

Assessment

Although preschool children are too young to be formally assessed, informal assessment is an important part of classroom routine. It will allow you to see what students learned well and what they are still struggling with so that you can effectively plan future remedial lessons. Informal assessment helps students see how much they have learned, which boosts confidence. It also helps them realize when they haven't quite grasped something and need you to slow down or repeat something. As students become aware of what they can do to improve, they become more active learners.

Using informal assessment in preschool classes

For preschool children, it is advisable to present informal assessment as a review of classroom learning, rather than an assessment of individual performance. This assessment needs to be a positive experience, seen by students as an opportunity to show you what they know, rather than a time when their weaknesses may be exposed.

Build these review sessions into your normal classroom routine and do them regularly. Include a short review session at the start of every lesson, as well as more summary sessions at the start and end of each week. Focus on progression in these sessions—the aim is to help students remember and use what they know, so it's fine for them to have help from you or other students if necessary.

Also remember that assessment doesn't always have to be individual. Students can, for example, be assessed in the activities they do as a class or in small groups.

Assessment practice

When doing informal assessment, conduct the activities as you normally would so students perform as they usually would. Use simple activities students are familiar with, such as acting out, repeating, or matching. Don't introduce new ways of doing something when you want to evaluate students' performance. This will eliminate the risk of students having difficulties because they don't understand the activity.

Repeating exercises or tasks for young learners is an important part of learning and a safe way to assess them. You know learning has taken place if students can repeat the activity more quickly than they did it the first time.

One of the most helpful ways to evaluate is through observation, and you can do this even for quiet activities, such as listening, watching the video, or when students are drawing, tracing, or completing Activity Book pages or worksheets. Watch and listen as students are listening, speaking, or doing craft activities. Make notes on any areas to follow up on in future remedial lessons. It is important to assess different skills because students, especially very young ones, are likely to vary in competence and develop each skill at a different pace.

Giving feedback

When giving feedback to preschool children, always remember that your main goal is to make them better learners by increasing their confidence and eagerness to learn. Focus on the positive and always congratulate students on any progress they make. Be specific in your praise so that students understand what they did well. For example, you may say, *Great job! You remembered all seven animal words!* or *Great job! You shared the toys.*

If it's clear that students have forgotten something or need to improve on something, give them feedback that includes a specific improvement tip. Then they can focus on only that tip. Giving this type of feedback will also depend on whether you are addressing the class, groups, or individual students.

To the class: Congratulate the class on how much they know, and give one specific tip on how to improve or remember more next time. For example, if they've forgotten a question-and-answer set, give them the challenge of asking the question at home.

To a group: Congratulate students on what they did well, and give one specific tip to enable students to help each other. For example, if they've forgotten words in a lexical set, have a student who does remember remind the others of an action associated with the word, while they say the word three times. Associating the word with an action will help them remember it.

To an individual student: Only give praise, rather than suggestions for improvement. You may note any individual weakness to inform your future planning and classroom management, but do not draw attention to this in front of the class.

However, if a student asks for help, guide them gently toward self-reflection by giving him/her a tip that will be helpful next time. For example, a student may look at the photos in the Student's Book at the beginning of each class and ask you, or other students, to help him/her with any words they have forgotten.

Formative Assessment Framework

Formative assessment means using regular—often informal—assessment to check students' progress, and then using the result of that assessment to help you plan remedial lessons and activities.

The Framework shown on the next page lists some performance descriptors for listening and speaking activities, based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It suggests some informal assessment activities for each performance descriptor, together with suggestions for remedial activities and a follow-up assessment activity.

Activity References	Performance Descriptors	Assessment Activity 1	Remedial Activity	Assessment Activity 2
LISTENING				
Unit 1, Lesson 2, Activity 3	CAN understand simple spoken instructions	After Unit 3, give spoken instructions. Students act or respond individually.	Random practice: In every lesson, include one instruction when the class isn't expecting it. Note how quickly they respond.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 1–5, Lesson 2, Activities 1 and 2	CAN understand everyday, familiar words	Select six words and draw pictures or display flashcards on the board. As you say each word, have students point to the picture.	Competition: In every class, say a word and have students race to touch the matching flashcard first.	After Unit 6, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, Lesson 5, Activities 1 and 2	CAN understand letters of the alphabet	After Unit 3, say a vowel sound and have students match the sound to the correct phonics flashcard.	Physical: Have students do the action for each animal as they repeat the sound.	After Unit 9, repeat Assessment Activity 1 with all five vowel sounds.
Units 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, Lesson 5, Activities 1 and 2	CAN understand numbers	After Unit 4, hold up four objects and have students count them.	Competition: Say a number and have students race to find that number of items.	After Unit 10, repeat Assessment Activity 1 with numbers 1 to 10.
SPEAKING				
<i>What's Your Name?</i> , Lesson 1, Activity 2	CAN give basic personal information by saying sentences about self	Ask the class to stand up. Gesture for students to say <i>My name's [Jian]</i> . As they do so correctly, they can sit down.	Random practice: When students learn a structure that can be personalized (for example, <i>I have a [car]</i> . <i>This is my [mom]</i>), always have them make a sentence.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 1–7, Lesson 2, Activities 2 and 3	CAN name some familiar people or things	Select six words and draw pictures or display flashcards on the board. In groups, have students name the pictures.	Competition: Repeat Assessment Activity 1 with groups competing. Focus on correct pronunciation.	After Unit 8 or 9, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 2–8, Lesson 3, Activities 2 and 3	CAN ask questions to identify familiar things	After Unit 2, have students take turns to select a flashcard and ask the class <i>What's this?</i>	Regular practice: Use the question <i>What's this?</i> to review previous vocabulary at the start of every lesson.	After Unit 8, repeat Assessment Activity 1, this time asking the question <i>Is it a [cat]?</i>
WRITING				
Units 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, Lesson 5, Activity 2	CAN trace letters of the alphabet	Draw the dotted outline of a letter students know on the board. Have students come to the board and trace the letter correctly.	Random practice: Say a letter and have students finger-trace the letter in the air. Observe the speed of the response.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, Lesson 5, Activity 2	CAN trace numbers	Draw the dotted outline of a number students know on the board. Have students come to the board and trace the number correctly.	Competition: Draw the dotted outline of different numbers on the board. Hold up a number of items. Have students race to trace the correct number on the board.	After Unit 6, repeat Assessment Activity 1.

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To a group: Congratulate students on what they did well, and give one specific tip to enable students to help each other. For example, if they've forgotten words in a lexical set, have a student who does remember remind the others of an action associated with the word, while they say the word three times. Associating the word with an action will help them remember it.

To an individual student: Only give praise, rather than suggestions for improvement. You may note any individual weakness to inform your future planning and classroom management, but do not draw attention to this in front of the class.

However, if a student asks for help, guide him/her gently toward self-reflection by giving a tip that will be helpful next time. For example, a student may look at the photos in the Student's Book at the beginning of each class and ask you, or other students, to help him/her with any words they have forgotten.

Formative Assessment Framework

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Activity References	Performance Descriptors	Assessment Activity 1	Remedial Activity	Assessment Activity 2
LISTENING				
Units 1–10, Lesson 2, Activity 4	CAN understand simple spoken instructions	After Unit 3, give spoken instructions. Students act or respond individually.	Random practice: In every lesson, include one instruction when the class isn't expecting it. Note how quickly they respond.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 1–10, Lesson 2, Activities 1 and 2	CAN understand everyday, familiar words	Select six words and draw pictures or display flashcards on the board. As you say each word, have students point to the picture.	Competition: In every class, say a word and have students race to touch the matching flashcard first.	After Unit 6, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 1–10, Lesson 5, Activities 1 and 2	CAN understand letters of the alphabet	After Unit 3, say two consonant sounds. Have students match the sounds to the correct animal flashcards.	Physical: Have students do the action for each animal as they repeat the sound.	After Unit 9, repeat Assessment Activity 1 with ten consonant sounds.
<i>How Old Are You?</i> , Activity 1	CAN understand numbers	After Unit 3, draw pictures of groups of objects on the board and have students count them.	Competition: Say a number and have students race to find that number of items.	After Unit 8, repeat Assessment Activity 1 with numbers 1 to 10.
SPEAKING				
<i>How Old Are You?</i> , Activity 2	CAN give basic personal information by saying sentences about self	Ask the class to stand up. Ask students <i>How old are you?</i> As they respond correctly, they can sit down.	Random practice: When students learn a structure that can be personalized (for example, <i>I have [brown eyes]. I want [noodles].</i>), always have them make a sentence.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 1, 4, 7, 9, and 10, Lesson 2, Activities 2 and 3	CAN name some familiar people or things	Select six words and draw pictures or display flashcards on the board. In groups, have students name the pictures.	Competition: Repeat Assessment Activity 1 with groups competing. Focus on correct pronunciation.	After Unit 9, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 3, 7, and 9, Lesson 3, Activities 2 and 3	CAN ask questions to identify familiar things	After Unit 3, have students take turns to select a flashcard and ask the class <i>What is it?</i> or <i>What are they?</i>	Regular practice: Use the questions <i>What is it?</i> and <i>What are they?</i> to review previous vocabulary at the start of every lesson.	After Unit 9, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
WRITING				
Units 1–10, Lesson 5, Activity 2	CAN trace letters of the alphabet	Draw the dotted outline of a letter students know on the board. Have students come to the board and trace the letter correctly.	Random practice: Say a letter and have students finger-trace the letter in the air. Observe the speed of the response.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.

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Units 1–5, Lesson 2, Activities 1 and 2	CAN understand everyday, familiar words	Select six words and draw pictures or display flashcards on the board. As you say each word, have students point to the picture.	Competition: In every class, say a word and have students race to touch the matching flashcard first.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 1–10 Lesson 5, Activities 1 and 2	CAN understand letters of the alphabet	After Unit 3, hold up three alphabet flashcards to make a CVC word. Have students sound it out.	Competition: Have students race to put alphabet cards in order to make a CVC word.	After Unit 9, repeat Assessment Activity 1 with additional CVC words.
Unit 9, Lesson 3, Activities 1 and 2	CAN understand numbers	After Unit 3, draw groups of ten objects on the board. Say a number and have students circle that number of objects.	Random practice: Display numbers flashcards. Call out a number and have students point to the correct flashcard.	After Unit 9, repeat Assessment Activity 1 with numbers 1 to 20.
SPEAKING				
Unit 1, Lesson 2, Activity 4	CAN give basic personal information by saying sentences about self	Have the class stand up. Ask each student to say his/her name and one thing he/she can do. As students do so correctly, they can sit down.	Random practice: When students learn a structure that can be personalized (for example, <i>I can [play the drums], I want [noodles:]</i>) always have them make a sentence.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 3, 4, 5, 7–10, Lesson 2, Activities 2 and 3	CAN name some familiar people or things	Select six words and draw pictures or display flashcards on the board. In groups, have students name the pictures.	Competition: Repeat Assessment Activity 1 with groups competing. Focus on correct pronunciation.	After Unit 10, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
Units 5 and 8, Lesson 3, Activities 2 and 3	CAN ask questions to identify familiar things	After Unit 5, have students find a group of objects and ask the class <i>What are these?</i>	Regular practice: Use the questions <i>What's this?</i> and <i>What are these?</i> to review previous vocabulary at the start of every lesson.	After Unit 8, repeat Assessment Activity 1.
READING				
Units 1–10, Lesson 5, Activity 2	CAN recognize letters of the alphabet	Write two consonants on the board with a space in the middle for the vowel. Have students make each vowel sound to determine the correct vowel to form the CVC word.	Random practice: Display the alphabet flashcards and have students arrange them into CVC words. Observe the speed of response.	After Unit 5, repeat Assessment Activity 1.