Acadience® Spelling
Administration & Scoring Guide

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Overview

Basic Early Literacy Skill	Encoding
Administration Time	2 minutes
Administration Schedule	Middle of kindergarten to end of third grade
Score	Correct spelling sequences and correctly spelled words

What Is Acadience Spelling?

Acadience Learning's spelling measure is designed based on the principles of General Outcome Measurement and provides a broad indication of a student's level of general spelling skills compared to other students and if the student is progressing sufficiently in spelling.

The spelling measure includes a sample of words selected from a broad pool of grade-specific words. The words are dictated by the assessor. Students have a limited amount of time to spell the word until the next word is given.

Similar to traditional spelling tests, the measure score will provide the total number of Correctly Spelled Words (CSW). Additionally, because students may not have been administered the same set of words, the number of Correct Spelling Sequences (CSS) will be used to provide partial credit for words as students progress to becoming good spellers. The primary cut score for determining need for support will be based on the CSS score. The CSW score provides additional information that educators may find useful.

Technical Information

General outcome measures of spelling have a history of strong technical adequacy and, in general, meet or exceed the reliability and validity criteria for screening decisions. Findings from several research studies conducted on general outcome measures of spelling, upon which Acadience Spelling is based, are summarized below.

Validity

Across studies, validity coefficients with tests such as the Test of Written Spelling, the Peabody Individual Achievement Test, and the Stanford Achievement Spelling subtest range from .83 to .96 for words spelled correctly and from .80 to .99 for correct letter sequences (Deno, Mirkin, Lowry, et al., 1980; Marston, 1982).

Reliability

Across studies, the test-retest reliability coefficients range .85 to .94 for words spelled correctly and from .83 to .93 for correct letter sequences. The alternate (i.e., parallel) form reliability coefficients range from .72 to .96 (most .80 or above) for words spelled correctly and from .73 to .97 for correct letter sequences (most above .80). Interjudge (i.e., interscorer) reliability coefficients were .99 and .91 for words spelled correctly and correct letter sequences, respectively. See Marston, 1982; Shinn, 1981; and Tindal, Germann, et al., 1983 for details.

Additional Validity Data

To obtain specific information about the validity of Acadience Spelling, we examined the concurrent and predictive correlations between Acadience Spelling and Acadience Reading K-6 measures. Results of these analyses are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The concurrent and predictive correlations between Acadience Spelling and Acadience Reading measures are mostly in the moderate to strong range, with some lower correlations for certain grades and measures. The highest correlations are between the Acadience Spelling scores and the RCS, and those correlations are in the strong range. Overall, Acadience Spelling is moderately to strongly related to concurrent and future reading performance, which is important because difficulties with spelling are often observed in students with dyslexia (Lohvansuu et al., 2021) and spelling is frequently cited as a necessary component of dyslexia screening.

Table 1

Concurrent Validity of Acadience Spelling with Acadience Reading

	Acadience Reading Measure							
	FSF	**LNF**	**PSF**	**NWF CLS**	**NWF WWR**	**ORF Words Correct**	**ORF Accuracy**	**RCS**
Kindergarten Middle of Year								
CSS	.59	.63	.60	.53	.23	–	–	.70
CSW	.55	.61	.58	.53	.20 *	–	–	.67
Grade 1 Beginning of Year								
CSS	–	.34	.43	.43	.39	–	–	.55
CSW	–	.14 †	.42	.71	.63	–	–	.65
Grade 1 Middle of Year								
CSS	–	–	–	.52	.59	.51	.65	.61
CSW	–	–	–	.54	.64	.55	.66	.65

Note. FSF = First Sound Fluency; PSF = Phoneme Segmentation Fluency; NWF CLS = Nonsense Word Fluency Correct Letter Sounds; NWF WWR = Nonsense Word Fluency Whole Words Read.; ORF = Oral Reading Fluency; RCS = Reading Composite Score; CSS = Correct Spelling Sequences. CSW = Correctly Spelled Words. Dashes indicate the Acadience Reading measure is not administered at the specified grade and time of year. Correlations for the end of kindergarten and first grade are not reported due to insufficient sample sizes. Pairwise samples sizes as follows. Kindergarten middle of year = 130. Grade 1 beginning of year = 194–197. Grade 1 middle of year = 95–115. Unless marked, correlations significant, $p < .0001$; * $p < .05$; † Not significant.

Table 2
Predictive Validity of Acadience Spelling with Acadience Reading

	Acadience Reading Measure						
	LNF	**PSF**	**NWF CLS**	**NWF WWR**	**ORF Words Correct**	**ORF Accuracy**	**RCS**
Middle of Kindergarten to Beginning of Grade 1							
CSS	.57	.50 ***	.52 **	.42 ***	–	–	.63
CSW	.54 **	.44 ***	.52 **	.48 ***	–	–	.60
Beginning to Middle of Grade 1							
CSS	–	–	.44	.51	.35	.46	.46
CSW	–	–	.67	.68	.63	.61	.71
Beginning to End of Grade 1							
CSS	–	–	.49	.53	.64	.67	.69
CSW	–	–	.69	.67	.71	.58	.74
Middle to End of Grade 1							
CSS	–	–	.48 **	.51 **	.64	.75	.75
CSW	–	–	.50 **	.55	.72	.74	.80
Middle of Grade 1 to Beginning of Grade 2							
CSS	–	–	.58	.58	.55	.65	.66
CSW	–	–	.58	.63	.56	.67	.69

Note. PSF = Phoneme Segmentation Fluency; NWF CLS = Nonsense Word Fluency Correct Letter Sounds; NWF WWR = Nonsense Word Fluency Whole Words Read.; ORF = Oral Reading Fluency; RCS = Reading Composite Score; CSS = Correct Spelling Sequences. CSW = Correctly Spelled Words. Dashes indicate the Acadience Reading measure is not administered at the specified grade and time of year. Correlations for (a) middle to end of kindergarten, (b) end of kindergarten to beginning and middle of first grade, (c) end of first grade to beginning of second grade, and (d) end of first grade to middle of second grade are not reported due to insufficient sample sizes. Pairwise samples sizes as follows. Middle of kindergarten to beginning of first grade = 41. Beginning to middle of first grade = 176–187. Beginning to end of first grade = 57. Middle to end of first grade = 44. Middle of first grade to beginning of second grade = 71–83. Unless marked, correlations significant, $p < .0001$; ** $p < .001$; *** $p < .01$.

Materials Needed for Administration

- Word List and Scoring Key
- Timer or stopwatch
- Pencils for student use
- Administration Directions
- Response Form Booklet for students to record their responses

Acadience Spelling Administration Directions

This measure may be group or individually administered. Provide each student with a pencil and the Response Form Booklet. Make sure the student has the Booklet turned to the correct response form. Follow these directions exactly each time with each student. Say the words in bold italic type verbatim. Begin with the practice activities (assessor modeling and sample A and B). The practice activities are designed to introduce the assessment task to the student. The practice activities are untimed.

- ***We are going to spell some words. Please write your name at the top of your paper, then put your pencil down and listen.*** (Pause for 10 seconds for children to write their name. Scan the room to make sure students have written their names on their paper.)
- ***I am going to say a word, and then I am going to use that word in a sentence. I want you to write the word that I say. Watch and listen first. If I say, cat*** (pause) ***the cat is fluffy*** (pause) ***cat, you would write the word cat on your paper, like this.*** (Write the word *cat* on the whiteboard.)
- ***Your turn. Point to the letter A on your paper. I am going to say a word, and then I am going to use that word in a sentence. Write the word that I say next to the letter A. If you cannot write the whole word, write any letters in the word that you know. When you are done writing, put your pencil down and look at me.***
- ***Rug. Sit on the rug. Rug.*** (Pause for 10 seconds or until all students have put their pencils down.) ***Put your pencils down and look at me.***
- ***You should have written the word rug next to the letter A.*** (Circulate among the students and scan papers to be sure all students have written something next to the Letter A.)
- ***Let's try another word. Write the word that I say next to the letter B. Zip. Zip up your coat. Zip.*** (Pause for 10 seconds.) ***Put your pencils down. You should have written the word zip next to the letter B.*** (Circulate among the students and scan papers to be sure all students have written something next to the letter B.)
- ***Now, I am going to say more words. Write the first word next to the number one, the second word next to the number two, and so on. For each word, be sure to write any letters you know. When I say the next word, write it down, even if you have not finished writing the last word I said.*** (pause) ***Here is your first word.***

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1. Start the timer/stopwatch and say the first item.
2. During the testing:
   - Say the number before each word. Then, say the word, the sentence, and the word again. Place emphasis on the target word.
     - For example, ***Number one. Sun. The sun shines in the sky. Sun.***
   - Say a new word every 12 seconds for kindergarten and every 10 seconds for grades 1-3. Provide all words on the list within the 2-minute time limit.
   - After 2 minutes say, ***Stop. Put your pencils down.*** Collect Response Form Booklets from students.
3. At a later time (shortly after testing but when you are no longer with the student), score the Response Forms for Correctly Spelled Words (CSW) and Correct Spelling Sequences (CSS) following the scoring rules.

Reminders

These reminders may be used only once:
Monitor students to ensure they are writing each word on the designated line. If students are trying to write the sentences, say, ***Remember, just write the word.***

If a student is not responding, say, ***Remember to write any letters you know.***

This reminder may given as often as needed:
Respond to student questions, such as, "What word was that?" or "You are going too fast, please slow down," by saying, ***Just do your best***.

Acadience Spelling Scoring Rules

Acadience Spelling is scored for Correctly Spelled Words (CSW) and Correct Spelling Sequences (CSS).

- A word may be scored as a Correctly Spelled Word (CSW) if the entire word is spelled correctly. In order for a word to be considered correct, each letter must be judged to be the correct letter in the correct location within the word. If it is not clear what letter the student wrote, then the word cannot be counted as a CSW. The total possible number of CSW is the total number of words on the list.
- A Correct Spelling Sequence is a pair of letters or spaces correctly sequenced within a word. For scoring, each CSS is marked with a caret (^). When scoring CSS, there is an implied space at the beginning and end of each word. Carets are used to connect the implied spaces to the correct beginning and ending letters. Count the carets to determine the number of earned CSS.
  - There are two scoring rules for CSS.
    Scoring Rule 1. Place a caret between each correct sequence of correct pair of letters or spaces.

    Scoring Rule 2. Do not place a caret between letters sequenced incorrectly or between any incorrect letters.

Examples of CSS Scoring Rules

The following are examples of how to score commonly occurring responses for CSS. Please pay attention to the notes included with the examples as they provide scoring explanations and indicate variations and nuances related to the scoring. The examples do not encompass all possible responses. If in doubt about how to score a student response, refer to the scoring rules above.

Scoring Rule 1. Place a caret between each correct sequence of correct pair of letters or spaces. The total possible number of CSS within a word is equal to the number of letters plus 1.

Example 1.	cap	_cap_	_^**c**^**a**^**p**^_	CSS = 4
Example 2.	cold	_cold_	_^**c**^**o**^**l**^**d**^_	CSS = 5
Example 3.	brown	_brown_	_^**b**^**r**^**o**^**w**^**n**^_	CSS = 6
Example 4.	pretty	_pretty_	_^**p**^**r**^**e**^**t**^**t**^**y**^_	CSS = 7

Note 1. **Hyphenated Words.** Hyphenated words are counted as one word. The hyphen is counted as a letter when determining CSS.

Example: one-sided

written as...

one-sided	^**o**^**n**^**e**^**-**^**s**^**i**^**d**^**e**^**d**^	CSS = 10
one sided	^**o**^**n**^**e s**^**i**^**d**^**e**^**d**^	CSS = 8

Note 2. **Apostrophes.** Apostrophes are counted as letters when determining CSS.

Example: won't

written as...

won't	^**w**^**o**^**n**^**'**^**t**^	CSS = 6
wont	^**w**^**o**^**nt**^	CSS = 4

Scoring Rule 2. Do not place a caret between letters sequenced incorrectly or between any incorrect letters.

Rule 2a. Omissions. When required letters are not written.

Example 1: boat

written as...

bot	^**b**^**ot**^	CSS = 3
bt	^**bt**^	CSS = 2

Note: When one letter in a double letter combination (tt, ll, oo) is omitted, count only the first letter written as part of the CSS.

Example 2: pool

written as...

pol	^**p**^**ol**^	CSS = 3

Example 3: kiss

written as...

kis	^**k**^**i**^**s**	CSS = 3

Rule 2b. Incorrect letters. When an incorrect letter is written.

Example: cap

written as...

kap	**ka**^**p**^	CSS = 2
kep	**kep**^	CSS = 1
rat	**rat**	CSS = 0

Rule 2c. Insertions. When extra letters are written.

Example: under

written as...

unders	**^u^n^d^e^rs**	CSS = 5
undler	**^u^n^dle^r^**	CSS = 5

Rule 2d. Reversed or Rotated Letters. Reversed or rotated letters are not counted as errors unless they form another identifiable letter. The letters **p**, **b**, **n**, and **t** written as **q**, **d**, **u**, and **f** would be counted as errors because each forms another identifiable letter.

Example: bake

written as...

dake	**da^k^e^**	CSS = 3
bakɘ	**^b^a^k^ɘ^**	CSS = 5

Rule 2e. Incorrect Splits. When single words are written as two or more words, each space results in a loss of 1 CSS.

Example 1: into

written as...

in to	**^i^n t^o^**	CSS = 4

Example 2: handprint

written as...

hand print	**^h^a^n^d p^r^i^n^t^**	CSS = 9

Rule 2f. Capitalization. Proper nouns must be capitalized to be counted in a correct sequence.

Example: June

written as...

June	**^J^u^n^e^**	CSS = 5
june	**ju^n^e^**	CSS = 3

Efficient Spelling Scoring Procedures

1. Compare each student response form with the scoring key.
2. If the word is spelled correctly, count it as a Correctly Spelled Word (CSW) and record the total number of Correct Spelling Sequences (CSS). Note that if a word is spelled correctly, the student receives full credit for CSS.
3. If the word is not spelled correctly, then count the number of CSS.
4. After all the words have been scored, add up the number of CSW and the number of CSS and record each total in the spaces provided on the Response Form.

Score Interpretation

Preliminary cut points are provided for grades and times of year for which there are sufficient data for analysis. In addition, the data examined to create the cut points were from a convenience sample. As more data becomes available, these cut points may be adjusted and expanded.

Currently, preliminary cut points are available for middle- and end-of-year in kindergarten, and beginning-, middle-, and end-of-year in first grade. For other grades and times of year, local norms may be used with the provisional cut point for risk being a CSS score at the 10th percentile or lower.

Preliminary Cut Points for Kindergarten and First Grade

For kindergarten and first grade, preliminary cut points for risk were created by examining the logistic regression curve for predicting a concurrent or subsequent Acadience Reading Composite Score (RCS). Using this logistic regression, we examined the probability that a student was meeting reading benchmarks given a specific CSS or CSW score. The cut points corresponding to At- versus Some-Risk and Some- versus Low-Risk are 40% and 60% respectively. Students who score at the cut point separating At-Risk and Some-Risk have a 40% chance of meeting later reading benchmarks and students who score at the cut point separating Some-Risk and Low-Risk have a 60% chance of meeting later benchmarks.

The Acadience Spelling preliminary cut points for risk (see Table 3) aid educators in their use and interpretation of Acadience Spelling data. Specifically, the cut points provide educators with an additional piece of information useful for identifying students who are at increased risk with respect to their literacy outcomes and for identifying additional targets for instruction and intervention. As noted previously, Acadience Spelling offers two indices of spelling performance with its two scores: Correct Spelling Sequences (CSS) and Correctly Spelled Words (CSW). Both CSS and CSW are highly correlated, but in the rare case where a student falls into different risk categories, their performance on CSS should be given precedence.

Students who earn Acadience Spelling scores in the Low-Risk range are unlikely to be at

additional risk, provided their scores on other Acadience Reading K–6 measures are At or Above Benchmark and they are receiving high-quality, evidence-based core reading instruction. Students whose Acadience Spelling scores fall in the Some-Risk range may be at increased risk, in particular if their scores on other Acadience Reading measures fall into the Below or Well Below Benchmark range. These students may need strategic or intensive support to achieve important reading outcomes in the future. Finally, students who earn Acadience Spelling scores in the At-Risk range are at increased risk of reading difficulties, in particular if their scores on other Acadience Reading measures fall in the Below or Well Below Benchmark range. Students with scores in the At-Risk range likely will need intensive support to meet subsequent reading outcomes.

Table 3
Acadience Spelling Preliminary Cut Points for Risk

Grade	Measure	Risk Status	Beginning of Year	Middle of Year	End of Year
Kindergarten	Correct Spelling Sequences	Low-Risk	–	12+	33+
		Some-Risk	–	8–11	26–32
		At-Risk	–	0–7	0–25
	Correctly Spelled Words	Low-Risk	–	2+	8+
		Some-Risk	–	1	5–7
		At-Risk	–	0	0–4
First Grade	Correct Spelling Sequences	Low-Risk	32+	40+	46+
		Some-Risk	21–31	32–39	40–45
		At-Risk	0–20	0–31	0–39
	Correctly Spelled Words	Low-Risk	3+	6+	8+
		Some-Risk	2	4–5	6–7
		At-Risk	0–1	0–3	0–5

Acadience Spelling
Word List and Scoring Key
Grade K Middle-of-Year
Form 1

Number	Time	Word and Sentence	Scoring	CSS [cumulative]
1	(start)	**Nap**. Time for a **nap**. **Nap.**	^**n**^**a**^**p**^	4 [4]
2	0:12	**Man**. The **man** had a beard. **Man.**	^**m**^**a**^**n**^	4 [8]
3	0:24	**Make**. I will **make** dinner. **Make.**	^**m**^**a**^**k**^**e**^	5 [13]
4	0:36	**Cup**. We put milk in a **cup**. **Cup.**	^**c**^**u**^**p**^	4 [17]
5	0:48	**Down**. She sat **down**. **Down.**	^**d**^**o**^**w**^**n**^	5 [22]
6	1:00	**Dog**. The **dog** barked. **Dog.**	^**d**^**o**^**g**^	4 [26]
7	1:12	**Met**. We **met** yesterday. **Met.**	^**m**^**e**^**t**^	4 [30]
8	1:24	**Tin**. He used a **tin** cup. **Tin.**	^**t**^**i**^**n**^	4 [34]
9	1:36	**Fit**. The shoe doesn't **fit**. **Fit.**	^**f**^**i**^**t**^	4 [38]
10	1:48	**Go**. Let's **go** outside. **Go.**	^**g**^**o**^	3 [41]
	2:00	***Stop. Put your pencils down.***		
			Total CSW Possible	10
			Total CSS Possible	41

Acadience Spelling
Word List and Scoring Key
Grade 1 Beginning-of-Year
Form 1

Number	Time	Word and Sentence	Scoring	CSS [cumulative]
1	(start)	**Do**. We **do** our best. **Do.**	^**d**^**o**^	3 [3]
2	0:10	**Nests**. Birds build **nests**. **Nests.**	^**n**^**e**^**s**^**t**^**s**^	6 [9]
3	0:20	**Ate**. I **ate** lunch. **Ate.**	^**a**^**t**^**e**^	4 [13]
4	0:30	**Plus**. One **plus** one is two. **Plus.**	^**p**^**l**^**u**^**s**^	5 [18]
5	0:40	**Sled**. They **sled** on the snow. **Sled.**	^**s**^**l**^**e**^**d**^	5 [23]
6	0:50	**We**. **We** had fun at camp. **We.**	^**w**^**e**^	3 [26]
7	1:00	**Fly**. Birds **fly** in the sky. **Fly.**	^**f**^**l**^**y**^	4 [30]
8	1:10	**Shops**. My dad **shops** for food. **Shops.**	^**s**^**h**^**o**^**p**^**s**^	6 [36]
9	1:20	**Pass**. I can **pass** the test. **Pass.**	^**p**^**a**^**s**^**s**^	5 [41]
10	1:30	**Pond**. Fish are in the **pond**. **Pond.**	^**p**^**o**^**n**^**d**^	5 [46]
11	1:40	**Mask**. The clown wore a **mask**. **Mask.**	^**m**^**a**^**s**^**k**^	5 [51]
12	1:50	**Path**. Follow the **path** home. **Path.**	^**p**^**a**^**t**^**h**^	5 [56]
	2:00	***Stop. Put your pencils down.***		
			Total CSW Possible	12
			Total CSS Possible	56

Acadience® Spelling
Word List and Scoring Key
Grade 2 Beginning-of-Year
Form 1

Number	Time	Word and Sentence	Scoring	CSS [cumulative]
1	(start)	**Starfish.** I touched a **starfish. Starfish.**	**^s^t^a^r^f^i^s^h^**	9 [9]
2	0:10	**Bonnet.** I wore a **bonnet. Bonnet**.	**^b^o^n^n^e^t^**	7 [16]
3	0:20	**Smiled.** The baby **smiled** at me. **Smiled.**	**^s^m^i^l^e^d^**	7 [23]
4	0:30	**Fixed.** I **fixed** my bike. **Fixed.**	**^fi^x^e^d^**	6 [29]
5	0:40	**Shiny.** The star is **shiny. Shiny.**	**^s^h^i^n^y^**	6 [35]
6	0:50	**Birthday.** Happy **birthday** to you. **Birthday.**	**^b^i^r^t^h^d^a^y^**	9 [44]
7	1:00	**Cold.** I feel **cold. Cold.**	**^c^o^l^d^**	5 [49]
8	1:10	**Volunteer.** I'll **volunteer** to help. **Volunteer.**	**^v^o^l^u^n^t^e^e^r^**	10 [59]
9	1:20	**Locked.** The door is **locked. Locked.**	**^l^o^c^k^e^d^**	7 [66]
10	1:30	**Icy.** The street is **icy. Icy.**	**^i^c^y^**	4 [70]
11	1:40	**Baked.** He **baked** a pie. **Baked.**	**^b^a^k^e^d^**	6 [76]
12	1:50	**Ponies.** The **ponies** ran. **Ponies.**	**^p^o^n^i^e^s^**	7 [83]
	2:00	***Stop. Put your pencils down.***		
			Total CSW Possible	12
			Total CSS Possible	83

Acadience® Spelling
Word List and Scoring Key
Grade 3 Beginning-of-Year
Form 1

Number	Time	Word and Sentence	Scoring	CSS [cumulative]
1	(start)	**Stretch.** I got up to **stretch. Stretch.**	**^s^t^r^e^t^c^h^**	8 [8]
2	0:10	**Obstacle.** There's an **obstacle** course. **Obstacle.**	**^o^b^s^t^a^c^l^e^**	9 [17]
3	0:20	**Foolish.** Don't be **foolish. Foolish.**	**^f^o^o^l^i^s^h^**	8 [25]
4	0:30	**Bread.** He bought some **bread. Bread.**	**^b^r^e^a^d^**	6 [31]
5	0:40	**Relieve.** Laughing can **relieve** stress. **Relieve.**	**^r^e^l^i^e^v^e^**	8 [39]
6	0:50	**Delay.** The snow caused a **delay. Delay.**	**^d^e^l^a^y^**	6 [45]
7	1:00	**Payment.** The **payment** is due. **Payment.**	**^p^a^y^m^e^n^t^**	8 [53]
8	1:10	**Avoid.** I **avoid** the rain. **Avoid.**	**^a^v^o^i^d^**	6 [59]
9	1:20	**Noodle.** They served **noodle** soup. **Noodle.**	**^n^o^o^d^l^e^**	7 [66]
10	1:30	**Strolling.** We were **strolling** the beach. **Strolling.**	**^s^t^r^o^l^l^i^n^g^**	10 [76]
11	1:40	**Waffle.** He ate a **waffle. Waffle.**	**^w^a^f^f^l^e^**	7 [83]
12	1:50	**Famous.** She is **famous. Famous.**	**^f^a^m^o^u^s^**	7 [90]
	2:00	***Stop. Put your pencils down.***		
			Total CSW Possible	12
			Total CSS Possible	90

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