

Grades 1–5 • Passage Copying

Use a 90-second near-point passage-copying task. Do not apply these benchmarks to dictation or original composition.

1 Prepare

- Select a short, grade-appropriate near-point copying passage. Confirm the student can read it.
- Use the student’s usual pencil and lined paper. Seat at an appropriately sized desk with feet supported.
- Have a stopwatch ready and minimize distractions.

2 Administer

“Copy this passage as quickly and accurately as you can. Try not to make mistakes. Keep writing until I tell you to stop.”

- Start timing when the pencil begins to move. Stop after 90 seconds.
- Do not prompt, correct, or encourage the student to speed up during the trial.
- Note pauses, corrections, visual tracking, grasp and pressure, paper position, pain, fatigue, and frustration.

3 Score

- **Total letters written:** count all alphabetic letters produced in the sample. Do not count spaces or punctuation.
- **Incorrect or illegible:** count substitutions, additions, and unreadable letters, then subtract from the total.
- Use the same scoring rule every time progress is monitored.

QUICK RECORD

STUDENT

GRADE

DATE

TIME · 90 SEC

- = ÷ 1.5 =

LPM

Total – incorrect = correct, legible letters, then ÷ 1.5 for letters per minute.

Loses place

never

sometimes

often

Effort & focus

easy

effortful

frustrated

Key observations:

Copying Benchmarks • LPM

Research-informed screening ranges derived from Graham et al. (1998). Use only with a comparable copying task.

Grade (avg)	Significant concern	Below expected	Broad expected	Above expected
1 (19)	0–4	5–11	12–26	27+
2 (34)	0–9	10–21	22–46	47+
3 (47)	0–22	23–34	35–59	60+
4 (63)	0–28	29–45	46–80	81+
5 (73)	0–42	43–57	58–88	89+

Interpret the Score

- **Within expected:** readable and functional without unusual effort. Continue typical instruction.
- **Below expected:** provide targeted practice and repeat the same probe under the same conditions.
- **Significantly low:** investigate further when the score stays low or occurs with poor legibility, pain, fatigue, avoidance, or incomplete work.
- **Average can still concern:** poor legibility, excessive pressure, pain, fatigue, or declining quality may still signal a functional problem.

CRITICAL CAUTIONS

• Do not compare passage-copying scores with dictation, alphabet writing, or original composition. Composition is normally slower.

• These are screening ranges, not diagnostic cutoffs. A low score does not identify a cause or diagnose a disorder.

• Consider time of year and repeat testing before deciding. Compare the student with their own growth as well as grade references.

Sources: Graham et al. (1998); Reed (n.d.); Pollock et al. (2008); Montgomery County Public Schools (n.d.). For educational screening and progress monitoring only. Not a diagnostic tool.

Handwriting Heroes®

Kindergarten • Alphabet From Memory

A separate 60-second alphabet-from-memory task. Do not compare the result with the Grades 1–5 passage-copying benchmarks.

1 Prepare

- Use blank or familiar lined paper and the child's usual pencil.
- Do not provide an alphabet model. The task measures retrieval and production from memory.
- Have a stopwatch ready and minimize distractions.

2 Administer

“Write the lowercase letters of the alphabet as fast and as carefully as you can. Cross out mistakes and keep going until I tell you to stop.”

- Start timing when the pencil begins to move. Stop after 60 seconds.
- Do not name letters, show an alphabet strip, correct errors, or cue the next letter.
- Note hesitation, restarts, reversals, skipped letters, formation, grasp and pressure, pain, fatigue, and frustration.

3 Score

- Score each letter written within 60 seconds. Letters must occur in an alphabetical sequence of at least two letters to be scorable.
- Add the points for all scorable letters. The total may include a half-point.

RESEARCH SCORING RUBRIC

1 pt	No formation/control, reversal or inversion, uppercase, or recognizability error.
0.5 pt	Exactly one formation/control, reversal/inversion, or uppercase error.
0 pts	Multiple errors or an unrecognizable letter. Random letters outside a sequence are uncodable.

Important: use this rubric when comparing a score with the research averages at right.

CRITICAL CAUTIONS

- This task measures letter retrieval, alphabetical sequence, and production together. It is not a pure motor-speed test.
- Do not compare this score with passage-copying LPM or use the Grades 1–5 benchmark table.
- Pair the probe with untimed alphabet writing, formation observations, and classroom performance.

QUICK RECORD

STUDENT	LETTERS ATTEMPTED

DATE	PREVIOUS SCORE

TIME OF YEAR	CHANGE
Fall / Winter / Spring	
TIME • 60 SEC	TOTAL POINTS
Recalls ☐ none ☐ partial ☐ whole alphabet	
Effort & focus ☐ easy ☐ effortful ☐ frustrated	
Key observations: _____	

Research Context

One study followed 134 kindergarten students using a 60-second alphabet-writing task.

FALL
~5
points on average

SPRING
~10
points on average

Descriptive group averages from one research sample, scored with the 0 / 0.5 / 1 rubric. Not minimum expectations, national norms, or diagnostic cutoffs. This card is adapted from the alphabet-fluency task described in Sears (2014); the record fields and observation prompts are practical additions, not part of the original measure.

Interpret the Result

- **Focus on growth:** compare the child with their own earlier scores using the same directions and scoring rules.
- **Look beyond the number:** consider recall, sequence, formation, reversals, hesitation, effort, and classroom writing.
- **Repeat before deciding:** one score is affected by familiarity, attention, instruction, or comfort with timed tasks.
- **Investigate further when:** limited progress persists with difficulty recalling or forming letters, avoidance, pain, fatigue, or very limited classroom writing.