ROAR FAMILY GUIDE

AN INTRODUCTION TO ROAR

Welcome to the Rapid Online Assessment of Reading (ROAR)! This guide will give you an overview of the ROAR assessments, what your child can expect during ROAR, as well as information about our research, your child's privacy and security, and the information that ROAR will provide you and your child's teachers.

WHAT IS ROAR?

ROAR is a suite of child friendly, game-like activities that assesses foundational reading skills. It was developed by the Stanford Reading & Dyslexia Research Program and allows reading skills to be evaluated in a quick and easy way. ROAR results are consistent with the scores produced by traditional one-on-one assessments used to identify students with reading difficulties, and the validity of ROAR is supported by many peer-reviewed, published research studies. ROAR assessments have also been shown to rapidly provide precise feedback on reading ability that is often even more reliable than standardized, individually-administered reading assessments.

With ROAR, schools can assess an entire classroom in the time it usually takes to evaluate just one student. This efficiency allows schools to more easily and frequently screen students for essential reading skills without having to sacrifice instruction time. Identifying strengths and gaps in these foundations allows for reading interventions to support readers of any age! ROAR aims to remove barriers to literacy and expand access to crucial assessments of foundational literacy skills, striving to ensure that all children can benefit.

TERMINOLOGY

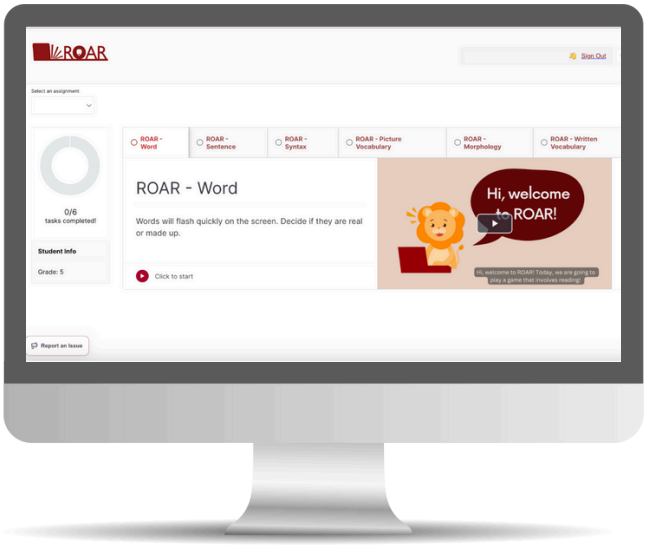
Throughout this guide we use various words and phrases that are defined below:

Literacy – The ability to read and write
Reading Fluency – The speed at which students can accurately read and understand connected text
Phonemes – The individual sounds of spoken language, for example, the sound each letter represents
Phonics – A way of teaching the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent
Phonological Awareness – The ability to recognize and manipulate sounds within words, for example, identifying syllables, rhyming, and identifying words that start or end with the same sound
Decoding – The mapping of sounds to letters and words – this is the first reading skill and is the foundation of rapid and automatic word recognition
Automaticity – The fast, effortless word recognition of words "by sight"

WHAT CAN MY KIDS EXPECT DURING ROAR?

During ROAR assessments, your child will use a computer, laptop, or iPad with headphones to complete engaging and developmentally appropriate online activities. These assessments are designed to be enjoyable, featuring game-like elements and compelling storylines to maintain children's interest throughout the process. Each activity lasts anywhere from three to fifteen minutes, and the key assessment suite can be completed in under 30 minutes. Assessments may be administered multiple times over the course of the academic year for screening or progress monitoring.

Your child's school will choose which activities are most valuable for your child to complete, which may include one or more of our four key assessments that evaluate skills in letter names and sounds, phonological awareness, word decoding, and sentence reading efficiency. If your child speaks Spanish, ROAR assessments in Spanish may be offered as well. ROAR is different from other assessments in that our team prioritizes transparency and openness at every stage. ROAR measures are always published in open-access journals and if you are curious about what these assessment activities look like, you can try them out at https://roar.stanford.edu/#demo.



PRIVACY, SECURITY, AND OPT-OUTS

By participating in ROAR assessments, you contribute to ongoing research that aims to improve educational practices and support for diverse learners, including those with reading difficulties like dyslexia. ROAR prioritizes the privacy and security of student data. Information collected from assessments is used by teachers and school leaders to help with education and is handled in accordance with legal standards regarding data security and privacy.

For research, names and other identifying details are removed from the data so researchers can study how to improve literacy education without knowing who your child is. Your child's confidentiality is maintained at all times. If you do not wish for Stanford to use or store your child's data for research, you can complete the Parent Opt Out Form provided by your child's school.

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ROAR SCORES AND LITERACY SUPPORT

This guide will provide you an overview of ROAR assessment scoring, explain ways that you can support your child's literacy journey, and provide links to more resources.

UNDERSTANDING ROAR ASSESSMENT SCORES

After taking a ROAR assessment, your school may choose to provide you with an individual report containing your child's scores. Each assessment evaluates foundational reading skills that are crucial for your child's literacy development. The specific assessments your child takes will be chosen by the school. These are likely to include one or more of our four key assessments that evaluate your child's skills in letter names and sounds, phonemic awareness, word decoding, and sentence reading efficiency. Scores that fall into the Developing Skill and Needs Extra Support categories may indicate specific areas of focus that your child needs support in.

Depending on the assessments your child has completed you may be able to view their scores as a percentile, standard score, or raw score.

- A **raw score** is the basic measure of a student's performance on the test. Depending on the test, the raw score is based on a number of factors. These may include the number of items a student answered correctly or incorrectly and the difficulty of the items. The raw score is comparable across grade levels and over time.
- The **standard score** shows how your child's test performance compares to other kids of the same age or grade. Standard scores on our measures generally range from 50 to 150. The standard score is comparable within a grade level, but not across grade levels or over time.
- The **percentile** refers to a student's rank within their grade level on the given skill. The percentile is the number of students out of 100 who have a lower score for that skill. For example, students in the 50th percentile would score higher than 50 out of 100 students in the same grade nationwide.

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UNDERSTANDING ROAR ASSESSMENT SCORES (CONT.)

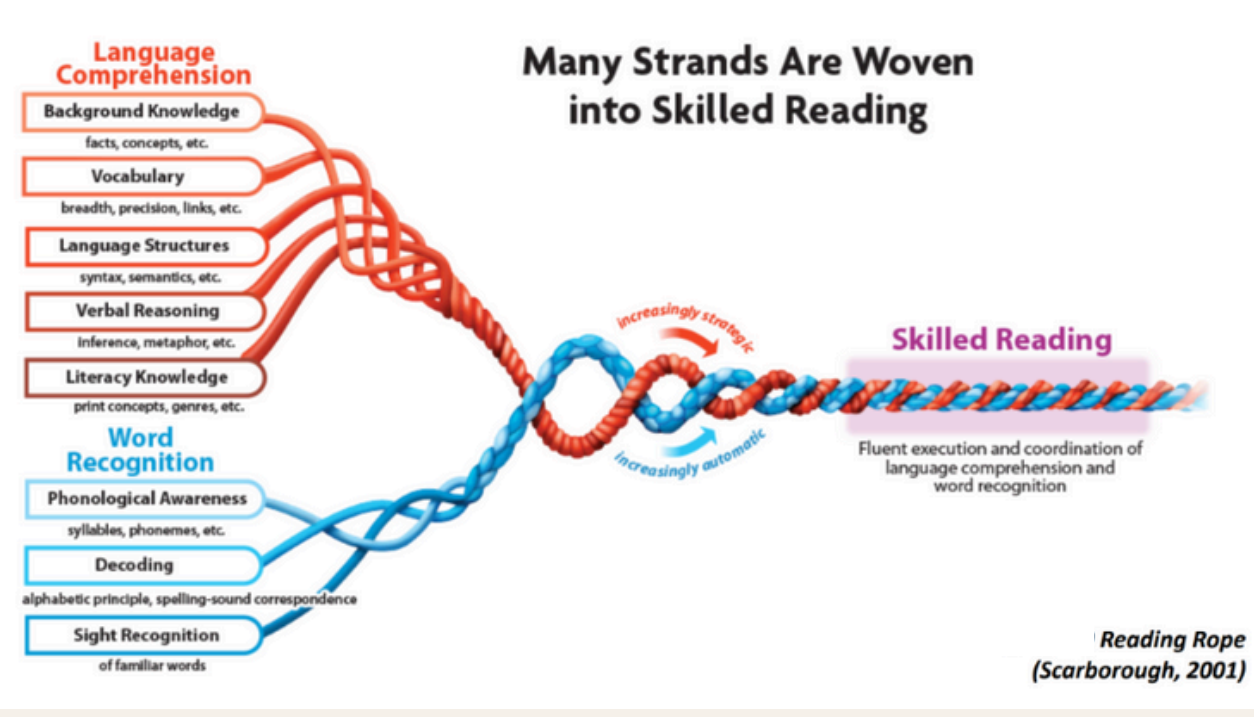
For each key assessment, your child's score will fall into one of three support categories:

Support Category	Kindergarten -5th Grade	6th-12th Grade
Achieved Skill	This category indicates that your child's score is above the 50th percentile for their grade level. Your child will continue to grow in this skill as they read grade-level material in their classroom. They are at or above average for their grade level, and this assessment suggests that this skill is not holding them back from reaching grade-level material.	This category indicates that your child is above a 5th grade level in this foundational reading skill. Your child will continue to grow in this skill as they read grade-level material. This assessment suggests that this skill is not holding them back from reaching grade-level material.
Developing Skill	This category indicates that your child's score is between the 25th and 50th percentile for their grade level. This means that their skill level may be below average compared to most students in their grade. Your child will continue to grow in this skill as they read in their classroom. They may need focused intervention in this skill to reach grade level in reading.	This category indicates that your child is between a 3 - 5th grade level in this foundational reading skill. Students with this support level may need focused intervention in this skill to reach grade level in reading.
Needs Extra Support	This category indicates that your child's score is below the 25th percentile for their grade level. This assessment suggests that this skill is holding them back from accessing grade-level material They will likely benefit from additional systematic, intensive instruction on this skill to reach grade level in reading.	This category indicates that your child's score is at or below a 3rd grade level on this foundational skill. This assessment suggests that this skill is holding them back from accessing grade-level material. They will likely benefit from additional systematic, intensive instruction on this skill to reach grade level in reading.

WHAT TO DO IF SKILLS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR SUPPORT

ROAR results can be used to determine specific skills where students need support. Each foundational reading skill works with the others to support reading comprehension. Being able to hear and work with the sounds in words (phonological awareness) supports learning to read individual words. Reading words smoothly (word-level decoding) is a precursor to reading sentences fluently. Reading sentences fluently supports overall reading comprehension.

In addition, foundational skills build on each other. As readers develop greater sentence fluency, they interact more readily with more difficult words, which improves word-level decoding. The opposite is also true - as readers have more practice and gain decoding skills with more complex words, their sentence-fluency improves.



Scarborough's reading rope (shown above) is a great way to understand basic reading skills. It shows how phonological awareness, word decoding, and sentence reading efficiency all work together to help us become skilled readers.

KEY READING SKILLS SUPPORT SUMMARY

The chart below offers a summary of ROAR's four key assessments, the foundational reading skills they evaluate, and how you can support the development of each skill. For more in-depth information visit our Next Steps Document at bit.ly/roarnextsteps.

Assessment Name	Foundational Reading Skill	How to Support this Skill
ROAR Letter	**Letter-Sound Correspondence** The ability to map sounds to letters, and letters to sounds.	Children need systematic, direct instruction and practice to master the connection between letters and the sounds they make. For more information and specific phonics activities for grades K-5, check out the Florida Center for Reading Research at https://fcrr.org/student-center-activities/kindergarten-and-first-grade and for grades 3+ check out Open Source Phonics at https://www.opensourcephonics.org/.
ROAR Phoneme	**Phonological Awareness** The ability to recognize and manipulate phonemes, which are the individual sounds of spoken language.	Children who need support in phonological awareness would likely benefit from targeted instruction in identifying and understanding the individual sounds within words. This skill supports both decoding and spelling words. Games and activities that highlight the different sounds and syllables in words help your reader practice this skill more specifically. Your child should practice recognizing and changing sounds in words, both in the classroom and at home. For more information and specific activities for grades K-5, check out the Florida Center for Reading Research at https://fcrr.org/student-center-activities/second-and-third-grade and for grades 3+ check out Open Source Phonics at https://www.opensourcephonics.org/.

KEY READING SKILLS SUPPORT SUMMARY (CONT.)

Assessment Name	Foundational Reading Skill	How to Support this Skill
ROAR Word	**Single Word Recognition** The ability to decode words and then read them by sight.	Children who need support in single-word recognition would likely benefit from targeted instruction in decoding skills to improve accuracy. Readers learn to turn letters and syllables into words through direct teaching and regular practice. Phonics lessons should be clear and follow a thoughtfully designed order of letter-sound relationships. For more information and curricular support for grades K-5, check out the Florida Center for Reading Research at https://fcrr.org/student-center-activities/second-and-third-grade and for grades 3+ check out Open Source Phonics at https://www.opensourcephonics.org/. For all grades, take a look at UFLI Toolbox: https://ufli.education.ufl.edu/foundations/toolbox/ .
ROAR Sentence	**Sentence-Reading Efficiency** The speed at which students can accurately read and understand connected text.	Some students may demonstrate they can read at the word-level, but do not appear to read quickly and accurately across the length of a sentence. If your child falls into this category they would likely benefit from sustained practice in reading for accuracy and fluency. Repeated Reading has been identified by research as a key strategy for developing fluency. It has two essential elements: 1) reading and re-reading the same text and 2) reading out loud with feedback. Students with dyslexia will need more intensive support. For more information and specific sentence reading activities for grades K-5, check out the Florida Center for Reading Research at https://fcrr.org/student-center-activities/second-and-third-grade and for grades 4-9 check out What Works Clearinghouse at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/WWC-practice-guide-reading-intervention-full-text.pdf.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR FAMILIES

No matter what scores your child received on their assessments, there are options for reading support. You can read more about each of ROAR's key assessments on our Next Steps document at https://roar.education/assets/NextSteps-a446d6a7.pdf.

You can find a full list of resources on our website at https://roar.stanford.edu/resources/. Our goal is to use the latest reading research to provide straightforward summaries for families and teachers. We keep these resources updated as new information comes out. Remember, your child's score report provides a snapshot of your student's reading performance at the time the test was taken. Their score can be affected by many factors, including their mood, and therefore may not be a complete representation of all of their literacy skills.

Research has shown that learning is improved when the instruction your child is receiving in different areas (e.g., classroom, after school, at home) is aligned – so it may be helpful to work with your school to address specific concerns you have regarding their reading skills. At your next parent-teacher conference you might want to ask some questions that include:

- What are my child's current goals for language and literacy?
- Can you tell me about the approach to reading instruction my child is getting in class?
- How do you keep track of my child's reading progress?
- What's the best way for me to stay informed about my child's literacy levels?
- What kinds of support are available for students who might be having trouble with reading?
- How can I help my child with their reading progress at home?

STAY UP TO DATE WITH ROAR

We are always working to improve our assessments and create new ways to support children's literacy development. Check out our newest updates by visiting our website at https://roar.stanford.edu/ or sign up for our newsletter at https://mailman.stanford.edu/mailman/listinfo/roar-updates. If you have any suggestions for ROAR you can reach out to our support team at roar-support@stanford.edu.

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