



## Before You Begin

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### **Introduction**

This guide looks at the philosophy and program organization of the Developmental Reading Assessment®, Second Edition, or DRA®2. It discusses the purpose and background of DRA2 as it relates to Grades K–3 and 4–8, the benefits of the program, and the Four-Step Plan of assessment.

### **Purpose and Background**

Over two decades of research has gone into the development of DRA2. In the mid-90s, the original DRA for Grades K–3 was developed by educator and author Joetta Beaver in collaboration with a distinguished group of primary classroom teachers.

Based on the success of the original DRA in 2000, Joetta Beaver partnered with Dr. Mark Carter, a fifth grade classroom teacher, to develop a second assessment, DRA 4–8.

In 2005, DRA was revised, expanded, field-tested, and published as the Developmental Reading Assessment, Second Edition.

### **Independent Reader Model**

DRA2 was designed using the Independent Reader Model. This model includes the three pillars of reading which work together to help students become successful independent readers. These pillars include word study, fluency, and comprehension. Word Study includes phonics and decoding strategies; fluency is the ability to read aloud with speed, accuracy, and proper phrasing and expression; and comprehension is the meaning a reader derives from a piece of text and the ability to clearly demonstrate that understanding. DRA2 not only measures these critical reading components, it also provides Focus for Instruction for you to help your students become independent readers.

The texts that are used to assess these components are typical of the material students read, both in and out of school. The content is drawn from different academic areas, such as humanities, social studies, science, and literature. DRA2 offers multiple fiction texts for each assessment level. Nonfiction texts are also included at each grade level starting in grade one.

### **Benefits**

DRA2 was designed to help teachers systematically observe, record, and evaluate students' reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension.

DRA2 provides field-tested, research-based assessment forms and texts. With these resources, teachers are able to determine students' independent reading levels and identify their strengths and needs on an instructional reading level.

Some helpful resources are available as well. The Teacher Observation Guides, which include the DRA2 Continuum and Focus for Instruction, are very useful. They enable teachers to evaluate and guide each student’s continued reading growth over time. They can also help teachers recognize trends in reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension. These observations provide the data to make instructional interventions and help teachers plan strategies for each student’s learning.

Implementing DRA2 on a larger scale helps create a school- or district-wide standard for evaluating student progress. It also provides a forum for sharing strategies among teachers and fosters professional development.

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**Four-Step Plan** The core of DRA2 is a one-on-one interactive conference between the student and the teacher. Using the DRA2 Four-Step Plan, teachers can assess a student’s independent reading level, identify strengths and needs, and recommend individual instructional strategies. These steps include Reading Engagement, Oral Reading, Comprehension, and Teacher Analysis. As students develop their reading and comprehension skills, the assessment increases in difficulty to reflect this progress.

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**Reading Engagement** In Grades K–3, start by assessing reading engagement through oral questions or by having each student complete the Student Reading Survey.

In Grades 4–8, prior to the one-on-one assessment conference, the students independently record what they have read over recent months and identify strengths and goals to improve reading skills. Teachers can administer this portion of the assessment individually, in small groups, or as a whole class.

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**Oral Reading** The student then reads aloud specially selected Benchmark Assessment Books. In order to assess the student accurately, teachers use previous DRA2 or other reading assessment information to determine the highest text levels the student can read.

Student's Current Grade	If the student's level of reading performance was ...	Select a text from the following <i>DRA2</i> Level(s) at the beginning of the year
Kindergarten	not applicable	Optional for teacher
First Grade	on grade level in kindergarten below grade level in kindergarten above grade level in kindergarten	3–4 A–2 8–14
Second Grade	on grade level in 1st grade below grade level in 1st grade above grade level in 1st grade	16–18 10–14 28*–34
Third Grade	on grade level in 2nd grade below grade level in 2nd grade above grade level in 2nd grade	28–30 18–24 34–38*

These books increase in difficulty to adjust to each reader’s stage of development. As each student reads, the teacher records responses and behaviors to evaluate oral reading fluency based upon accuracy, phrasing, expression, and rate.

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**Comprehension** After the oral reading, it is time to evaluate comprehension. Ask students in Grades K–3 to retell the story or to write a summary. Then, the students answer questions that will help determine how well they understood the story.

Students in Grades 4–8 independently read the Benchmark Assessment Book and respond to questions and prompts in the Student Booklet. Clarify the assignment with the student if needed, but do not provide specific information or examples related to the text.

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**Analysis** The last step is the Analysis and Focus for Instruction. Use the Teacher Observation Guide to provide a framework for evaluating and scoring students' overall reading performance as well as their strengths and the areas that need improvement.

Use the Focus for Instruction checklist in the Teacher Observation Guide to determine what students need to learn next. This will help target instruction based on each student's specific needs.

It is easy to see how easy it is to incorporate DRA2 into the current lesson plans where it can become an effective part of your teaching methodology.

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**DRA2  
Technical  
Manual**

Additional information about the theoretical framework, research, reliability, and validity of DRA2 is available in the DRA2 Technical Manual.



To view an online interactive version of the manual, go online to the Pearson Web site.

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**Review** This tutorial explained the background and foundations of DRA2; how the program systematically observes, records, and evaluates students' independent reading levels; and the program organization through the basic Four-Step Plan, which includes Reading Engagement, the One-on-One Reading Conference, Comprehension, and Analysis.