Analysis of the Blumenfeld Oral Reading Assessment Test
(BORAT – Version A)

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This "Analysis of the BORAT" will study the sequenced orthographic organization of the test. Quotes are from the test instructions.

"The first 23 columns test the student's knowledge of the English alphabetic system in its entire range of vowel and consonant spelling forms. This knowledge is generally known as 'basic decoding skills.'"

"Columns 24, 25, 27, and 28 test reading ability with a variety of two-syllable words. Columns 26, 29 and 30 consists of three-syllable words. Column 31 consists of common multisyllabic words used in and out of school.

"Columns 32-36 consist of more difficult multisyllabic words generally found in such adult-level reading matter as the *Reader's Digest*. Columns 32-36 consist of multisyllabic words from employment display ads in the *Sunday Boston Globe*."

I. Basic Decoding Skills

Columns   Phonetic Elements Tested

1. Short vowels; beginning consonants: b, d, h, l, m, p, s; ending consonants: b, d, g, m, p, t x
2. Short vowels; beginning consonants: c, d, f, g, j, w, y; ending consonants: b, d, g, m, p, t, w
3. Long a spellings
4. Long e spellings
5. Long i spellings
6. Long o spellings
7. Long u spellings
8. Long oo spellings
9. /ou/ spellings
10. /oi spellings
11. /ar/ spellings
12. "a" as in all
13. /er/ spellings: er, ir, ur, ear, wor,
14. Short vowel nonsense syllables; beg. cons: b, h, j, l, m, s, t, z; ending cons: b, f, n, v, x, z
15. Short vowels; Beginning consonant blends: bl, br, cl, cr, dr, dw, fl, fr, gr, pr
    Short vowels: Ending consonant blends: st, (sh), mp, (dge), rf, (sh), nt, ft, mpt
17. Beginning consonant blends: thr, br, tw, sw, str, cr, br,
    Ending consonant blends: st, (sh), tch, (ch), ngth, xt, pt, ft
18. Words ending in "le."
19. Misc. words
20. Consonant digraphs, th, ch, wh, sh, and some blends etc.
21. Alternate spellings for /sh/: ti, si, ci, and /tu/ as in rapture.
22. Ch as /k/, ps as /s/, short y.
23. Ph and gh as /f/.

II. Advanced School Decoding Skills
24. Two-syllable words
25. Two-syllable words
26. Three-syllable words
27. Two-syllable words
28. Two-syllable words
29. Three-syllable words
30. Three-syllable words
31. Multisyllabic School words

III. Basic Adult-level Reading
32. Multisyllabic words
33. Multisyllabic words
34. Multisyllabic words
35. Multisyllabic words
36. Multisyllabic words

III. Advanced Adult-level Reading
37. Multisyllabic words
38. Multisyllabic words

The following are merely *rough indicators* of the columns that a student should be able to read based on the Grade/Score Parameters in the BORAT instructions. This table was created by Donald Potter to see how the scoring corresponded with the organization of the phonics elements in the BORAT and the corresponding organization in *Alpha-Phonics*.

Grade Levels by Columns

Third-grade:	25 columns	110 – 130 errors
Fourth-grade:	27 columns	95 – 109 errors
Fifth-grade:	29 columns	75 – 94 errors
Sixth-grade:	31 columns	55 – 74 errors
Seventh-grade:	33 columns	45 – 54 errors
Eight-grade:	34 columns	40 – 44 errors
Ninth-grade:	35 columns	35 – 39 errors (9th, 10th, and 11th are very close)
Tenth-grade:	35 columns	30 – 34 errors
Eleventh-grade:	35 columns	25 – 29 errors
Twelfth-grade:	36 columns	20 – 24 errors

Mr. Blumenfeld notes that the test is for testing oral reading skills from third-grade through adult. "First and second-graders can be tested by using the first 23 columns only. They will inform the tester on how well the child is mastering the English alphabet system." He adds, "Most important to note is **where** the errors were made. If a student misreads many words in the first 23 columns, then that student has a serious lack of basic phonetic knowledge and is primarily a sight-reader. If the student did well on the first 23 columns but then began to falter with the multisyllabic words, then this student simply has not had enough challenging, vocabulary-rich reading in school or at home."

Conclusion: The BORAT proves to be a comprehensive instrument for testing a reader's oral knowledge of the English alphabet system.

A sample of the BORAT Version A is appended along with the Instructions, which also contain information on when and how the test was normed. I first used the test on 11/9/1996.

The Blumenfeld Oral Reading Assessment Test

The purpose of the Blumenfeld Oral reading Assessment Test (BORAT) is to permit the tester to determine the student's ability to read. By reading, we mean the ability to translate our alphabetic written language into its precise spoken equivalent.

The four-page test consists of 38 columns of words, each column consisting or 10 words (380) words in al, arranged in a sequence progressing from the simplest three-letter, one syllable words to complex, multisyllabic words.

The first 23 columns test the student knowledge of the English alphabetic system in its entire range of vowel and consonant spelling forms. This knowledge is generally known as "basic decoding skills"

Columns 24, 25, 27 and 28 test reading ability with a variety of two-syllable words. Columns 26, 29 and 30 consist of three-syllable words. Column 31 consists of common multisyllabic words used in and out of school.

Columns 32-36 consist of more difficult multisyllable words generally found in adult-level reading matter as in *Reader's Digest.* Columns 37 and 38 consist of multisyllabic words culled from employment display ads in the *Sunday Boston Globe*.

This is an oral test and therefore does not test comprehension. It tests decoding skills in order to establish whether or not the student can read written English with accuracy. Indeed, many students with good phonetic knowledge may have difficulty with some of the multisyllabic words, indicating a weakness in vocabulary development.

Before administering the test, the tester should read all the words to make sure he or she knows their correct pronunciation. If the tester is unsure of only a few words, a dictionary will usually provide the correct pronunciation and accentuation. It is important for the test to know the correct pronunciation of all the words, for wrong accentuation is considered an error.

The test packed contains at least two copies of the test – one for the student to read, and a marking copy for the tester. Each student requires a marking copy as his or her own record of the test. The tester should have as many marking copies as number of students to be tested. If an entire student body in a school is to be tested, then several hundred marking copies will be needed. If you are a private tutor, keep a stock of marking copies on hand.

(Information concerning copyright.)

This test package contains a grade-level scoring chart, and a section on how to interpret the score. Also at the end of the test are several questions the tester should ask the student. If the student plans to attend college, or pursue a career goal that requires good reading skills, but has tested poorly, an intensive remedial program should be recommended. A knowledge of the schools the student has attended may provide the teacher with information on how the student as taught to read in the primary grades.

Testing Instructions

The test can be given to anyone – from a third grader to an adult. It is particularly useful in determining the reading skill of adult functional illiterates. First and second graders can be tested by using the first 23 columns only. They will inform the tester on how well the child is mastering the English alphabetic system.

Because this is an oral test, it can only be given to one person at a time. It should be given privately in a room or office where others cannot hear or interrupt. If the test is given at home, a kitchen or dining room table and two chairs would provide a comfortable setting. The student and tester should be close enough so that the tester can hear the student without difficulty and the student can read in a normal speaking voice.

First, the student fills out the information at the top of the tester's copy. When completed, the student hands the marking copy to the tester. The tester then gives the student the reading copy and instructs the student to read the words down each column in regular sequence when told to begin. The student should be told to read for accuracy, not for speed, and to pronounce each word clearly and distinctly.

When the student begins reading, the tester listens carefully, following the words as they are read, putting a check only next to those word read incorrectly. Any derivation from the correct pronunciation of the word must be marked as an error. However, if the student first mispronounces a word ore misreads it but immediately corrects himself, this should not be marked as an error. If you've already made a check mark, simply put a slash through the check to indicate an immediate self-correction. Under no circumstance should the tester in any way assist the student in reading the words.

Typical errors include gross misreadings, wrong vowel pronunciation, inability to read the word at all, wrong guessing.

When the student has completed reading all the columns, the tester should add up the check marks in each column and tabulate the total number of errors. The total number of errors it the final score. Check the scores against the grade-level chart to arrive at the student's grade-level reading ability.

Interpreting the Scores

The lower the score, the better the reader. The higher score, the poorer the reader. The discrepancy between the student's score and the expected grade-level score will indicate how far behind the student is. For example, if the student is a seventh grader, with an expected score of 45 to 54, who actually scored 100 errors, he or she would have the reading ability of a fourth-grader.

Most important to note is where the errors were made. If the student misread many words in the first 23 columns, then that student has a serious lack of basic phonetic knowledge and is primarily a sight reader. If the student did well on the first 23 columns but then began to falter with the multisyllabic words, then this student has simply not had enough challenging, vocabulary-rich reading in school or at home.

Good readers score at their grade level or better. If you are testing an entire school, you may find one or more third-graders reading at a seventh-grade level, a nineth-grader reading at a third-grade level, and a few twelfth-graders at a third-grade level, and a few twelfth-graders reading at a fifth-grade level. By giving the test to everyone, the administrator will be able to draw a literacy profile of the entire school, thus identifying those who need remedial help. If the entire school tests poorly then the reading instruction in that school will most likely be at fault.

If you are operating a good private school with good reading instruction but have among your students poor readers from the public schools, this test will help you identify them so that you can offer them remedial or tutorial instruction. In fact, this is an excellent test to administer to students how are applying. In ten minutes, this test will provide you with a clear profile of the student's reading skill and his or her ability to hand your school's curriculum. By informing the parents beforehand that the student will need extra tutorial instruction, the additional cost can be factored into the tuition.

If an adult made many errors in the first 23 columns, then the adult will need intensive systematic phonics instruction, such as *Alpha-Phonics*, to improve his or her reading ability. That individual may have been labeled functionally illiterate or dyslexic. The cure for dyslexia is to become a phonetic reader, and that means instruction in intensive, systematic phonics.

Grade Chart

The following chart is a guide to grade-level reading ability based on the number of errors made by the student in the test:

Grade	Score Parameters
3	110-130
4	95-109
5	75-94
6	55-74
7	45-54
8	40-44
9	35-39
10	30-34
11	25-29
12	20-24

How was this grade level chart prepared? In September 1983 this test was given to 207 students in grades 3 through 12 in a private school in Boston. The results made it possible to set parameters of reading ability based on errors made the students. By averaging the scores of the students in each grade, a mean score was arrived at for the grade permitting the setting of expected or ideal score parameters for each grade.

In actuality, the average scores for each graded were at variance with the expected or ideal scores. Some grades scored at, above, or below the expected average. In the chart below are the actual scores of the students by grade.

Grade	Number of Pupils	Average Errors Scored	Expected Grade-level Scores	Errors Scored by Best Reader	Errors Scored by Poorest Reader
3	11	119	110-130	51	230
4	7	105	95-109	39	227
5	0		75-94		
6	21	62	55-74	31	103
7	17	49	45-54	16	83
8	33	48	40-44	12	123
9	42	50	35-39	15	130
10	29	36	30-34	6	111
11	25	29	25-29	8	93
12	22	31	20-24	9	85

Note the amount of information that one was able to gather by the testing. Beginning with seventh grade, the best readers scored far above twelfth-grade level, while the poorest readers name made it above fifth-grade level. In addition, the chart reveals that grades 3, 4, 5, 7 and 11 achieved grade-level scores but that grades 8, 9, 10 and 12 scored below their expected level. The reason is because they did so poorly is because they included many recent arrivals from the public schools with poor reading ability.

Note that the best reader in the third grade scored at the seventh-grade level and the poorest reader in the twelfth grade scored at the fifth-grade level. The best reader in the school who made only 6 errors in the test. The poorest reader was a 9th grader who scored at the 3rd-grade level.

Obviously, the scores identified those students who were in the greatest need of help. It was discovered, for example, that 22 students in grades 8 through 12 were reading 4 or more grades below their expected level. Two students were reading seven grades below their expected reading level.

Of the 207 students tested in grades 3-12, 106 students (51%) scored at or below their expected grade level, indicating that a tutorial program was needed to bring these students up to their grade level in reading.

Drawing a School Profile

By administering this test to an entire school, it is possible to gather the following important information.
1. The reading ability of each student
2. A determination of how many students are phonetic readers and how many are "sight" readers.
3. The identification of those students who need help.
4. A comparison between those students taught to read at the school and those who were taught elsewhere.
5. A literacy profile of each class – identifying the best reader and the poorest.
6. Matching a student's reading ability to his or her career goa.
7. An evaluation of the school's overall language arts program
8. An evaluation of the school's beginning reading program.
9. A comparison between schools that have administered the same tests.
10. Data that will permit the school to determine why some students are superior readers and others very poor readers. Are the difference attributable to beginning reading instruction or other factors finding out where and how these students were taught to read in the first three grades would provide very valuable information about different reading instruction programs.

Follow Up Testing

The Paradigm Company publishes the original Blumenfeld Oral Reading Test in two versions (A & B) so that the students can be retested at a later date after tutorial or remedial help. The format of the test is the same, but the words are different, thereby permitting the tester to measure progress made by the student.

Evaluating Home Schoolers

The BORAT provides home-schooling parents a very easy and quick means of evaluating their children's reading ability. These evaluations will be useful later should the family decide to place the child in a school or when the student applies for college entrance.

THE BLUMENFELD ORAL READING ASSESSMENT TEST

Marking Copy (Version A)

Name				Age	Grade	Date

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
mad	dad	make	leak	time	joke	tune
yen	vex	paid	yield	like	boat	fuse
bit	dim	wait	she	sight	soap	huge
hog	fog	game	dream	size	row	crude
mum	cub	eight	weep	fire	cold	new
nap	jam	say	seat	cry	nose	blue
let	yet	jail	mean	dice	hope	chew
rib	fig	cage	treat	shy	phone	juice
top	cop	weigh	seed	high	slow	zoo
dug	gut	fade	brief	price	dome	spoon

8	9	10	11	12	13	14
food	out	Joyce	car	ball	serve	fam
wood	now	toy	sharp	yawn	term	hap
should	house	boil	spark	fault	girl	dex
pool	count	coin	charm	raw	shirt	seg
too	brown	void	chart	cause	thirst	dib
room	ounce	boy	charge	talk	nurse	min
book	ground	moist	farce	haunt	earn	jod
could	crowd	Troy	card	crawl	earth	nov
crook	owl	foil	large	call	worm	lub
nook	our	join	arch	caught	burn	sut

THE BLUMENFELD ORAL READING ASSESSMENT TEST
(version A)

15	16	17	18	19	20
blunt	slump	trust	able	who	this
brash	shrimp	thrash	fiddle	eye	which
clamp	smash	twitch	cattle	your	chap
crutch	snarl	preach	struggle	where	sheath
dredge	sprang	threat	single	young	while
dwell	stomp	streak	fumble	pull	church
flush	strand	text	stifle	door	rash
frost	swift	kept	wriggle	enough	those
grudge	scalp	brisk	strangle	sew	when
prompt	scrunch	draft	turtle	touch	ash

21	22	23	24	25	26
nation	scheme	Philip	napkin	promptly	national
action	chorus	phony	gallon	begrudge	consumption
patient	chemist	phrase	chapel	slothful	imagine
mission	school	physics	kidnap	tactless	tyranny
special	Christmas	graphic	vivid	luncheon	possible
capture	psychic	photo	pencil	witchcraft	difference
question	myth	rough	mimic	chopstick	judicious
fusion	system	cough	vanish	swiftly	represent
leisure	syntax	laugh	cactus	cascade	incident
tissue	syrup	draught	signal	spaceship	consonant

THE BLUMENFELD ORAL READING ASSESSMENT TEST
(Version A)

27	28	29	30	31
concern	chastened	artisan	eccentric	manager
routine	contrite	subsidies	applicants	information
asphalt	realty	upheavals	excesses	registration
prepare	apprised	ascertain	epithets	biographical
nasal	derived	resilience	exultant	photogenic
assigned	pattern	prodigious	contrary	discovery
rely	inane	equity	imminent	immediately
triumph	regime	potentate	fortified	supervision
bestow	novice	lunacy	conveyor	vacation
technique	precepts	antidote	decisive	environment

32	33	34	35
interrogation	diminutive	irresponsible	indignation
concentrated	spontaneous	surreptitiously	undemocratically
inconceivable	tremendously	representative	customarily
collaboration	emulation	consanguinity	idiosyncracies
accomplices	apostrophe	justifiable	indistinguishable
deregulation	revolution	totalitarian	intimidated
reapportionment	enunciate	infallibility	entrepreneur
contemptuous	conscientious	analytical	simultaneously
incompatibility	dictatorship	climatology	interminable
formidable	combustible	anonymity	meticulously

THE BLUMENFELD ORAL READING ASSESSMENT TEST
(Version A)

36	37	38
illumination	candidate	microprocessor
unimaginable	productivity	facilities
replicated	exceptional	confidential
reverberating	pneumatic	multidisciplinary
ludicrously	semiconductor	neurosurgery
computerized	collateral	coordinator
contiguous	appropriate	prototypes
ephemeral	responsibilities	negotiations
resuscitated	manufacturing	synonymous
anesthesiologist	innovation	installation

Score (Number of errors by column)

1____	11____	21____	31____
2____	12____	22____	32____
3____	13____	23____	33____
4____	14____	24____	34____
5____	15____	25____	35____
6____	16____	26____	36____
7____	17____	27____	37____
8____	18____	28____	38____
9____	19____	29____	
10____	20____	30____	Total____

Final Score_____ **Reading Grade Level** _____

Do you plan to attend a college? _____

What is your career goal?_____

What schools have you attended?_____