**Phonics for ESL Diagnostic**

**by Shelley Hale Lee**

The diagnostic will help you determine a starting point for your phonics instruction. The goal of this process is to discover your students’ knowledge of these letter/sound relationships in English: short vowels, single consonants, and digraphs sh, ch, th, and ck.

It is designed for use with *At the River and Other Stories for Adult Emergent Readers* by Shelley Hale Lee, but can be used with other beginning readers as well.

Use this with beginning ESL students ages 8-adult who are nonliterate or semiliterate in their native language, who are literate in a non-Roman alphabet language, or who have gaps in their native language literacy skills.

Steps 1-3 can all be done on the same day. Do Step 4 on another day if students do very well on Step 3. If your students don’t do well as a group on Step 3, skip Step 4.

**Step 1: Oral quiz on letter names**

Put the alphabet on the board, upper and lowercase. Ask the students to tell you the letter names as you point to each one. This can be done individually or with the whole group.

**Step 2: Oral quiz on letter sounds**

Point to each letter and ask for the sound. Model the first few letters and sounds to show them what you’re asking for. Ask for the short vowel sounds: /a/ as in apple, /e/ as in egg, /i/ as in India, /o/ as in octopus, and /u/ as in umbrella. This can be done individually or with the whole group.

If you get a fairly strong response from the group, move on to Step 3. If the response is weak, stop the diagnostic and begin planning phonics instruction for single consonants and short vowels.

**Step 3: Written quiz on letter sounds** (see teacher’s key and answer sheets)

The teacher produces the letter sound only, not the letter name. Students write the letter that makes that sound. If students ask you for the name, just tell them to listen for the sound. Don’t give examples like “/b/, book”. Don’t allow students to collaborate so that you can really see who knows what.

After grading the quizzes, you’ll get a good idea of which sounds your students know. If the results are fairly strong, move on to step 4 the following day.

**Step 4: Written quiz on CVC words**

Ask students to number 1-25 on their own paper. They will write the word they hear. Say each word 2 or 3 times, but not too slowly. Don’t spell the word or break it down into sounds. Don’t point to a picture of the item. This list of words contains all of the short vowels and single consonant sounds plus digraphs sh, ch, th, and ck.

*mat, nut, fan, bed, jog, kid, fox, wet, rag, mix, pod, lad, box, hum, mug, zip, yes, vet, sit, yum, quit, ship, chat, bath, sock*

After grading the quizzes, you can see areas of strength and weakness for individuals and for the group as a whole.

**English Letter Sounds Quiz Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 11. \_\_\_\_\_ 21. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 12. \_\_\_\_\_ 22. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 13. \_\_\_\_\_ 23. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ 14. \_\_\_\_\_ 24. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ 15. \_\_\_\_\_ 25. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_ 16. \_\_\_\_\_ 26. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_ 17. \_\_\_\_\_ 27. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_ 18. \_\_\_\_\_ 28. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_ 19. \_\_\_\_\_ 29. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_ 20. \_\_\_\_\_ 30. \_\_\_\_\_

**English Letter Sounds Quiz Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 11. \_\_\_\_\_ 21. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 12. \_\_\_\_\_ 22. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 13. \_\_\_\_\_ 23. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ 14. \_\_\_\_\_ 24. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ 15. \_\_\_\_\_ 25. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_ 16. \_\_\_\_\_ 26. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_ 17. \_\_\_\_\_ 27. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_ 18. \_\_\_\_\_ 28. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_ 19. \_\_\_\_\_ 29. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_ 20. \_\_\_\_\_ 30. \_\_\_\_\_

***Teacher’s key***

**English Letter Sounds Quiz Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_b\_\_\_ 11. \_\_w\_\_\_ 21. \_\_u\_\_\_

2. \_\_m\_\_\_ 12. \_\_i\_\_\_ 22. \_\_x\_\_\_

3. \_\_r\_\_\_ 13. \_\_p\_\_\_ 23. \_\_y\_\_\_

4. \_\_a\_\_\_ 14. \_\_n\_\_\_ 24. \_\_qu\_\_\_

5. \_\_z\_\_\_ 15. \_\_j\_\_\_ 25. \_\_e\_\_\_

6. \_\_d\_\_\_ 16. \_\_h\_\_\_ 26. \_\_t\_\_\_

7. \_\_s\_\_\_ 17. \_\_o\_\_\_ 27. \_\_ch\_\_\_

8. \_\_f\_\_\_ 18. \_\_v\_\_\_ 28. \_\_sh\_\_\_

9. \_\_g\_\_\_ 19. \_\_k\_\_\_ 29. \_\_th\_\_\_

10. \_\_l\_\_\_ 20. \_\_c\_\_\_ 30. \_\_ck\_\_\_