes, especially for contractions (that’s, isn’t)
- Including punctuation at the end of sentences. John rarely used an ending period or other punctuation at the end of a sentence, except when explicitly instructed to do so on the Spelling and Punctuation subtest.

- Capitalization. John frequently capitalized letters that should be lower-case, and less frequently did not capitalize the first letter in a sentence or proper nouns – even when he knew he was going to be penalized for these errors.

- Spelling homophones such as there/their (and likely they’re), know/no, and here/hear. John also wrote “are” in place of the similarly sounding our, and more than once wrote were as “where.”

- Spelling words with the –ed suffix (smelled/smelt, He also miswrote the irregular past tense of hear as “heared” (versus heard).

- The use of commas within dates – for instance, June 4_ 2004”

**Diagnostic Summary and Recommendations:**

The ability to access content from printed text is the culmination of many factors. At the foundation lies strong linguistic skills, including an adequate receptive vocabulary, as well as an individual’s overall background knowledge. At the next “tier” is reading fluency – or the ability to read accurately, at a good pace, and with appropriate prosody. Finally, a proficient reader must be able to apply specific comprehension strategies.

John exhibited struggles in virtually all facets of literacy – including his phonetic knowledge, oral and silent reading fluency, and reading comprehension. His pattern of errors when reading are indicative of a lack of mastery of certain critical phonetic concepts, impacting not only his reading (and spelling) accuracy but also his fluency – and, at times, his comprehension of text. While many of these unmastered concepts are more advanced, including certain sound-symbol relationships and decoding/encoding rules, others reflect a lack of mastery of certain concepts of which he appears to have some knowledge, such as silent-e and closed syllables.

John’s particular difficulty with unknown words – and tendency to substitute graphically and contextually similar words in connected text – suggests that, at times, he is relying on memorization and context to “guess” at words as opposed to applying decoding rules. These strategies will grow less effective as the text John is required to read – particularly non-fiction, technically-oriented material – grows increasingly complex, containing unfamiliar words with little context on which to rely.

His performance tended to be content-specific, with more fluent reading and deeper comprehension noted in certain passages – presumably those that were higher interest and/or for which he possessed a stronger background knowledge.

In the writing arena, John’s ability to express ideas in writing is an area of strength, but he exhibited struggles in many of the underlying “mechanics” of writing.
More specific recommendations follow, organized by skill area.

I. Reading Fluency and Word Identification:

a) It is recommended that John receive individualized, systematic and explicit instruction targeted to address those – largely more advanced – phonetic concepts that do not appear to be mastered to automaticity; these include:

- **Syllabication**, encompassing the six syllable types, plus the segmentation of words into syllables using the following syllable division patterns in particular:
  - V/CV (ti/ger, por/cu/pine, bu/gle, ri/pened) versus VC/V (cam/el);
  - VC/CV (in/ven/tion, im/por/tant, non/fic/tion, flom/ma); and
  - V/N (vi/o/lence, tri/al, O/hi/o).

- **Spelling rules and generalizations** for:
  - Long vowel sounds – especially pertaining to using silent-\(e\) spellings as opposed to a vowel team in multisyllabic words (e.g., **athlete**/athleat, **trade**/traid); and
  - Adding suffixes to words, including changing a \(y\) to \(i\) (**blacies**), and consonant doubling rules (**stridder**, **cluter**).

- **The three sounds of -ed**, especially pertaining to the /d/ sound (**barbed**).

- **Unmastered sound-symbol relationships**, including:
  - The two sounds of **c**, **g** and **s**, plus **dge**;
  - **Qu** (**squint**, **squirt**), and **c**-blends (**scraps**, **expect**, **inspected**) – and distinguishing between the /k/ and /ks/ sounds;
  - The “welded exceptions”, such as -**old**, -**olt**, -**ost**, -**ind**, -**olt**, and -**ild**;
  - Unmastered vowel teams;
  - More advanced letter combinations such as **ti/ton**, **tu/ture**, **si/sion**, **ci/cian/cious/cial**, **que**, **ture**, **rh**, and **ci**.

- Distinguishing between voiced and non-voiced sounds, such as /k-\(g\) (**crothy**/**grothy**), and /p-\(b\) (**plature**/**blätter**, **wribe**/**wripe**).

b) Given John’s advanced age and the complexity involved with providing such targeted instruction (versus running through a complete program), it is important that this instruction be delivered by an individual who understands the structure of the English language and is trained and experienced in delivering systematic, research-based phonics instruction.
c) John would also benefit from direct instruction in the morphology of words, breaking words into their meaningful units (including prefixes, suffixes and roots) and then analyzing the meaning of each part. This type of structural analysis will help him to decode unfamiliar – particularly content-specific – words. It also helps with vocabulary development, and in making connections between decoding and comprehension.

d) Since encoding – or spelling using phonetic concepts – is the inverse of decoding, introducing concepts in both “directions” helps to facilitate understanding and mastery, and makes the instruction more multisensory. As the rules grow more complex, and encoding concepts become generalizations as opposed to concrete rules (e.g., in spelling long vowel sounds), then the parallels become less clear and difficult to comprehend – but no less critical.

e) John would also benefit from instruction in spelling common homophones such as *there/*their/*they’re*, *know/no*, and *here/*hear ("you hear with your ear."). He also appeared to confuse the spelling of *are* and *our*, as well as *were* and *where*.

f) Special attention should be paid to inflection and phrasing – even modeling appropriate prosody and phrasing and having John repeat the text, as necessary/appropriate. John’s reading should closely resemble his spontaneous language; that is, he should ideally be reading as he speaks, in terms of both his inflection and phrasing.

g) John appears to require assistance in keeping his place within more lengthy passages, particularly for more content-dense expository text. Using his finger to track words appeared to provide some assistance, but it is recommended that other strategies and tools be trialed as well such as different types of reading strips (highlighted and not) and even the use of index cards.

h) Regular progress monitoring is recommended in order to confirm that the intensity is appropriate, and to create a more systematic vehicle for assessing progress. The Oral Reading Fluency assessment of the DIBELS (the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) – available free of charge from [https://dibels.uoregon.edu/](https://dibels.uoregon.edu/) – would be an appropriate choice, administered on a regular (bi-weekly is recommended) basis. Another excellent benchmark and progress monitoring system is AIMSweb (www.aimsweb.com).

i) It is recommended that this progress monitoring be supplemented with the administration of portions of a criterion-referenced tool such as the Wilson Assessment of Decoding and Encoding (WADE) or the Gallistel-Ellis Test of Coding on a regular basis, perhaps once on alternating marking periods.

j) John’s tendency to add, omit, or transpose sounds within words read in isolation may warrants special attention. If these types of errors continue to surface, despite receiving systematic phonics instruction, they could be indicative of an underlying, language-based disability.
II. Comprehension:

k) Based on his performance on the various assessments utilized, John requires language and comprehension-related instruction targeted to meet those areas of difficulty identified. This instruction would employ a variety of teaching strategies – including direct instruction, teacher modeling, guided practice, and application – and utilize authentic text of varying genres, in order to systematically teach the following comprehension strategies in particular:

- Determining what information is most (and least) important;
- Synthesizing content to derive the “big picture”;
- Making inferences – especially with regard to how characters are feeling and why they act as they do;
- Visualizing text as he is reading (or hearing) it;
- Continually engaging with the text, and checking that word reading and punctuation makes sense;

l) John should always be encouraged to “make a movie in your head” when he is reading, developing a visual image of the text. This is especially critical when reading lower interest text, or text for which he has more limited prior knowledge. Elements of Lindamood Bell’s Visualizing & Verbalizing program may be helpful in helping him to refine this skill.

m) Given John’s observed difficulties with recalling literal facts within texts, and apparent weaknesses in certain facets of memory, he should be provided with strategies for referencing text to efficiently locate key information.

n) John would also benefit from instruction in higher level linguistic concepts – including the use of more sophisticated grammatical structures, language pertaining to the relationship between concepts or ideas (often expressed using more sophisticated conjunctions), and other nuances of our language. Also included should be the irregular past tense (e.g., heard).

III. Written Expression:

o) Difficulties with certain underlying “mechanics” of writing were found to require particular attention for John. As outlined previously, these include:

- The use of apostrophes, especially for contractions;
- Using punctuation at the end of sentences;
- Capitalization, both at the beginning at sentences and for proper nouns; and
- The use of commas within dates.
IV. Other Recommendations:

p) If not already conducted, an assistive technology is recommended in order to maximize John’s ability to access content from text. This could include:

- **Text to speech software**, to be utilized for grade-level text that John is struggling to read; and
- **Word prediction software**, assisting John in retrieving appropriate words as he writes.

It was a pleasure meeting John. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl Knapp, M.Ed., CIT/AOGPE
## APPENDIX

The Qualitative Reading Inventory – 5 (QRI -5)

(WPM=Words Per minute; CWPM=Correct Words Per Minute)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Passage Title</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Explicit Questions (w/LBs*)</th>
<th>Implicit Questions (w/LBs)</th>
<th>WPM</th>
<th>CWPM</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expository</td>
<td><em>Plant Structures for Survival</em></td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>0/4 (3/4)</td>
<td>0/4 (0/4)</td>
<td>160**</td>
<td>156**</td>
<td>Instructional – Word ID Frustration – Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td><em>Patricia McKissack</em></td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>1/4 (2/4)</td>
<td>0/4 (0/4)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Frustration – Word ID Frustration – Comprehension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Score when permitted to “look back” at the text..

** A large proportion (16%) of words were skipped within the passage, impacting the reading rate and likely comprehension.
**APPENDIX (cont’d)**

**Gray Oral Reading Tests (GORT-5 – Form A)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Age Equivalence</th>
<th>Grade Equivalence</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Standard Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluency:</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>9-3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9-3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9-9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9-0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oral Reading Quotient: 84 (14th percentile)

**Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE – Form A)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sight Word Efficiency</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Age Equivalence</th>
<th>Grade Equivalence</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Standard Score by Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9-3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonemic Decoding Efficiency</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Age Equivalence</th>
<th>Grade Equivalence</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Standard Score by Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11-0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Word Reading Efficiency

13% 83

**Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF – Form A)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Age Equivalence</th>
<th>Grade Equivalence</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Standard Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOSWRF</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOSCRF</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7-6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX (cont’d)

## Wilson Assessment for Decoding & Encoding (WADE)
(all scores are reported in percentiles)

### SOUNDS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score (%)</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consonants</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>(20/24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digraphs/Trigraphs</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>(5/9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowels</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>(24/56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Sounds</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(0/15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welded Sounds</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>(14/16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sounds</strong></td>
<td><strong>53%</strong></td>
<td><strong>(63/120)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### READING & SPELLING – Form A:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reading Words</th>
<th>Spelling Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Real Words</td>
<td>Made-Up Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Closed Syllables (primarily 3 sounds)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Closed Syllables (4+ sounds)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Closed Syllables (multisyllabic)</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Silent-(e) Syllables</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Open Syllables</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Suffix Endings (unchanged basewords), Consonant-(e) Syllables</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Soft-(c) and -(g), (dge), (tch), -(tion/-(sion)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>R-Controlled Syllables</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Vowel Team Syllables</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Suffixes (changing basewords)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Additional Vowel Sounds ((y) as /(i/) - /(i/), (i) as /(æ/) and Word Endings)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Advanced Concepts</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX (cont’d)

Test of Written Language (TOWL-4) – Form A
Subtest Scores – Standardized Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBTESTS/COMPOSITE:</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Percentile Rank by Age</th>
<th>Standard Score by Age</th>
<th>Age Equivalence</th>
<th>Grade Equivalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary (VO)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>&lt;9-0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling (SP)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt;9-0</td>
<td>&lt;3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation (PU)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;9-0</td>
<td>&lt;3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical Sentences (LS)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt;9-0</td>
<td>&lt;3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Combining (SC)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>&lt;9-0</td>
<td>&lt;3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrived Writing Composite</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Conventions (CC)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9-6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Composition (SCo)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9-3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous Writing Composite</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall Writing               | 7%        | 78                     |                       |                 | Poor              |