

# **PLANNED ILLITERACY WITHIN AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**



**SCHOOL TEST RECORDS  
FROM OUR PAST WHICH  
PROVE THIS VIEW**

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# THE LITERACY DISASTERS

THAT AUSTRALIA DID NOT LEARN FROM

IN 40 YEARS

... a simple true story ...

There is something desperately sad about any year **6** group in a working class area where **14%** of the class cannot read out loud the word *hub* ... **25%** cannot read out loud the word *dazzle* ... and **40%** fail on the word *scribbler*. Each response to the **80** different words in the test was failed *twice* before being marked as wrong.

The contrast between the **TOP** half of the class and the **BOTTOM** half was cruel indeed: For every phonic or sounding out error that a *top* half student made, his counterpart in the *bottom* half would average **25** errors. The two halves weren't exactly equal. There were **69** students all told, with **33** in the *top* half. The *phonic* test had been organized in three levels of difficulty and had tested the student's 'sounding out' of some **100** common letter combinations which underpin the construction of English words.

*In round figures:* The average of the *reading comprehension ages* for the **TOP** half on **2** different standardised reading age tests, was only **10.4 years**. The **BOTTOM** half was two years further behind on the standardised tests: its average reading age on the **2** tests was **8.3 years**. The month was approximately mid-year, so this meant that most students were around **11.5** years old. And *all* students were set to proceed to secondary education within **8** months.

The school was in an outer Melbourne metropolitan area that was a predominantly housing commission area and a safe political electorate. Every Australian state has **many** such schools in areas like this. This school was, and still is **typical** of many throughout Australia today.

The year was **1982**. The school principal who permitted the study didn't seem especially worried at these results. For that time, the teachers in his school were rather '*avant-garde*' in their choice of literacy curriculum. Some were in line for promotion upon the grounds of their modern '*progressiveness*' in teaching. Most were among the early supporters of the new '*creative spelling*' ideas and of the new '*whole language*' methods for literacy teaching.

The school did not therefore have a program in place for the systematic testing or teaching of *phonic* skills: And this even for the **BOTTOM 36** Year 6 students whose average reading comprehension age on **2** tests was **8.3** years, and whose *phonic read aloud* scores were **25 TIMES LOWER** than their same age counterparts in the upper half of the **very same class**.

**YOU ARE WRONG** if you think that Australian 'working class' schools are any better off in **2022** than they were in **1982**

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### SIMPLE NATIONAL EVIDENCE THAT WILL SHOCK YOU

**EVERY WORD** does have to be written ( s p e l l ) accurately before we can require any child to **READ** it. Did you know the following things about the teaching and testing of English **SPELLING** in Australian schools ?

The **spelling-for-age** performance of our Australian school students was **last nationally tested** all the way back in **1936** . . . a distance of **12** entire primary school generations. The **words** that were used in these long ago spelling tests were recently presented to all Australian ministers for education in a paper dated 17<sup>th</sup> August **2017**. None of these ministers admitted to significant error in their literacy curricula yet the **annual** exclusion of **age level spelling testing** has not been accidental even once for over 80 years.

Australia's most recent **National Primary Literacy Survey** was conducted in **1996**. It was the first such survey in **21** years yet it did not contain an **age level spelling test**.

As far back as **1996** industry sources had reported that a staggering **70%** of **Australian youth entering the workforce** failed industry standards in English **spelling**.

In April of **2011** Australia's eleven **Industry Skills Councils** publicly announced that Australia has up to **8 million workers** with serious problems in **reading** and **spelling**.

In December of **2012** a global survey of basic **spelling** skill revealed that the scores of Australian students in **year 4** were the **lowest** of some **27 countries** in the **English speaking world**.

Some **9** years ago too, Australia's National Broadcasting Commission featured an ABS report to the effect that a stunning **half** of all Tasmanian adults were **functionally illiterate**.

Australian government education systems at **all** levels ... between and including our kindergartens and workplaces ... have now not systematically tested or taught the primary **spelling** basics since well **before** the **1980s**

Since **2008** our national yearly **NAPLAN** tests have **not once** conventionally tested for accurate **age level** spelling skills among our Australian school students.

Since **1982** there have been no recommended **year by year spelling lists** in any official federal, state or territorial literacy curriculum for primary schools.

In **2005**, the Australian government conducted its first ever **National Inquiry Into the Teaching of Literacy in Australian Schools**. This project did **not** inquire into the spelling skills of Australian school children. Its final report contained some **40,000** words and provided rare reference to the subject of **spelling** mentioning it a total of only **26 times!** This was an outright nationwide refusal to carefully investigate the basic English **spelling skills** of Australia's school children.

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

Even more to the point ... in **2018** our current **Australian National Primary English Curriculum** mentions the word **dictation** only **once** in a total of **17,500** words. But correspondingly ... the word **spelling** does get mentioned **29** times ... but this is close enough to an average of only **4** mentions for each entire year of the primary school. **Year level spelling lists** for our primary school children are **no longer** provided by the official English ( literacy ) curriculum of **any** Australian government !

### The Nationwide **Eradication** of Accurate Spelling From Australia's Literacy Teaching: Summary

During the course of at least the last 40 years, our Australian English curriculum bureaucrats have consistently *conspired* in order to *remove* the systematic testing and teaching of English spelling from Australian basic literacy curricula! And this current writing provides the evidence to show that this is *not* an exaggeration.

Yet, the spelling process does comprise at least *50% of the entire basic literacy process*: all words *do* have to be accurately written before we can require children to read them.

When an *entire* national educational establishment so patently seeks to *remove* all insistence on the teaching and testing of accurate English spelling skill from its literacy curricula ... and this for some 40 years... then a national literacy tragedy is *inescapable*. And this is *precisely* what Australia has today.

### **WHY AUSTRALIAN PARENTS AND TEACHERS NEED THE TESTS IN THIS CURRENT PDF FILE**

Australian schools and workplaces currently house some **9.5 million** students and workers with basic spelling and reading problems. This is a national literacy crisis. The rise of this crisis has occurred mainly during the last 40 years of the globally discredited testing and teaching practices that have been used by all Australian government education departments.

The main teaching methods that have been used throughout most Australian schools since 1982 are now recognized as having been the primary cause of literacy failure in school education systems throughout the world. The reasons for their failure are just as obvious today as they should have been from the very start. These methods have *persistently omitted* to direct teachers toward the systematic testing and teaching of the **3 core literacy basics !**

These core “ **literacy basics** ” are referred to as *read aloud* skills, *phonic* skills and English *spelling* skills. Without all **3** of these skills in place and functioning at age appropriate levels, competence in basic spelling and reading does not exist because it *cannot*. In the case of all states and territories in Australia, the systematic teaching and testing of these core skills have been omitted from mainstream literacy curricula for some **40** years.

School report cards especially, have often failed to show parents what to do to help their children when they have had problems with spelling and reading. This is why parents now **need** the type of information that they can get by *giving the tests* in this PDF files to their children at home.

# PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

## THE ONE MINUTE TEST OF READ ALOUD SKILL

Successive Australian governments since at least the early 1970s have annually thrown billions of dollars at the teaching of the literacy basics in their schools without ever publishing any *age-level test results* to show that any of Australia's school based literacy problems are being alleviated or fixed.

Every education system in the world has an ethical, and in some parts of the world even *legal* obligation, to supply each child's standardized *performance-for-age* details to parents on demand. Yet throughout Australia, **none** of our education systems do because none *can*. With the few exceptions mentioned in this testing booklet, no government system in Australia has actually collected the *vital baseline data* for over 70 years.

### About Read Aloud Skills

Every teacher or parent who has ever heard a young child read, knows that when children can't *read aloud* then they *cannot* read at all. The three snippets below about the testing of *read aloud skills* in Australia are worth noting.

1. It is close enough to *impossible* to find the word *test* in all Australian government literacy *curriculum* documents written between 1982 and 2018.
2. The Australian 1996 *National Primary School Literacy Survey* ... the very first such survey in 21 years ... did *not* test for *age level* read aloud skills.
3. Our most recent ( 1998 ) *National Primary Literacy Benchmarks* make *no mention* of read aloud skills.

The very simple *read aloud* test which follows, is adapted from the late 1970s work on 'quick tests' by Dr Peter Edwards, formerly of Monash University in Victoria. Within the space of only *one minute* parents can usually get a very simple estimate of a child's *read aloud age*. This is the quickest and most efficient starting point in testing any child with a suspected literacy problem. Dr Edwards gave permission to use his work in this writing.

When you give this test, simply ask your child to read out loud each short list of ten words in the boxes opposite. More than **TWO MISTAKES** in any list of ten words means that he has failed to read at an *independent* level for his age. Whilst your child is reading, it is a good idea for you to keep a record of his errors on a separate copy of the test.

## *The One Minute Read Aloud Test*

6.5 year olds	7.5 year olds	8.5 year olds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not</li> <li>• sit</li> <li>• milk</li> <li>• little</li> <li>• one</li> <li>• we</li> <li>• look</li> <li>• baby</li> <li>• was</li> <li>• school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• kids</li> <li>• still</li> <li>• when</li> <li>• picture</li> <li>• book</li> <li>• today</li> <li>• mother</li> <li>• night</li> <li>• people</li> <li>• birthday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• city</li> <li>• attack</li> <li>• animals</li> <li>• several</li> <li>• half</li> <li>• many</li> <li>• somewhere</li> <li>• together</li> <li>• direction</li> <li>• frighten</li> </ul>
9.5 year olds	10.5 year olds	11.5 year olds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• event</li> <li>• accept</li> <li>• numbering</li> <li>• future</li> <li>• water</li> <li>• including</li> <li>• state</li> <li>• swallow</li> <li>• convoy</li> <li>• journey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• million</li> <li>• splendid</li> <li>• develop</li> <li>• cousin</li> <li>• wealthy</li> <li>• warrior</li> <li>• curtain</li> <li>• improve</li> <li>• modern</li> <li>• pioneer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abolish</li> <li>• visible</li> <li>• veranda</li> <li>• apparatus</li> <li>• opportunity</li> <li>• original</li> <li>• orchestra</li> <li>• foreign</li> <li>• pyramid</li> <li>• routine</li> </ul>

### THREE MINUTE READ ALOUD TEST

In a busy primary classroom fast or 'ball park' measures of *read aloud* age are very useful but they not fully justifiable unless they lead to later more thorough testing. With apologies ... the test which follows presents only the first 80 words of the 1974 BURT test of word recognition. On the next page, the table of age equivalents for the *number of words correctly read* is partly invalidated as a result, but the trade-off has been that your ball park estimate of *age performance level* has been quicker.

#### Giving the test: Method

The child reads each word aloud while the parent or teacher keeps a record of his errors on a separate copy of the test. When the test is finished, the table on the next page gives the *performance ages* for the number correct. One mark is allowed for each word read correctly.

to	is	up	he	at
for	my	sun	one	of
big	some	his	or	an
went	boys	that	girl	water
just	day	wet	pot	things
no	told	love	now	sad
nurse	carry	quickly	village	scramble
journey	terror	return	twisted	shelves
beware	explorer	known	projecting	tongue
serious	domineer	obtain	belief	luncheon
emergency	events	steadiness	nourishment	fringe
formulate	scarcely	universal	commenced	overwhelmed
circumstances	destiny	urge	labourers	exhausted
trudging	refrigerator	melodrama	encyclopaedia	apprehend
motionless	ultimate	atmosphere	reputation	binocular
economy	theory	humanity	philosopher	contemptuou



## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### READING - WORD RECOGNITION - AGES FOR SCORES

This test was originally designed in Scotland in 1938 . The *reading* ages in the table below have been taken from revised performance data in 1974.

<u>SCORE</u> : <u>READING</u> AGE	<u>SCORE</u> : <u>READING</u> AGE	<u>SCORE</u> : <u>READING</u> AGE	<u>SCORE</u> : <u>READING</u> AGE
2 5.3	21 6.2	41 7.6	61 9.3
3 5.3	22 6.3	42 7.7	62 9.4
4 5.4	23 6.4	43 7.8	63 9.6
5 5.5	24 6.5	44 7.9	64 9.7
6 5.5	25 6.5	45 7.10	65 9.8
7 5.6	26 6.6	46 7.11	66 9.9
8 5.6	27 6.6	47 8.0	67 9.10
9 5.7	28 6.8	48 8.1	68 10.0
10 5.7	29 6.9	49 8.2	69 10.1
11 5.8	30 6.9	50 8.3	70 10.2
12 5.9	31 6.9	51 8.4	71 10.3
13 5.9	32 6.10	52 8.5	72 10.4
14 5.10	33 6.11	53 8.6	73 10.6
15 5.11	34 7.0	54 8.7	74 10.7
16 5.11	35 7.1	55 8.8	75 10.9
17 6.0	36 7.2	56 8.9	76 10.10
18 6.1	37 7.3	57 8.10	77 10.11
19 6.1	38 7.4	58 9.0	78 11.0
20 6.2	39 7.5	59 9.1	79 11.1
	40 7.5	60 9.2	80 11.3

### SIX 'YEAR LEVEL' TESTS OF READ ALOUD SKILLS

In the following pages are six brief extracts from a set of books which were effectively the *Reading Curriculum* for all Victorian primary schools for some **45** years. These books were called the *Victorian Readers*. Most of them were initially written in the 1930s, but they were still being used for the teaching of reading in some Victorian schools even into the mid 1970s.

No Australian education authority has actually tested for age level read aloud skills since the **federation of Australian states** in 1901. Our modern primary teachers then, are rarely in a position to confidently find out for themselves just how well or poorly their students are performing for their age. In the absence of valid modern data about *age appropriate read aloud* skill, we are *compelled* to turn to old fashioned guidelines.

The six passages which follow, are from the now 'old fashioned' Victorian Readers. Whilst these extracts exemplify the classroom standards of yesteryear, they can still be of value to both parents and teachers in *today's* homes and classrooms. If, for example, a present day **12** year old cannot read the passage for yesteryear's **9** year olds or even younger . . . then it becomes *vital* to test further to find out where his problem lies . . . and then subsequently set out to fix it.

## ***6.5 Year Olds***

Victorian School Readers: **GRADE 1**: 1930-1970's

In a passage of this size, the curriculum rule of thumb for the more modern *whole language* literacy teachers of the last 30+ years ... was that the child could make as many as 3 errors or '*miscues*' on this passage and still be considered *independent*. How does your own modern 6.5 year old measure up?

One Sunday, Mother said,

“Bob, will you go with me to see old Sam?”

Old Sam is ill. He is in his hut.

We got a can of milk and a box of eggs for him.

Old Sam was in bed.

He had a red rug on him.

He said, “I am glad to see you; I am so ill.”

**NUMBER OF ERRORS** \_\_\_\_\_

## 7.5 Year Olds

Victorian School Readers: **GRADE 2:** 1930-1970's

In a passage of this size, the curriculum rule of thumb for the more modern *whole language* literacy teachers of the last 30+ years ... was that the child could make as many as 5 errors or '*miscues*' on this passage and still be considered *independent*. How does your own modern 6.5 year old measure up?

### ***THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF.***

Once upon a time there were three Billy goats gruff.

They were going up the hill to get themselves fat.

The first was Little Billy Goat Gruff.

The second was Middle-sized Billy Goat Gruff.

The third was Big Billy Goat Gruff.

On the way, they had to cross a bridge over a river.

Under this bridge there lived a greedy troll, with eyes as big as saucers, and a nose as long as a poker.

This troll liked to eat goats better than anything else.

The three goats were afraid of the greedy troll.

**NUMBER OF ERRORS** \_\_\_\_\_

## ***8.5 Year Olds***

Victorian School Readers: **GRADE 3**: 1930-1970's

In a passage of this size, the curriculum rule of thumb for the more modern *whole language* literacy teachers of the last 30+ years ... was that the child could make as many as **8** errors or '*miscues*' on this passage and still be considered *independent*. How does your own modern **8.5** year old measure up?

### ***THE GOLDEN BIRD IN THE KING'S GARDEN.***

A certain king had a beautiful garden, and in it stood a tree that bore golden apples. About the time when the apples grew ripe, it was found that every night one of them was gone.

The king became very angry at this, and ordered the gardener to watch all night. The gardener set his eldest son-to watch; but about twelve o'clock he fell asleep, and in the morning another of the apples was missing. Then the second son was ordered to watch; and at midnight he, too, fell asleep, and in the morning another apple was gone.

Then the third son lay down under the tree to watch. As the clock struck twelve, a bird of pure gold came; and, as it was snapping at one of the apples, the gardener's son shot an arrow at it. But the arrow did the bird no harm; only it dropped a golden feather from its tail, and then flew away.

**NUMBER OF ERRORS** \_\_\_\_\_

## ***9.5 Year Olds***

Victorian School Readers: **GRADE 4:** 1930-1970's

In a passage of this size, the curriculum rule of thumb for the more modern *whole language* literacy teachers of the last 30+ years ... was that the child could make as many as 7 errors or '*miscues*' on this passage and still be considered *independent*. How does your own modern **9.5** year old measure up?

### ***TOM AND THE LOBSTER.***

Tom was going along the rocks in three-fathom water when he saw a round cage of green withes, and inside it, looking very much ashamed of himself, sat his friend the lobster.

"What! Have you been naughty, and have they put you in the lock-up?" asked Tom.

The lobster felt a little indignant at such a notion, but he only said, " I can't get out."

"Why did you get in?"

"After that nasty piece of dead fish."

"Where did you get in ?"

"Through that round hole at the top."

"Then why don't you get out through it?"

"Because I can't," and the lobster twiddled his horns more fiercely than ever, but he was forced to confess.

"I have jumped upwards, downwards, backwards, and sideways at least four thousand times, and I can't get out."

**NUMBER OF ERRORS \_\_\_\_\_**

## ***10.5 Year Olds***

Victorian School Readers: **GRADE 5:** 1930-1970's

In a passage of this size, the curriculum rule of thumb for the more modern *whole language* literacy teachers of the last 30+ years ... was that the child could make as many as **9** errors or '*miscues*' on this passage and still be considered *independent*. How does your own modern **10.5** year old measure up?

### ***THE DROVER'S WIFE.***

The two-roomed house is built of round timber, slabs, and stringy-bark, and floored with split slabs. A big, bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, veranda included.

Bush all round-bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten, native apple-trees. No undergrowth.

Nothing to relieve the eye, save the darker green of a few she oaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless, creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest house.

The drover, an ex-squatter, is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone.

Four ragged, dried-up-looking children are playing about the house. Suddenly, one of them yells, "Snake! Mother, here's a snake!"

The gaunt, sun-browed bush woman dashes from the kitchen, snatches her baby from the ground, holds it on her left hip, and reaches for a stick.

"Where is it?"

"Here! Gone into the wood-heap" yells the eldest boy, a sharp-faced, and excited urchin of eleven. "Stop there, mother! I'll have him. Stand back. I'll have him!"

**NUMBER OF ERRORS** \_\_\_\_\_

## ***11.5 Year Olds***

Victorian School Readers: **GRADE 6**: 1930-1970's

In a passage of this size, the curriculum rule of thumb for the more modern *whole language* literacy teachers of the last 30+ years ... was that the child could make as many as 9 errors or '*miscues*' on this passage and still be considered *independent*. How does your own modern **11.5** year old measure up?

### ***THE LOADED DOG.***

Dave Regan, Jim Bently, and Andy Page were sinking a shaft at Stony Creek in search of a rich quartz reef that was supposed to exist in the vicinity.

The creek held plenty of fish, providing both sport and food for the men. There came a time, however, when the fish, for some reason best known to themselves, refused to bite. The creek at this time was reduced to a series of water-holes, and Dave, who was subject to what are popularly known as "brain waves," conceived the idea of blowing the fish up with a cartridge similar to those which they used for blasting the rock.

He thought the thing out, and Andy worked it out, making the cartridge about three times the ordinary size, Jim Bently remarking that it was big enough to blow the bottom out of the river. After covering the thing with several coatings of canvas and tallow, Andy stood it carefully against a tent peg and wound the fuse loosely around it. Then he went to the camp fire to try some potatoes which were boiling in a "Billy."

**NUMBER OF ERRORS** \_\_\_\_\_

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### AGE LEVEL SPELLING SKILL

#### PARENTS AND TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE!

#### ... I HAVE NOT EXAGGERATED ...

As briefly explained on pages 2 and 3 ... since the early 1980s, government literacy curricula throughout Australia have been oriented towards actually *eradicating* spelling from the testing and teaching of basic English at all levels. Impossible though this seems, no other conclusion is possible. Here is some additional information.

- In **1993-95** the official federally promoted newsletter of advice to some **10,000** Australian teachers of *Adult English Language and Literacy* was called '*Literacy Update*'.

A simple count of 'core' words in the articles of **22** editions of this journal showed that although the word *literacy* was written over **2,700** times, the word *spelling* was mentioned only **3** times and the expressions *test* and *alphabet* only **twice**. The expressions *dictation*, *read aloud skill* and *word recognition* each scored **0**. This example of the new literacy curriculum trend toward the total eradication of *read aloud skills* as well as *spelling skills* from basic English education in Australia was just the beginning.

- Since **1994** all new government sponsored English curricula for primary schools in Australia have been based directly or indirectly on the *never ever validated* '*Outcomes Based Education*' method for curriculum design. None of these 'new' curricula have ever contained any recommended year level *spelling* lists, any sample *spelling* tests, or even any lists of English *spelling* rules for Australian literacy teachers in the primary school.
- Since **1996** our annual Victorian '*LAP*' and '*AIM*' primary school surveys of basic English skills, have not once included an age level *spelling* test.
- Our **1998** *Australian National Literacy Benchmarks* have an example of a Year **2** level *spelling* test in the section for Year **5**. It's still hard to believe, but the inescapable proof is on page **35** of the printed version of the Benchmarks.
- In **1982**, Victoria's recommended year level *spelling* list for primary schools contained over **1,300 words** that were organized in **16** levels for children in years **3** to **6**. By **1994** however, our only recommended spelling list for Victorian primary schools was only **100 words** long. No reason was ever offered.
- In all except **1** of the above mentioned documents, the words *dictation* and *test* simply cannot be found. They weren't mentioned even accidentally. They seem to have been obliterated even from the thinking of Australia's literacy curriculum writers.
- As mentioned earlier, in **1996**, industry sources reported that a staggering **70%** of Australian youth failed industry standards in English spelling skills.



## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### TWO SPELLING AGE TESTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

The forty spelling test words written in **bold** on the test below are probably the most tested forty words in the history of English spelling testing. They were first published in the UK, free of copyright restriction, by J C Daniels and Hunter Diack, in their **1958** book called *The Standard Reading Tests*. They have been used to find the spelling ages of millions of children globally since that time: They are still being used for this purpose by a number of teachers in private practice in Australia.

However, the forty spelling words in **faint** below are simply parallel **substitutes** for the words in the original **1958** test. Each **substitute** word has been picked because it is a close match to the original spelling word with respect to (1) its length (2) alphabetic complexity and (3) frequency of occurrence in primary school texts. The aim of this **substitute** test is to provide a reasonably valid backup spelling age test that might corroborate student scores on the original:

#### The Two Spelling Tests

<b>on</b> in	<b>hot</b> hat	<b>cup</b> pen	<b>van</b> ten	<b>jam</b> him	<b>lost</b> help	<b>sit</b> set	<b>plan</b> plug	<b>mud</b> mad	<b>beg</b> big
<b>the</b> one	<b>go</b> no	<b>for</b> her	<b>so</b> by	<b>me</b> we	<b>are</b> were	<b>of</b> to	<b>do</b> she	<b>who</b> what	<b>here</b> where
<b>ship</b> shop	<b>chop</b> chip	<b>food</b> moon	<b>fire</b> hair	<b>thin</b> thick	<b>date</b> hate	<b>seem</b> feel	<b>dart</b> harm	<b>loud</b> cloud	<b>form</b> born
<b>eye</b> buy	<b>fight</b> light	<b>friend</b> water	<b>done</b> love	<b>any</b> many	<b>great</b> break	<b>sure</b> sugar	<b>women</b> lettuce	<b>answer</b> minute	<b>beautiful</b> wrestling

#### The Original Spelling Ages for Student Scores

0	5.0 yrs	10	6.1 yrs	20	7.2 yrs	30	8.5 yrs
1	5.2 yrs	11	6.2 yrs	21	7.3 yrs	31	8.7 yrs
2	5.3 yrs	12	6.3 yrs	22	7.5 yrs	32	9.0 yrs
3	5.4 yrs	13	6.4 yrs	23	7.6 yrs	33	9.2 yrs
4	5.5 yrs	14	6.5 yrs	24	7.7 yrs	34	9.5 yrs
5	5.6 yrs	15	6.6 yrs	25	7.8 yrs	35	9.8 yrs
6	5.7 yrs	16	6.7 yrs	26	7.9 yrs	36	10.2 yrs
7	5.8 yrs	17	6.8 yrs	27	8.1 yrs	37	10.5 yrs
8	5.9 yrs	18	7.0 yrs	28	8.2 yrs	38	11.0 yrs
9	6.0 yrs	19	7.1 yrs	29	8.3 yrs	39	11.6 yrs
						40	12.3 yrs

Not long after their publication in **1958**, the above ‘spelling age’ scores became recognized in many parts of the English speaking world, as appropriate ‘average for age’ performance for children in the primary school. In **1978**, a South Australian study, by Peter Westwood, produced what was effectively ‘Australian norms’ for the same 40 original words.

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### THE 'FOREVER' SPELLING TEST

5 to 9 year olds only

*Limitless Substitute Spelling Tests Based on the 1958 Research*

No.	LIST 1	LIST 2	LIST 3	LIST 4	LIST 5	ORIGINAL DANIEL & DIACK WORD
1.	in	up	at	it	am	<b>on</b>
2.	mat	jet	cot	fit	nut	<b>hot</b>
3.	zip	gap	pup	mop	sip	<b>cup</b>
4.	ten	fun	win	pin	ran	<b>van</b>
5.	fox	wax	him	sum	box	<b>jam</b>
6.	lent	best	help	pond	sent	<b>lost</b>
7.	vat	yet	rot	bit	cut	<b>sit</b>
8.	plum	drag	stop	glad	tram	<b>plan</b>
9.	red	hid	mad	cod	fed	<b>mud</b>
10.	bug	log	wag	rag	mug	<b>beg</b>
11.	this	that	the	these	those	<b>the</b>
12.	so	no	go	so	no	<b>go</b>
13.	from	by	for	from	by	<b>for</b>
14.	as	is	us	as	is	<b>so</b>
15.	he	we	be	she	he	<b>me</b>
16.	was	were	are	was	were	<b>are</b>
17.	to	of	to	of	to	<b>of</b>
18.	does	do	does	do	does	<b>do</b>
19.	what	who	when	what	who	<b>who</b>
20.	there	where	here	there	where	<b>here</b>
21.	shop	dish	rush	shut	wish	<b>ship</b>
22.	chip	rich	chat	such	chug	<b>chop</b>
23.	moon	roof	cool	hoop	boot	<b>food</b>
24.	hair	tire	fare	fear	more	<b>fire</b>
25.	thin	them	then	with	broth	<b>thin</b>
26.	ride	late	fine	fate	time	<b>date</b>
27.	feed	seen	deep	keep	feet	<b>seen</b>
28.	part	cart	harm	park	tart	<b>dart</b>
29.	cloud	road	trout	soak	scout	<b>loud</b>
30.	born	north	worn	fork	torn	<b>form</b>
31.	sight	light	night	tight	might	<b>fight</b>
32.	some	done	love	come	shove	<b>done</b>
33.	thief	piece	chief	niece	priest	<b>friend</b>

#### A comment on the Forever Spelling Test

The 'letter and sound' patterns which underpin the original *1958* spelling words, again provide the basic spelling test design which enables us to form a virtually limitless number of viable *substitute* spelling tests for children between the ages of 5 and 9. There are 33 words in each of the columns. To design a 'new' and relatively viable 'spelling age' test of 33 words for 5 to 9 year olds is as simple as selecting one of the five words in each row as you proceed down the columns.

From a strictly technical standpoint it is statistical cheating to use the original *1958* table of 'normal scores for age' for each of these *substitute* tests. But from a very practical teaching standpoint who cares?

## **SPELLING MASTERY TESTS FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS**

### **How to give any spelling test**

The valid method for giving a spelling test has remained unchanged for centuries.

1. Say the word to be spelt: e.g. **yacht**
2. Put it in a sentence: e.g. The **yacht** was found on the rocks
3. Repeat the target word as the children write it: **yacht**

### **Spelling standards old and new**

The standard year by year level spelling lists that, years ago, were used in Australian classrooms were of two main types. In the *infant* grades ( the first 3 years ) of the primary school ... *phonic* word lists for *sounding out practice* were more common ... because there was the almost universal recognition among teachers that they were the only sensible way to start.

In the the *middle and upper* grades ( years 3 to 6 ) the spelling lists usually changed in character from *phonically* based lists to lists based largely upon *word frequency*. This second type of list contained merely words which experienced teacher designers estimated would be most likely needed by the children whenever they wanted to write.

In all instances that I am aware of, this second group of spelling lists was substantially *speculative*. Even though they were compiled by the expert teachers of the day, they were unavoidably influenced by the teaching aspirations and by the *personal and professional estimates* of their compilers. I refer to these lists then as largely *aspirational* spelling lists.

However, one set of spelling lists, researched by the *Victorian Education Department* during the mid to late *1960s*, remains even today as a worthy exception to this type of aspirational list. A *modified version* of this list features in the next few pages.

## **RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS**

### **Designing primary SPELLING MASTERY tests using these word lists.**

Any person with an officially 'approved' year level spelling *list* of the old fashioned type can design, administer and correct a *simple and valid* test of *spelling mastery* for any year level in the primary school. Only a small amount of background information is necessary.

The original spelling booklet from which the lists in the following pages have been selected, was produced by the *Victorian Education Department* in 1969. For some 15 years or more it provided Victorian primary teachers with a basic reference as to what words to teach to students in each year of the primary school.

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

It is important to understand *why* this particular spelling list was so different to others of that same approximate era. The original study which gave rise to these words involved an extensive count of the words that students of the different age groups actually used in their *writing*. The lists that derived from this basic count were then checked against the prevailing '*word frequency*' listings of that date and adjustments made. The word lists in the next few pages then, are much more of a *carefully researched* rather than merely *aspirational* type.

As explained elsewhere: in the early 1980s, literacy curricula around Australia changed radically. They changed so radically in fact, that spelling lists for each age group in the primary school just *disappeared* from literacy curricula in all Australian states and territories. For the previous 50 years or more, teachers had had year by year *official curriculum guidance* on what words to try and teach to which children: and then suddenly the guidance of more than half a century was gone! No public explanation was ever offered.

Coming back to the present day: if the spelling standards of our school children today are going to improve, teachers of each age group will need to be *supplied once again* with appropriate and '*standard*' spelling lists for the age or class year level that they are teaching. That's what the lists in the *next few pages* are on about.

**Making a primary spelling test where the sensible 'pass' mark must be close to 100% correct ! You simply choose words randomly from the lists.**

In the next few pages I have collapsed the original *16* lists of the official **1969** spelling book into 4 easier to manage ones that correspond to years 3 through to 6.

It might be argued that children nowadays are likely to use different words when they write, and that new research is needed to indicate which new and different words are used by today's children. The argument has some validity, but for the time being, I have adopted the assumption that children in the different age groups of today *probably* use much the same words in their writing as those in the 1970s.

Though the *aspirational* spelling lists ( see previous page ) of the same approximate period tended to be more difficult, it is the *research work* behind the official 1970s departmental lists that will *enable them to endure*. My personal view is that these lists are easier for the children of each age group than they really should be. But I still recommend that the primary spelling lists *which follow immediately* must be regarded as an interim *minimum age level spelling standard* for today's teachers and parents to consider.

*Minimum* spelling levels for students must be exactly that. At the end of each year, children who have been properly taught with comparatively simple spelling lists, such as the ones in the next few pages, can be expected on testing to get close to **100%** right.

With respect to your own children at home, this means that they should score close to **100% correct** on any test of spelling that has been designed for the year level *immediately BELOW their current age*. If their scores are not within this ballpark,

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

you would be well advised to check out their basic *phonic* skills with the tests that start on page 33 and then carefully follow up on the recommended *phonic drill activities*.

The objection will arise from some quarters that the following spelling lists are based on the criterion of their *frequency* in common usage rather than their *alphabetic* or *phonic* complexity. This cannot be helped. The winning argument for this middle and upper primary school level of spelling ability is that most children are better taught those particular words that they are more likely to need when writing.

This does not preclude the addition of supplementary phonic activities to be added to the core lists of words based upon frequency. Indeed, such additions are usually necessary throughout the primary school because of the following reason:

Primary school children are **still** in the process of **learning** to decipher some of the finer points of the **English phonic** or '**alphabetic**' system even when they are performing **comfortably** at an old fashioned **12.5 year old** level in their basic **read aloud** skills.

### RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
a	able	address	accident
across	about	afraid	aeroplane
after	afternoon	again	allowed
alive	almost	against	ankle
all	alone	agree	arithmetic
along	also	already	awful
am	amount	although	banana
an	another	always	bandage
and	any	among	bare
apple	apart	angry	bear
are	army	animal	beautiful
arm	around	answer	beauty
as	arrow	aunt	believe
asleep	asked	backwards	bicycle
at	ate	basket	blossom
awake	bank	bathe	break
away	bark	beat	breakfast
axe	bath	because	breath
baby	battle	beef	breathe
back	beast	berry	buried

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS

#### Year 3

bad  
bag  
ball  
band  
bat  
be  
became  
bed  
been  
bell

belong  
below  
bend  
best  
bird  
bit  
black  
blow  
boat  
bone

book  
box  
boy  
bread  
bring  
broom  
bump  
bus  
but  
by

cake  
call  
came  
can  
cap  
car  
card  
cart  
cat  
cave

#### Year 4

become  
before  
begin  
behind  
beside  
better  
birthday  
bite  
block  
blood

blue  
body  
both  
bother  
branch  
brick  
bright  
brother  
brought  
brown

brush  
bucket  
build  
bull  
bunch  
bush  
butter  
button  
buy  
cannot

carry  
catch  
cattle  
chain  
chair  
chalk  
cheese  
chest  
chicken  
children

#### Year 5

between  
biggest  
blew  
blown  
board  
bottle  
bottom  
bought  
bow  
bowl

brakes  
bridge  
broken  
built  
bullet  
bundle  
burnt  
burst  
busy  
butcher

cabbage  
cabin  
calves  
camel  
candle  
captain  
captured  
castle  
chance  
changed

charge  
chase  
cheap  
chief  
choose  
circle  
cliff  
climate  
climbed  
clothes

#### Year 6

business  
canoe  
capital  
careful  
carriage  
caught  
cause  
celebrated  
centre  
century

certain  
characters  
cheered  
chimney  
chocolate  
chosen  
circus  
cocoa  
coffee  
collar

collect  
college  
colour  
complete  
considered  
continued  
control  
correct  
costume  
cotton

couple  
course  
court  
cousin  
crawl  
crowd  
cupboard  
curtain  
dangerous  
decided

**RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS**

<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>
clock	church	coach	decorated
coat	city	coast	desert
come	class	coming	developed
cook	clean	company	different
cow	clear	containing	dining
cry	close	corner	disappeared
cut	clothe	cough	disease
dark	cloud	counted	distance
days	coal	country	divided
did	cold	creek	division
dig	cool	crept	double
dish	could	dairy	dropped
do	cover	dare	drowned
dog	cross	daughter	earn
doll	crown	dear	either
done	dance	death	electric
door	dead	deer	electricity
down	deep	delighted	enemy
drink	died	delivered	engineer
drive	dinner	dentist	enjoyed
drum	doctor	direction	entered
duck	donkey	dirty	especially
dug	drank	discovered	examined
eat	draw	does	example
egg	dream	dozen	except
eighteen	dress	drew	excited
eighty	dry	during	excuse
end	each	duty	exercise
ever	early	eighth	expected
face	earth	else	experience
far	east	empty	explained
fat	easy	engine	explore
father	edge	enough	famous
fed	elephant	escape	fastened
feed	even	evening	favourite
feet	every	factory	feathers
fell	fairy	failed	feel
fill	fall	fair	field
fine	fancy	family	figure
fish	farmer	feast	finally

**RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS**

**Year 3**

five  
fix  
flag  
fly  
food  
foot  
football  
for  
forget  
four

fox  
from  
fun  
game  
garden  
gate  
gave  
get  
girl  
give

go  
gold  
good  
got  
green  
grow  
gum  
had  
hand  
happy

hard  
has  
hat  
have  
hay  
he  
help  
hen  
her  
hill

**Year 4**

fast  
felt  
fence  
few  
fifteen  
fifty  
fight  
find  
finger  
first

flames  
flew  
floor  
flower  
folk  
follow  
forgot  
found  
full  
funny

getting  
glad  
glass  
gone  
grandfather  
grandmother  
grass  
ground  
hair  
half

hang  
hate  
head  
hear  
held  
here  
hide  
hold  
hollow  
horse

**Year 5**

fellow  
fifth  
finish  
fired  
float  
flood  
flour  
forest  
forty  
fresh

friend  
front  
fruit  
fur  
garage  
ghost  
giant  
glove  
goes  
good-bye

great  
grew  
grey  
grocer  
group  
guess  
handle  
happened  
harvest  
healthy

heard  
heart  
heaven  
heavy  
herd  
hero  
hiding  
high  
history  
holiday

**Year 6**

forced  
foreign  
fourth  
frightened  
furniture  
further  
gain  
general  
gentle  
government

guard  
guide  
handkerchief  
harbor  
haul  
honour  
hospital  
imagine  
important  
increased

industry  
insects  
instrument  
island  
its  
journey  
joyful  
judge  
laid  
language

lantern  
laughed  
lettuce  
level  
library  
lightning  
listened  
lonely  
loose  
lose



## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
him	hour	honey	machine
his	hundred	hotel	material
hit	hung	hungry	meant
hole	hunting	hurry	measured
home	jelly	hurt	medicine
hop	jumped	husband	minute
hope	jungle	idea	mirror
hot	keep	including	museum
house	key	instead	national
how	killed	interesting	naughty
in	kind	invited	necessary
inside	kitten	iron	needle
into	knee	joined	neighbor
is	knife	juice	neither
it	know	keen	niece
just	lady	kept	notice
land	lamb	kicked	offered
late	lame	kitchen	paid
lay	large	knew	parade
left	last	knock	parents
leg	later	knot	passed
let	leather	ladder	period
letter	leave	lawn	piano
life	lift	lead	piece
like	light	leaf	pigeon
line	lion	learn	pioneer
little	living	lying	plain
lived	load	main	plane
locked	loud	making	pleasant
log	low	marry	pleasure
long	maid	matter	plough
look	many	meet	poison
lost	market	merry	population
lot	master	midnight	position
love	match	might	possible
lunch	meal	million	pour
made	mean	mistake	practice
man	message	model	practise
may	middle	modern	prepared
me	mind	month	prisoner

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
neat	mine	native	probably
men	miss	nature	produced
met	mixed	navy	program
mice	moment	often	promise
milk	money	pair	public
moon	monkey	palm	purpose
more	morning	past	quarter
most	music	plenty	queer
mother	near	porch	quiet
mouse	nearly	potatoes	raised
mouth	neck	powder	rapidly
mud	now	present	received
must	number	prize	refused
my	nurse	problem	remained
name	office	product	remembered
nest	paint	proper	ribbon
net	paper	proud	roam
never	person	question	rough
new	pillow	quite	safety
nice	port	motor	sandwiches
night	move	mountain	saucer
nine	much	muddy	scene
no	next	narrow	science
not	north	newspaper	scissors
nothing	nose	noise	scratched
nut	o'clock	obeyed	screen
of	only	ocean	search
old	opened	orange	secretary
on	order	ought	section
once	other	oven	sense
or	outside	patch	sentence
our	own	path	separate
out	pay	peace	served
over	people	pencil	settled
pack	picked	perfect	several
park	place	picnic	sew
party	plate	picture	sign
pat	please	point	signal
pen	pocket	pretty	silence
pet	police	prison	sincerely

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
pie	pony	pupil	slippery
pig	poor	pure	soldier
pin	pulled	purple	solid
pink	puppy	radio	special
plant	queen	reason	spirit
played	quick	replied	square
pond	rabbit	return	steal
pool	race	rifle	steel
put	rang	rooster	steer
rag	rather	saddle	stomach
rain	reach	sailor	stopped
ran	ready	scale	straight
rat	real	scared	success
read	rent	score	supply
red	report	scream	suppose
rest	right	season	sure
rich	road	second	surface
ride	rope	secret	surprise
ring	row	shadow	surrounded
river	round	share	system
road	rubber	shirt	taught
rock	running	shore	terrible
roof	safe	shoulder	theatre
room	said	sight	thief
rug	sail	silver	though
sad	sale	simple	tobacco
same	seat	since	tomorrow
sand	seen	single	tongue
sang	self	sitting	touch
sat	sell	something	towards
save	sent	sore	trouble
saw	seventh	sort	truly
say	shall	soup	tyre
school	sharp	spare	umbrella
sea	sheet	spear	union
see	shell	speech	until
seed	shine	spoilt	useful
seem	shoe	stairs	usual
send	shoot	station	valuable
set	short	stayed	vegetables

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS

#### Year 3

seventy  
she  
shed  
sheep  
ship  
shop  
shot  
shout  
show  
shut

sick  
side  
sing  
sister  
sit  
six  
sixty  
sky  
sleep  
smell

so  
soft  
sold  
some  
son  
song  
soon  
spot  
start  
state

step  
still  
stop  
street  
string  
such  
sun  
swim  
swing  
tall

#### Year 4

should  
silly  
sixth  
size  
skin  
skipping  
slave  
slide  
slow  
small

small  
smoke  
smooth  
snake  
soap  
soil  
sorry  
sound  
south  
speed

spend  
spent  
splash  
spoke  
spring  
stable  
stand  
started  
stick  
stocking

stone  
stood  
storm  
story  
straw  
strong  
summer  
sunny  
sweet  
table

#### Year 5

steep  
stole  
store  
strange  
stream  
strike  
struck  
study  
stuff  
sudden

sugar  
suit  
supper  
sweep  
taste  
telephone  
their  
thirsty  
those  
thought

threw  
through  
thrown  
tied  
tight  
tire  
toast  
tomatoes  
tore  
trail

travel  
treated  
tribe  
tried  
true  
trunk  
truth  
tunnel  
turned  
twelve

#### Year 6

view  
visitor  
voyage  
wealthy  
weigh  
weight  
whether  
whispered  
whistle  
whose

witch  
woman  
wrapped  
written

**RESEARCH BASED 1970s PRIMARY SPELLING LISTS**

**Year 3**

tea  
teeth  
tell  
ten  
tent  
that  
the  
them  
then  
thin

things  
thirty  
this  
time  
tin  
to  
today  
tonight  
top  
town

toy  
train  
tree  
twenty  
two  
under  
up  
us  
wall  
was

**Year 4**

tail  
take  
talk  
tame  
tax  
teacher  
team  
tears  
thank  
there

these  
they  
thick  
think  
thousand  
thunder  
ticket  
tiger  
till  
timber

tiny  
toe  
together  
told  
too  
took  
track  
trick  
trip  
truck

**Year 5**

ugly  
upon  
valley  
village  
voice  
waiting  
wanted  
waste  
watch  
weak

wear  
weather  
week  
welcome  
wheat  
while  
whole  
women  
wonderful  
wore

worry  
worst  
worth  
wound  
write  
wrong  
young

**Year 3**

water  
wash  
wave  
way  
we  
well  
went  
west  
wet  
when

wide  
will  
win  
wind  
window

**Year 3**

wing  
winter  
with  
wood  
wool  
yard  
year  
yellow  
yes  
yet

yesterday  
you  
your  
zoo

**Year 4**

try  
twice  
uncle  
used  
very  
visit  
wake  
walked  
war  
warm

were  
what  
wheel  
where  
which

**Year 4**

whip  
white  
who  
why  
wild  
with  
without  
woke  
wolf  
won

word  
work  
worm  
would  
wrote

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### **A mastery test of minimum primary spelling skill: TWO REMINDERS.**

It should be remembered that most spelling *tests* of the 1970s and of the centuries before were of a uniform type. All spelling tests required students to *write the word in full and this completely from memory*.

I know of no record since the 1980s of any government sponsored assessment of spelling that has tested students pelling skill in this way. Remember too, that ... in line with the *instructions* given earlier... success in a primary spelling test of *mastery* requires close enough to *100%* correct.

### **DISGRACEFUL items within government spelling tests . . .**

Over the past 3 decades, the deplorable record of Australian government sponsored efforts to officially “assess” student spelling levels is highlighted by the following examples.

#### **1996 test words**

##### **VICTORIAN STATE ‘LAP’ TESTS**

##### **YEAR 3**

crashed  
looked  
liked  
wanted  
couldn't  
threw  
missed  
tied

#### **1996 test words**

##### **VICTORIAN STATE ‘LAP’ TESTS**

##### **YEAR 5**

crashed  
looked  
liked  
wanted  
couldn't  
threw  
missed  
tied

#### **1998 test words**

##### **FEDERAL NATIONAL LITERACY BENCHMARKS**

##### **YEAR 5** (Ref: page 35)

crashed  
looked  
liked  
wanted

### **Three points need to be made about the above spelling test items:**

- I have *not* made any mistake in the reporting: *Yes*, in *1996* in the state of Victoria the very *same* spelling test words were given to children in *both* year *3* and year *5*.
- Even then, the 1996 students we *not* required to write the words *in full* from memory as in the good old days. In each case they had only to *encircle* the correctly spelt word from *4 alternatives* provided. e.g. *lookt* *looked* *lookd* *lukt*.
- I refer you back to the research based spelling lists of the previous pages. Even if we were to set out to do it, it would be difficult to design a more damning example than the above of **government authorised dumbdown** in the testing of English spelling.

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### **A disgraceful example closer to the present day:**

The official attempt to ‘assess’ spelling levels in the May 2008 **National Assessment Plan** weren’t quite as bad as the foregoing, but they still refused to actually test any student’s ability to recall and write *entire words from memory*. A paper written at that time explains:

The final insult to credibility is provided by the sample test questions for spelling from the 2008 **National Assessment Plan**.

The program tested the students’ spelling skills by getting them merely to correct only *10* arbitrarily contrived misspellings at each year level. Cause for grave concern are examples such as the old fashioned ...

Year **2** words: *running* and *catch* for Year **5**:

Year **2 & 3** words: *bottle* and *finished* for Year **7**:

Year **5** words: *finally*, *receiving*, *advances* and *impact* for Year **9**

I invite you to judge for yourself visit either the NAP website or its modern equivalent

## **THE WAY WE WERE**

### **Six national Australian spelling tests from 1936 to 1969**

There was indeed a time in Australian literacy education, when all of our state education authorities were actually prepared to *honestly* report the spelling-for-age levels of the students in Australian schools.

Strategically locked away in government sponsored archives are records of this honesty. Surviving tattered copies of these heritage era documents occasionally crop up in rare places. From a photocopy of one of these copies I present, on the next page, the evidence of a distant past official honesty in the reporting of the *age-level* spelling skills of Australian school children.

My 1936 copy of the evidence is entitled A.C.E.R. SPELLING TESTS. It was originally produced by The Australian Council for Educational Research in 1936 and went through 13 *officially sanctioned reprints* until the last one in 1969. For these 33 years it was a guide for the age-level spelling skills of school students in all Australian states.

Many thousands of copies of this Australian educational landmark and *heritage* book had to have been printed.

Perhaps pointedly however, on a recent trip to the head offices of the ACER in Melbourne, I was informed by the librarian that she was unable to actually find an inspection copy: not even in the ACER archives. Interestingly too, at the time of my visit I was not *permitted to photocopy* any records of former ACER tests. (Wow!)

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### SIX "OLD FASHIONED" AUSTRALIAN SPELLING TESTS: 1936 to 1967

PERFORMANCE AGE RANGE: 8.5 to 13.5 year olds.

TEST A	TEST B	TEST C	TEST D	TEST E	TEST F
gold	ring	send	rich	baby	letter
bring	stay	word	most	box	door
high	some	true	blow	push	very
took	catch	wife	looks	buy	garden
part	unless	always	father	should	use
north	build	sorry	often	few	none
burn	helped	hold	these	finish	died
climb	however	care	caught	ticket	daughter
press	post	who	shoe	afraid	seemed
sometimes	need	tiny	hurt	across	news
return	pair	instead	busy	worth	laugh
music	dozen	flour	short	running	remember
speaks	enough	until	though	calm	quite
size	chain	honey	search	struck	amount
obtain	study	forest	laid	family	weary
coffee	whistle	woman	cheap	since	minute
chimney	against	hungry	comrade	district	cousin
weigh	expect	listened	needle	piece	repaired
wear	enemy	cabbage	stopped	proper	crowd
towel	refused	freeze	result	guess	visitor
choose	famous	included	led	pleasant	doubt
usual	grocery	common	copy	divided	written
allowed	view	meant	whether	banana	biscuits
ought	lose	sleeve	wholesome	ninety	readily
quarrel	bargain	grief	arrived	difficulty	volumes
tomato	seized	piano	neither	really	justice
canoe	speech	unusual	clothe	unfortunate	height
described	vegetable	lining	argument	machine	impossible
receive	earliest	decided	commences	business	salary
concern	scissors	imagine	regularly	probably	council
label	presence	practical	separated	system	arrangements
opposite	proceed	successful	especially	finally	gradually
sincerely	nervous	grease	niece	disappointed	absence
occupy	occasions	immense	delicious	disease	foreign
familiar	cushion	excitement	suggest	excellent	expense
quantity	evidence	experience	enormous	immediately	completely
opportunity	bicycle	kerosene	naturally	chocolates	calendar
extraordinary	secretary	necessary	interfere	sensible	thoroughly
annual	extremely	foresight	solemn	decision	source
receipt	desirable	science	coarse	discussion	possess
consequence	cyclone	caterpillar	profiting	character	conqueror
committee	convenience	intelligent	sufficiently	propeller	literature
orchestra	kindergarten	irritable	acquaintance	scientific	peculiar
persistence	sovereign	municipal	commemorate	sympathy	practised
recommend	necessity	accuracy	tragedy	occurrence	cemetery
stationery	benefited	mischievous	parallel	principle	bachelor
indispensable	parliamentary	anniversary	courteous	millionaire	accommodate
unanimous	criticism	appropriate	enthusiasm	bilious	miscellaneous
privilege	discernible	definitely	pneumonia	perseverance	inflammable
irresistible	counterfeit	colossal	embarrassment	conscientious	paralysis

### THE APPROXIMATE EXPECTED SCORES FOR AGE in 1936 to 1967 :

(Plus or Minus 1.3 words)

<b>PERFORMANCE AGE:</b>	8.5 yrs	9.5 yrs	10.5 yrs	11.5 yrs	12.5 yrs	13.5 yrs
<b>SCORE PER TEST:</b>	13	21	28	34	39	42

The 'average' spelling scores for the ages listed above have been extrapolated from a 1967 book entitled  
A.C.E.R. SPELLING TESTS by The Australian Council for Educational Research



## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### A SIMPLE AGE LEVEL **PHONIC** READ ALOUD TEST

When students, young or old, have problems with reading aloud, then they *also* have problems with spelling as well as with understanding whatever it is that they are trying to read. It is *impossible* for any person to be independent in reading comprehension skills or spelling unless they are independent *first* in at least *read aloud* skills.

A very large number of Australian students have problems with basic read aloud skills and spelling. The greater proportion of these, especially if they are in primary and junior secondary schools, will have problems with *read aloud* skills that are usually fairly easy to correct in *a relatively short time* but only with a number of carefully designed and strictly sequenced *phonic teaching programs*. Increased accuracy in *spelling* however, usually involves more time in trying to get it right.

#### Setting the record right

If the *read aloud* and *spelling* tests of the previous sections have shown you that your own children are behind normal expectations for their age, you *must* find out now just how much they know about their *phonic skills*. The test which follows is designed to help you do just this, but before we proceed it is advisable in the current curriculum climate, to set the score right on a number of background issues. These are:

- No student can be classified as competent in reading aloud until he can read words that are *both in text* where guessing might help him, and *out of text* where guessing can't. Even when words do have other words around to help him to guess, this guessing rarely gets him very far.
- The 25 years of research by *Byron and Jean Harrison* of Tasmania into the basic *phonic or alphabetic or sounding out* skills of Australian school children has been most extensive and conclusive. They showed consistently over more than 20 years that a stunning **72%** of students entering modern Tasmanian secondary schools, cannot sound out Australian 'heritage' words and even traditional English root words of **3** and more syllables such as the following:

survival    Kakadu    consonant    Yallamba    terrestrial

adamant    Pingaring    belligerent    Eudunda    and many more.

Under the traditional phonic or alphabetic teaching methods of the 1930s through to the 1970s this level of sounding out or phonic ability was expected of most **9.5** year olds.

The lesson from the above is clear. Until primary school students are thoroughly taught their English alphabetic principle, they will *remain* impaired in their basic ability to even decode the strings of letters that go together to construct many *traditional English* and *indigenous* Australian words alike.

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

- In the following illustration, I have written a number English words but with the Greek alphabet. These words will help some of you to further understand how utterly disabled many Australian students must feel, when they try to read in school without enough knowledge of their English *alphabetic principle* or *phonics*. Please *try* to read the *Greek* on the next line before you look at the English ‘answers’ underneath.

δογ φογ λογ: θε κατ σατ ον θε ματ

Converted to the English alphabetic equivalents these words read as follows.

dog fog log: The cat sat on the mat

### THE INVARIANT PHONIC OR ‘SOUNDING OUT’ RULE

When it comes to problems with age level English read aloud skills among school children, the invariant phonic rule that can be validated **every** time, is as follows:

All problems with age level performance in basic *read aloud* skill ( but not necessarily *spelling* ) can be traced back to the student’s lack of skills with the *English alphabetic principle*. Any educational system that is refusing to test and teach phonics **for the duration of the primary school** in the most systematic way possible is refusing to properly teach the English **alphabetic principle** to its students.

No educational administrative system, no educational theory, no group of public servants and no teacher training course or institution has the right to promote the withholding of knowledge of the English *alphabetic principle* from its school children or its adult illiterates. With this in mind, let’s now test to find out what your own child knows about the **English alphabetic principle** which is more commonly known more simply as **phonic skills**.

## **EIGHT TEN WORD ‘ READ ALOUD ‘ TESTS FOR PHONIC AGE**

Immediately following are 8 short *diagnostic* phonic tests of 10 words each. This group of tests has withstood the rigors of time and classroom practice since they were first assembled and researched in 1969-72. The current modern format for practical use with individual students in classrooms, was finalized in **1987**. This modern format comes with each of the three **phonic drill books**\* described below.

As a group of words, the items in the 8 *diagnostic* phonic tests were originally selected from the three **1969 phonic drill books**\* that were designed to help students to learn all the main *rules* which underpin the spelling and pronunciation of English words. This type of organization always led to efficient and appropriate tutoring as soon as the diagnostic phonic **testing** was finished: all failure points on the tests were linked *immediately* with the phonic drill exercises that were actually designed to *fix the problem*.

*\*These **phonic drill books** are currently referred to as the **Word Families books** when bought from Fitzroy Programs: 597 Brunswick St. North Fitzroy: VIC: 3068 Ph: 03 9489 5700. Fax: 03 9482 3226*

### **Efficient test format**

The current test format is especially efficient. In addition to revealing where the student's main phonic deficits are, it also provides **age appropriate estimate scores** on all 8 diagnostic tests for students between the ages of **8.5** to **13.5**.

Finally each 10 word test is linked directly with the specific section of the *phonic drill books* that is designed to fix the problem.

I know of no other diagnostic phonic testing and tutoring system that yields such a lot of information in such a short time spent on testing. It is highly recommended that you spend time in carefully studying the test before buying the three **Word Families** books and using them to help fix the problems.

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### GIVING THE TESTS: LEVEL A : SHORT VOWEL WORDS

Allow the student to read aloud TEST 1 (see example below) without interruption.

Allow the student a SECOND attempt at any word that was wrong on the first run through. If right on the second attempt, then count this word as RIGHT in the total score for the test.

Do the same for TEST 2 and TEST 3.

When the student makes 3 or 4 consecutive errors BEGIN the next test.

Lengthy pausing time means unnecessary STRESS: it is time to go on to the next word or END the test.

Students who perform at a *competent* midyear of year 3 level ( i.e. an average 8.5 year old level ) will score at least **80%** correct on TESTS 1 to 3 below. These tests therefore tap *foundation* phonics skills that later skills build on. If the pattern of student errors over these three tests seems unusual, then additional test words can be selected from the corresponding exercises from the ( *Word Families* ) phonic drill books.

TEST 1	TEST 2	TEST 3
<p>lax sot vet rig hub chap whet thug sham quin</p>	<p>batch stiff gloss husk silt dwell throng strength shrank squint</p>	<p>dazzle grinning fantastic platter struggling javelin scribbler scurry published banned</p>
Phonic Drills 'A'	Phonic Drills 'A'	Phonic Drills 'A'

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OF  
FULL  
TEST  
PAGE  
40

PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

**GIVING THE TESTS: LEVEL B : LONG VOWEL SOUNDS**

Allow the student to read aloud TEST 4 (example below) without interruption.

Allow the student a SECOND attempt at any word that was wrong on the first run through. If right on this second attempt then, as with earlier tests, count this word as right in the total score for the test.

Do the same for TEST 5 and TEST 6.

When the student makes 3 or 4 consecutive errors, begin the next test.

Lengthy pausing time means unnecessary STRESS: it is time to go on to the next word or end the test.

Students who perform at a *competent* midyear of Year 5 level ( i.e. an average 10.5 year olds level ), will score at least *80%* correct on TESTS 4 to 6 below. If the pattern of student errors over these three tests gives cause for concern, then additional test words can be selected from the corresponding exercises in the ( *Word Families* ) phonic drill books.

TEST 4	TEST 5	TEST 6
tee willow fray nook pew coy fable vice rue goad	stain costume yeast pouch woe promote vie compete exploit recruit	char install mirth contrast emerge gurgle irksome argue absorb turquoise
Phonic Drills 'B'	→	Phonic Drills 'C'

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# PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

## GIVING THE TESTS: POLYSYLLABIC & PHONICALLY COMPLEX

1. All procedures remain as for earlier tests.
2. For more information on the age level scores for each test see page ....

Students who perform at a *competent* midyear of Year 8 level ( i.e. an average 13.5 year old level ) will score at least **80%** correct on these 2 tests. In cases of doubt, additional words can be selected from the corresponding exercises in the ( *Word Families* ) phonic drill books.

TEST 7	TEST 8
<b>engineer foresight warrior thwart conceit retrieve launch acquire cautious persevere</b>	<b>independent pamphlet classification symptom extravagant gnarled architecture susceptible pneumatic epilogue</b>
Phonic Drills 'C'	→

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## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### AGE LEVEL SCORES FOR THE 8 TESTS

SUMMARY OF INSTRUCTIONS	The NORM. These columns show the expected Scores for 6 age groups					
Have the Student READ ALOUD the group of 10 words in each test on the following page.	<b>AGE 8.5</b>	<b>AGE 9.5</b>	<b>AGE 10.5</b>	<b>AGE 11.5</b>	<b>AGE 12.5</b>	<b>AGE 13.5</b>
At the end of each 10 words, let the student have a 2 <sup>nd</sup> attempt at any word that he did not get right.	Box 1 <b>8</b>	Box 1 <b>9</b>	Box 1 <b>9</b>	Box 1 <b>10</b>	Box 1 <b>10</b>	Box 1 <b>10</b>
Score 1 mark for every word read correctly, including 2 <sup>nd</sup> attempts if these were correct.  Enter this score in the <b>Actual</b> Score column of the student's test record sheet on the next page.	Box 2 <b>8</b>	Box 2 <b>9</b>	Box 2 <b>9</b>	Box 2 <b>10</b>	Box 2 <b>10</b>	Box 2 <b>10</b>
When the student makes 3 or 4 consecutive errors in any test, begin the next 10 word test which is in the next box down.	Box 3 <b>7</b>	Box 3 <b>8</b>	Box 3 <b>9</b>	Box 3 <b>10</b>	Box 3 <b>10</b>	Box 3 <b>10</b>
Note well: lengthy PAUSING means unnecessary stress - it is time to go onto the next word or to end the test.	Box 4 <b>7</b>	Box 4 <b>8</b>	Box 4 <b>9</b>	Box 4 <b>10</b>	Box 4 <b>10</b>	Box 4 <b>10</b>
After testing, select the NORM scores for the student's age, from the table alongside these instructions. <b>Transfer</b> this column of figures across to the NORM column on the student's TEST RECORD sheet on the next page.	Box 5 <b>3</b>	Box 5 <b>6</b>	Box 5 <b>7</b>	Box 5 <b>8</b>	Box 5 <b>9</b>	Box 5 <b>10</b>
	Box 6 <b>2</b>	Box 6 <b>5</b>	Box 6 <b>7</b>	Box 6 <b>8</b>	Box 6 <b>9</b>	Box 6 <b>10</b>
On the student's TEST RECORD sheet compare the student's ACTUAL SCORES with the NORMS for the age. This gives a direct indication of the student's strengths and weaknesses in sounding-out skills.	Box 7 <b>1</b>	Box 7 <b>3</b>	Box 7 <b>5</b>	Box 7 <b>7</b>	Box 7 <b>8</b>	Box 7 <b>9</b>
	Box 8 <b>0</b>	Box 8 <b>1</b>	Box 8 <b>3</b>	Box 8 <b>4</b>	Box 8 <b>6</b>	Box 8 <b>7</b>
<b>REMINDER: Note down the age of your student and their EXPECTED scores-for-age in the correct column opposite. Transfer ACTUAL scores to the TEST RECORD .</b>						

PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

**STUDENT TEST RECORD**

NAME.....

YEAR:.....

DATE OF BIRTH:...../...../.....

Norm	Actual Score	For this test, the student does not need to know the meanings of the words	Phonic Drill	Book
Box 1	Box 1	lax            sot            vet            rig            hub chap        whet        thug        sham        quin	Set 1	Book A
Box 2	Box 2	batch        stiff        gloss        husk        silt dwell        throng     strength    shrank     squint	Sets 2-7	
Box 3	Box 3	dazzle    grinning    fantastic    platter    struggling javelin    scribbler    scurry      published    banned		
Box 4	Box 4	tee            willow        fray            nook            few coy            fable            vice            rue            goad	Sets 8-14	Book B
Box 5	Box 5	stain        costume     yeast        pouch        woe promote    vie        compete    exploit      recruit		
Box 6	Box 6	char    install    mirth    contrast    emerge gurgle    irksome    argue    absorb    turquoise	Set 15	Book C
Box 7	Box 7	engineer    foresight    warrior    thwart    conceit retrieve    launch    acquire    cautious    persevere	Sets 16-19	
Box 8	Box 8	independent    pamphlet    classification symptom    extravagant    gnarled    architecture susceptible    pneumatic    epilogue	Sets 20-24	

**REMINDER: When testing do not 'coach' your student to the right answers**



## **EXCEPTIONAL RESOURCES FOR SYSTEMATIC PHONIC TEACHING**

**The Fitzroy Phonics Program** consistently gets exceptional results for all levels from beginning learners through to independence. It has been classroom tested in Australia for over 30 years and has helped many thousands of students to well above-average levels. Enquiries can be made through [www.fitzprog.com.au](http://www.fitzprog.com.au)

**Phonics Unlimited** provides a new all inclusive phonics based teaching resource. The worksheets are very finely graded with inbuilt consolidation. In particular, the *teaching dialogues* that accompany the worksheets make this resource valuable indeed for any teachers or parents, who may never have taught phonics before. [www.phonicsunlimited.com](http://www.phonicsunlimited.com)

**Ease Into Reading** has a very useful and thorough collection of free and easy to use resources that all teachers and parents should investigate. [www.easeintoreading.com](http://www.easeintoreading.com)

**Word Families** as described earlier, is available from Fitzroy Programs Pty Ltd. Web Enquiries at [www.fitzprog.com.au](http://www.fitzprog.com.au)

**The Alpha to Omega, and Word Shark Systems** have both been created on the findings of many years of research by specialists in many fields. In their time, they've had rave reviews. You may like to read up on these via the SPELD website. [www.dyslexia-speld.com](http://www.dyslexia-speld.com)

### **Four Overseas Websites**

Home computer users are also advised to search Google on the websites of the following persons and organisations:

- The [Reading Reform Foundation](#) in the United Kingdom.
- The [National Right to Read Foundation](#) in the United States
- The [Dyslexia Foundation](#)

## AGE LEVEL READING COMPREHENSION TEST

### THE GRADED TEST OF READING EXPERIENCE

J C Daniels and Hunter Diack 1958

The reading comprehension test on the next two pages was designed and normed by two 20<sup>TH</sup> century pioneers in literacy teaching, J C Daniels and Hunter Diack, as far back as 1958. It was published in a book called **The Standard Reading Tests** and was called **The Graded Test of Reading Experience**.

It was produced free of copyright restriction, enabling education systems everywhere to reproduce it at will, for *age level* survey testing of reading comprehension skills with large numbers of children. It was used for generations to test an uncountable number of children in the UK, Canada, USA, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

If there is a test that is able to withstand the ravages of both time and discredited reading theories, then this is almost certainly that test. It is still being used today as an age level yardstick of reading comprehension by some Australian teachers in private practice .

The test does provide a clear testimony as to what ‘generally acceptable’ school based reading comprehension levels used to be:

- when computers did not exist and class sizes in schools were much bigger.
- when schools, school equipment and school facilities were nowhere near as attractive, comprehensive and expensive as they are today.
- when the *whole language* literacy teaching methods had not yet been mandated by government policy for Australian primary schools.
- when government policy promoted efficient literacy curricula that *did* more carefully test *and* teach: read aloud skills, the alphabetic principle, spelling and dictation as well as English punctuation and grammar.

The need for our schools to widely use this reading comprehension once again but within the 21<sup>st</sup> century, just cannot be understated. Hats off to our 20<sup>th</sup> century pioneers in literacy education. Their work of half a century ago may yet save the day for our modern schools, teachers and children.

#### HOW TO GIVE THE TEST

The reading comprehension test on the next 2 pages contains 50 finely graded sentences. It is a simple *untimed* pencil and paper test that most children complete within 20 minutes. Each sentence has only one correct answer that has to be *underlined* by the student. If you complete the first 2 sentences with the students at the outset of the test, they will know what to do with the rest.

A table of ‘age level’ equivalents for scores is on page 45

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### GRADED TEST OF READING EXPERIENCE

Name ..... Age ..... Score .....

1. Trains can often be seen standing in a railway ( engine, driver, box, station )
2. If you write with a pen, you also need (crayons, money, help, ink).
3. Children go to school in order to (sleep, run, cry, learn).
4. A horse is an animal with four (tails, eyes, legs, ears).
5. People usually go on their holidays to (enjoy, reimburse, spite, employ) themselves.
6. Coal is usually (yellow, black, white, pink).
7. Boys often like to climb up (bees, tents, trials, trees).
8. The first meal of the day is called (dinner, breakfast, tea, supper).
9. Books are made of (patent, paper, pamper, pepper).
10. Oranges and bananas are both (fronts, fruit, poisonous, animals).
  
11. Grass is ( blue, green, white, red )
12. Before we eat meat it should be (swallowed, stroked, cooked, crooked ).
13. Mr Smith is limping because, yesterday, while getting off the bus he slipped and twisted his (armlet, neck, ankle, umbrella).
14. Shoes are usually made of (leather, lather, laces, soles).
15. A giant is a (short, tall, thin, hungry) man.
16. Men's socks are usually (matter, stolen, wasted, knitted).
17. Motor cars are driven along by petrol being exploded inside the (cabin, pump, engine, steering wheel).
18. When we go out to a friend's house for tea, we usually find that the table is already laid with ( visitors, sand, sausages, saucers ).
19. Most houses in this country today are lit by means of (candles, oil-lamps, electricity, tapers).
20. If the road is very bumpy, a ride on a bus can be very (uncomforting, uncomfortable, uncontrolled, unconverted).
  
21. Liquids are usually kept in (boxes, fires, drinks, bottles).
22. A steam engine usually runs on (rails, reels, stoves, signals ).
23. One of the best ways of keeping healthy is to take plenty of (examples, examinations, excitement, exercise).
24. When we send a letter to a friend, it is usual to fold it and put it into an (address, appliance, affluence, envelope).
25. The season of the year when young green buds appear on trees is called (autumn, spring, winter, October).
26. The cyclone blew so hard that three houses were (destroyed, annoyed, demonstrated, burst).
27. Unless one is very experienced, rock climbing can be (lucrative, temporary, dangerous, degenerative).
28. A place where movies are shown in public is called a (gallery, cinema, house, restaurant).

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

29. A bald man has little (feet, hair, nose, cap) on his head.
30. A male child is called a (boy, girl, dwarf, nuisance).
31. The head teacher granted (permission, presentation, permutation, refusal) for the boy to be absent from school for his brother's wedding.
32. A prisoner usually longs for his (sentence, toleration, serenade, freedom).
33. When people are ill they are often visited by the doctor who prescribes (prevention, disease, radio, medicine) for them.
34. In this country the commonest fuel used in open fire places is (wood, oil, kerosene, smoke).
35. The case for the prosecution so impressed the jury that they found the prisoner (dirty, guiltless, wicked, guilty).
36. A mushroom is an edible (fugitive, fungus, parlour, fantasy).
37. We use soap to wash clothes because it helps to remove the (grease, dye, geese, shrubs) from them.
38. If there is one nearby, you should always cross the road at a (pedestal, railway, channel, pedestrian) crossing.
39. The visitor went to the manager's office and asked the secretary if he could have an (interruption, extradition, interest, interview) with the manager.
40. If you want to make sure that the plants in your garden will grow well, it is a good idea to sprinkle them with (seeds, roots, fertilizer, worms).
41. When bombs drop on an undefended city, it is almost certain they will cause a great deal of (demonstration, suspicion, destruction, conservation).
42. A city has a bigger (popularity, population, rainfall, postulation) than a village.
43. The most important female participant at a wedding is the (groomsman, bridegroom, mother, bride).
44. A man who translates the conversation of two people who cannot speak each other's language is called an (interpreter, interloper, annotator, exploit )
45. Ships sail from port to port, crossing the seas and oceans carrying (mercenaries, menstruation, meridians, merchandise) to all parts of the world.
46. In spring the farmer is often very busy ploughing the fields, in order to make them ready for (stewing, cattle, sowing, grazing).
47. When two armies are engaged in battle, one of the two (adjectives, adversaries, explosions, swords) will usually end up the winner.
48. The wheels of a motor car (rotund, retreat, rotate, excavate).
49. When walking in the bush you must be careful not to throw down lighted matches or you may cause a serious (contemplation, conflict, conflagration, stipulation).
50. The explorers who first reached the South Pole found that the intense cold and fierce blizzards (receded, impressed, impeded, imposed) their progress.

## PLANNED ILLITERACY IN OUR SCHOOLS ?

### AGE LEVELS FOR TEST SCORES

The original 1958 'age equivalence' scores for the total number of correct answers on this test were used without change throughout the English speaking world for many years. Many private practitioners are still using them today as benchmark levels for literacy skill, simply because our educational authorities have not yet produced an alternative that is anywhere near as practical.

Even now these 'performance age equivalents' remain as a sobering reminder of the literacy standards that teachers expected of their students in an era when computers were machines that only got a mention in science fiction stories.

I present the original 1958 'age equivalence' scores below.

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>AGE EQUIVALENT</b>	<b>SCORE</b>	<b>AGE EQUIVALENT</b>
0	-	21	7.1 years
1	-	22	7.2 years
2	-	23	7.4 years
3	-	24	7.5 years
4	-	25	7.6 years
5	-	26	7.7 years
6	-	27	7.8 years
7	-	28	7.9 years
8	-	29	8.1 years
9	-	30	8.2 years
10	6.0 years		
11	6.1 years	31	8.3 years
12	6.2 years	32	8.4 years
13	6.3 years	33	8.6 years
14	6.4 years	34	8.7 years
15	6.6 years	35	8.8 years
16	6.7 years	36	9.0 years
17	6.7 years	37	9.1 years
18	6.8 years	38	9.3 years
19	6.9 years	39	9.5 years
20	7.0 years	40	9.7 years
		41	10.0 years
		42	10.3 years
		43	10.6 years
		44	11.2 years
		45	11.6 years
		46	12.1 years
		47	12.6 years
		48	13.1 years
		49	13.7 years
		50	14 + years

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