

# CASAS Intake Screening Process for STEPS

Oral, Writing, and Reading Tools

# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>CASAS Intake Screening Process for STEPS .....</b>            | <b>0</b>  |
| Oral, Writing, and Reading Tools .....                           | 0         |
| <b>CASAS Intake Screening Process Overview .....</b>             | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Initial Interview .....</b>                                   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Oral Screening (ESL Only) .....</b>                           | <b>4</b>  |
| Description.....   | 4         |
| Giving the Oral Screening.....                                   | 4         |
| Scoring the Oral Screening.....                                  | 5         |
| Oral Screening Results.....                                      | 5         |
| <b>Writing Screening (optional) .....</b>                        | <b>6</b>  |
| Description.....   | 6         |
| Administration Instructions.....                                 | 6         |
| Writing Screening Results .....                                  | 6         |
| <b>Reading Screening.....</b>                                    | <b>7</b>  |
| Description.....   | 7         |
| Administration Instructions.....                                 | 7         |
| Reading Screening Results .....                                  | 8         |
| <b>CASAS eTests Sessions based on Intake Screening results .</b> | <b>9</b>  |
| Intake: Pretest – Level A* .....                                 | 9         |
| Intake: Pretest – with Locator .....                             | 9         |
| <b>Intake Screening Summary .....</b>                            | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Interpretation of Results.....</b>                            | <b>10</b> |
| Basic Skills Education Referral.....                             | 11        |
| Program Placement.....   | 11        |
| <b>APPENDICES .....</b>  | <b>12</b> |
| APPENDIX A – Intake Screening Scoring Sheet .....                | 13        |
| APPENDIX B – Oral Screening .....                                | 14        |
| APPENDIX C – Writing Screening Student Response Sheet.....       | 16        |
| APPENDIX D – Reading Screening.....                              | 17        |

# CASAS Intake Screening Process Overview

Intake and orientation is your opportunity to welcome students to your program. With an effective intake and orientation process, programs can create a learning environment that works to determine students' needs, goals, skill levels, and education and work backgrounds. When we engage students at the beginning, they are more likely to have higher retention and completion rates, improved learning gains, and overall program success. When we use proven intake strategies of building relationships, ensuring that students understand their options and program expectations, and helping them identify the steps in their learning journey, students become more engaged in and responsible for their education.

This guide focuses on the intake process related to assessing ESL learners. Intake is an important part of the initial student orientation process described above. The *Reading Screening* and the *Writing Screening* could be used with ABE students who are low literate, but that is not covered in this guide.

Some ESL students have very low (beginning level) basic skills and should *not* take an appraisal or a CASAS eTests locator. The intake screening process provides informal tools to determine if a student should bypass the appraisal or locator and go directly into a beginning level pretest. Giving a locator or appraisal to ESL and low-literate test takers is not constructive because these tests are much too difficult for these students. Students who clearly have the skills to take the appraisal or locator do **not** need to go through the intake screening process. For all other students, intake screening should take place **before** a student takes an appraisal or locator.

Agencies can administer one or more of the following tools with accommodations to students with disabilities. CASAS recommends contacting the disability support office at your agency or organization to learn more about local intake processes for students who require accommodations, as well as having a conversation with the student about what kind of accommodations and assistive technology they use in the classroom. Some intake accommodations include: scheduling extra time, allowing the student to use their personal computer and assistive technology to complete the Writing Screening tool, use of an ASL interpreter, read aloud/scribe (except for the Reading Screening tool) and use of a magnifier. The Reading Screening tool is not appropriate for students who are visually impaired/blind and require a screen reader/human reader; agencies can elect to provide the Oral and Writing Screening to these students. For more information, contact [info@casas.org](mailto:info@casas.org).

The intake screening process also can include gathering valuable information about speaking and writing skills, as well as the student's previous education. This information can be useful in student placement. The intake procedures of successful programs help to identify possible barriers to attendance and allow administrators to structure a program of study based on the unique needs of those students, which in essence supports retention and success (Goertzel & Keeley, 1992; Guisier & Molek, 1992; Quigley, 1993). CASAS intake tools include the *Oral Screening (ESL only)*, the *Writing Screening*, and the *Reading Screening*. The use of these tools is outlined in this document.

## Initial Interview

At the beginning of the intake screening process, for all incoming students:

- Observe how well the student communicates during registration (speaking ability).
- Observe how well the student completes registration forms to check their writing ability.
- Consider the number of years of formal schooling. A few or many years?
- Consider other factors affecting class placement. Any certificates or degrees?

To check a student's writing ability for paper testing, the top section of the test answer sheet (name, address, and other information) may serve as a screening device to identify anyone who cannot read or write English. For online testing, use any form for collecting name, date, and similar information.

Students who have difficulty completing this basic personal information should not take the reading or listening locator in CASAS eTests or the corresponding appraisal for paper tests.

The following sections describe the three intake screening instruments, to be used in this order:

- **Oral Screening** – 6 questions
- **Writing Screening** – Name, Date and Short Response
- **Reading Screening** – 5 questions

**Appendix A** contains the *Intake Screening Scoring Sheet* that can be used to record results for all intake screening measures.

# Oral Screening (ESL Only)

## Description

The *Oral Screening* provides a quick measure of speaking ability for ESL students, including those who cannot write their name or other information on the program's registration form. The *Oral Screening* serves to screen out beginning level ESL students from taking the reading and listening locators or appraisals so that programs can refer them directly to a beginning level pretest.

It is **not** necessary to give the *Oral Screening* to students who obviously speak English well.

The *Oral Screening* is a one-on-one instrument with six questions (See the *Oral Screening Script, Rubric and Response Notes* in Appendix B). The test administrator asks the questions, the student answers, and the test administrator rates each response. Agencies may expand the *Oral Screening* for a fuller assessment of speaking ability.

## Giving the Oral Screening

- Set up two chairs in a quiet corner, out of earshot of other examinees. This should be adapted for remote screening.
- Introduce yourself, if appropriate. Then ask the questions in the *Oral Screening Script* in Appendix B.
- If the student does not respond or asks for clarification, repeat the entire question once, exactly as written, or use the clarification questions provided.
- Score each item after the student has given a response. If students are unable to answer a question, go on to the next. For those having apparent difficulty, end the *Oral Screening* at any time and score the unanswered questions 0.

## Scoring the Oral Screening

Use the scoring rubric below to assign **0**, **1**, or **2** to each of the six *Oral Screening* questions. Score the *Oral Screening* according to the guidelines in Appendix B.

| Points   | Guidelines   |
|----------|--|
| <b>0</b> | No answer, incomprehensible, or does not answer the question.<br>Note: If the examinee responds, "I don't know," it is up to the administrator to determine whether this answer represents an appropriate response or lack of comprehension. |
| <b>1</b> | Comprehensible but not grammatically correct.<br>Note: Comprehensible = understandable and relevant  |
| <b>2</b> | Comprehensible and grammatically correct.<br>Note: Answers that are appropriate and represent what a native speaker would provide would be given 2 points; therefore, some one-word answers would be given 2 points.                         |

Record the score for each response in the *Oral Screening* section of the *Intake Screening Scoring Sheet* in Appendix A. Add the number of points for the six questions and record the score in the box labeled "Total Points."

## Oral Screening Results

If the total score is **less than 6 points**:

- Skip the locator or appraisal.
- Give the *Writing Screening* (optional).
- Give the *Reading Screening*.
- Follow instructions about the pretest based on the results of the *Writing Screening* and the *Reading Screening*.

If the total score is **6 or more points**:

- End the intake screening process.
- Give the locator or appraisal and then the pretest.

# Writing Screening (optional)

## Description

The *Writing Screening* is an optional exercise in which individuals write their name, the date, and a short answer to a simple question. This short exercise provides a very general assessment of a student's writing ability.

The *Writing Screening* provides enough information to determine whether a student has very limited reading and writing ability and should not take a locator with CASAS eTests or an appraisal with paper tests.

The *Writing Screening* also provides valuable information to guide student placement into an instructional level or program.

The Writing Screening is recommended to use as part of the intake process. Local programs who decide not to administer the *Writing Screening* during the intake process should give the *Reading Screening* after the *Oral Screening*. Teachers may be advised to administer the *Writing Screening* or a similar measure in class at the beginning of instruction.

## Administration Instructions

Students may use the *Writing Screening Student Response Sheet* in Appendix C to write their response to the question, "Why do you want to study here?" Please make copies of the response sheet for student use.

- Have students write their name and the date at the top of the sheet.
- If any student has difficulty writing name and date, stop the *Writing Screening* and proceed to give the *Reading Screening* one-on-one.
- To introduce the writing task, say "Please read the question and write your answer."
- Allow 5 -- 10 minutes for students to respond.
- Students who can write only a few words may finish quickly. These students should also take the *Reading Screening* to determine the appropriate pretest form.
- The student's response may be shared with the student's teacher to guide instruction.

## Writing Screening Results

Give the *Reading Screening* if the student:

- Had difficulty writing Name or Date on the *Writing Screening* or on the program registration form, or
- Wrote nothing or a few words in response to the *Writing Screening* question.

If the student demonstrated basic or higher writing ability:

- Skip the *Reading Screening*.
- Give a locator or appraisal.

# Reading Screening

## Description

The *Reading Screening* is a one-on-one instrument to determine a student's literacy skills at the most basic level. It is for adults who have minimal or no ability to read in English. These students typically have limited or no formal education.

Do **not** give the *Reading Screening* to students who have already demonstrated that they have basic reading literacy skills.

The results of the *Reading Screening* will determine the appropriate pretest.

### Give the *Reading Screening* only if a student:

- Scored **less than 6** points on the *Oral Screening*, or
- Had difficulty writing Name or Date on the program registration form or on the *Writing Screening*, or
- Wrote nothing or a few words in response to the *Writing Screening* question.

## Administration Instructions

Working one-on-one with a student, give the 5 questions in Appendix D – *Reading Screening*.

Since the student may have never taken a test before, speak clearly and simply, give clear oral instructions, and be patient. You may use the native language to convey how to navigate the format of the test questions, being careful not to give away any answers.

- For the first question, point to the “Letter A” in the first row which is the test prompt for this question. Then point to the 4 capital letter choices (V, A, W, M).
- Ask the student, “Is it the **same**?” while pointing from the Letter A prompt to the V, then from the Letter A prompt to the A, then from the Letter A prompt to the W, and then from the Letter A prompt to the M.
- After the student has indicated an answer, go to the next question.
- If a student cannot answer or says “I don’t know” for the first 3 questions, end the *Reading Screening*.



## Reading Screening Results

If a student has –

### Great difficulty, 0 – 2 points

- Do not test.
- Collect demographic data.
- Enroll in literacy or beginning ESL.
- Provide some classroom or one-on-one instruction, and then give a Level A test form as the pretest.\*

### Some or no difficulty, 3 – 5 points

- Give a Level A test form as the pretest.\*

\*Suggest using a **touch screen** device for low-level learners on eTests.

\*Another option is to give the **Level A test as a consumable paper test** with students circling answers in the test booklet.

# CASAS eTests Sessions based on Intake Screening results

Intake screening should take place **before** a student takes the appraisal or locator in CASAS eTests.

CASAS eTests offers the flexibility needed to deliver the appropriate pretest for students who screen out of taking the locator or appraisal at intake. Based on the screening results, choose from the following testing sessions.

## Intake: Pretest – Level A\*

This session delivers a **Level A** form. It does **not** deliver a locator or appraisal.

Use this testing session with students who scored fewer than 6 on the *Oral Screening* **AND**

1. had **Some or No Difficulty, 3-5 points**, on the *Reading Screening OR*
2. had Great Difficulty, **0-2 points**, on the *Reading Screening*.  
*These students may have needed some instruction before taking a Level A form to get an accurate score.*

## Intake: Pretest – with Locator

This session delivers the locator and pretest together in the same sitting.

Use this with students who are clearly High Beginning ESL or above, or who scored **6 or more** on the *Oral Screening*.

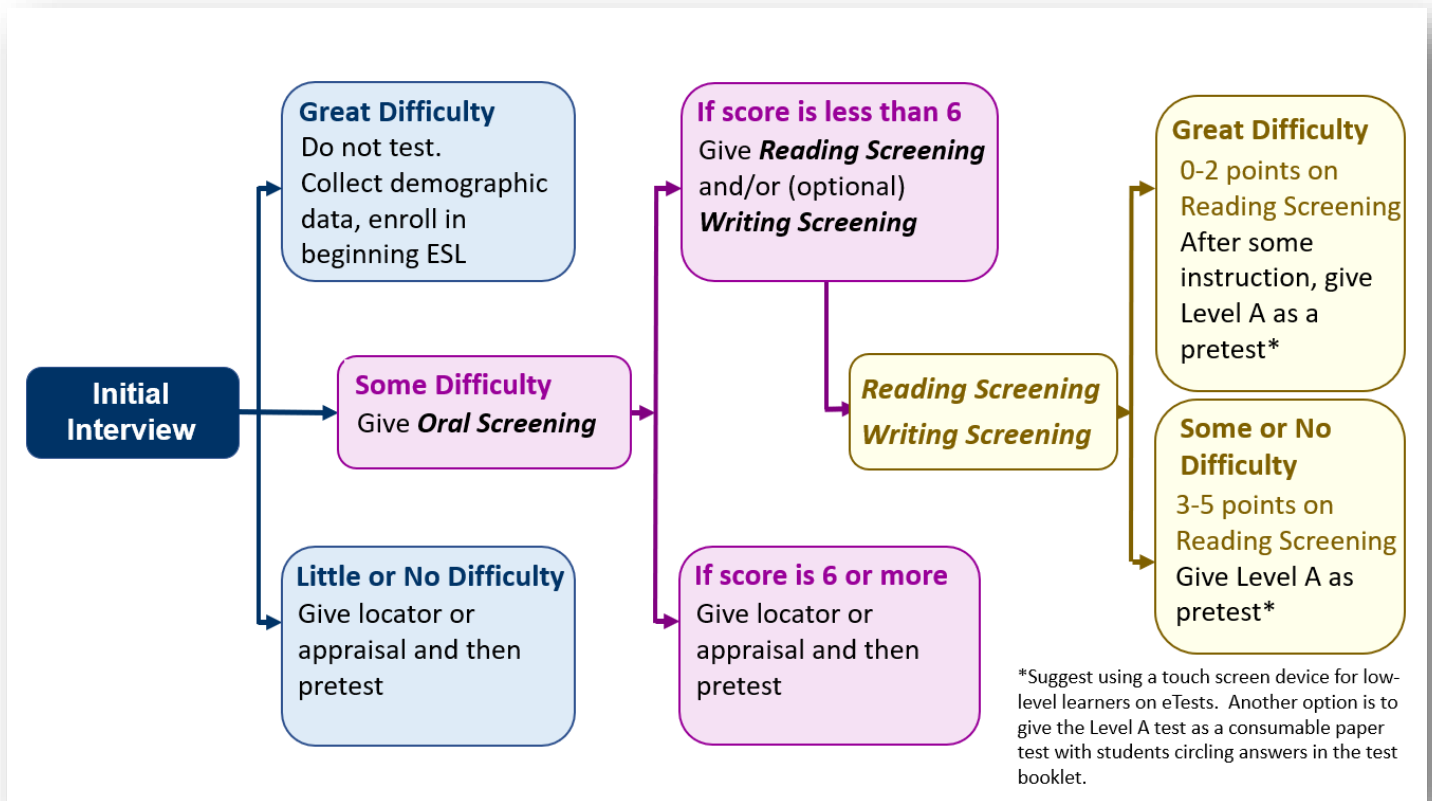
\*Suggest using a **touch screen device** for low-level learners on eTests.

Another option is to give the **Level A test as a consumable paper test** with students circling answers in the test booklet.

| Testing Sessions         |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Template Name            | Session Name               |
| ESL/ELL <span>✕</span> ▾ | intake <span>✕</span> ▾    |
| ESL/ELL                  | Intake: Level A only       |
| ESL/ELL                  | Intake: Pretest w/ Locator |

# Intake Screening Summary

The flowchart below shows a summary of the CASAS intake screening process.



## Interpretation of Results

An intake screening process is crucial to identify both ESL students and ABE test takers who should **not** automatically take a locator or appraisal because they have very low (beginning level) basic skills.

Based on the results of the *Oral Screening*, *Writing Screening*, and *Reading Screening*, follow the appropriate intake procedures described in this guide for these students.

In summary, the CASAS intake screening process has these uses:

- Basic skills education referral
- Identification of pretest level
- Placement into instructional program or class

## Basic Skills Education Referral

Programs may use test results to determine basic skills proficiency. The scores assist in determining eligibility and in developing an EDP (Educational Development Plan) or ISS (Individual Service Strategy). The goal is to place students into a training or educational program that allows them to succeed.

## Program Placement

The [CASAS Scale Scores, and NRS Educational Functioning Levels \(EFLs\)](#) provide guidelines for determining program placement and pretest levels based on results from the CASAS intake screening process.

Programs should bear in mind that the levels are available as general guidelines and should be adapted to local class levels and program focus. When programs use the [CASAS Skill Level Descriptors](#) as references for student placement, the program purpose and focus of instruction should receive consideration because a student may score higher in one skill area than another – attaining a higher score in reading than in listening, for example. **The lower test score is generally the basis for program placement.**

However, if a program places greater emphasis on listening and speaking skills, such as at the beginning levels of ESL instruction, the listening score may be given greater weight in determining placement into lower levels in that program. Conversely, if there is emphasis on reading and writing skills, such as at the intermediate and advanced ESL levels, the reading score could receive greater weight for placement into higher levels. **Please note that the listening and reading scales are distinct and cannot be averaged to determine learner placement.**

The CASAS intake screening process is one measure by which a program can make decisions on appropriate program or class placement. In any program, final determination should involve a combination of assessments looking at a variety of skills.

# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A – *Intake Screening Scoring Sheet***

**APPENDIX B – *Oral Screening Rubric, Script, and Response Notes***

**APPENDIX C – *Writing Screening Student Response Sheet***

**APPENDIX D – *Reading Screening***

## APPENDIX A – Intake Screening Scoring Sheet

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Test Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

### Oral Screening

Circle 0, 1 or 2

**Total Points**

|          |   |   |   |
|----------|---|---|---|
| <b>1</b> | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| <b>2</b> | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| <b>3</b> | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| <b>4</b> | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| <b>5</b> | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| <b>6</b> | 0 | 1 | 2 |

### Intake Process Outcome

- \_\_\_\_\_ Refer to instruction in a Literacy or Beginning ESL class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give Level A
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give locator or appraisal and pretest.

### Reading Screening

Circle 0 or 1

**Total Points**

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| <b>1</b> | 0 | 1 |
| <b>2</b> | 0 | 1 |
| <b>3</b> | 0 | 1 |
| <b>4</b> | 0 | 1 |
| <b>5</b> | 0 | 1 |

### Writing Screening

- \_\_\_\_\_ Could not write name.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Could not write date.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Could not answer question.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Minimal response to question
- \_\_\_\_\_ Good response to question

*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*

## APPENDIX B – Oral Screening

The Oral Screening Rubric, Script, and Response Notes are on the next page.

### Scoring the Oral Screening

Use the scoring rubric below to assign **0**, **1**, or **2** to each of the six *Oral Screening* questions.

Score the *Oral Screening* according to the guidelines below.

| Points   | Guidelines   |
|----------|--|
| <b>0</b> | No answer, incomprehensible, or does not answer the question.<br>Note: If the examinee responds, "I don't know," it is up to the administrator to determine whether this answer represents an appropriate response or lack of comprehension. |
| <b>1</b> | Comprehensible but not grammatically correct.<br>Note: Comprehensible = understandable and relevant  |
| <b>2</b> | Comprehensible and grammatically correct.<br>Note: Answers that are appropriate and represent what a native speaker would provide would be given 2 points; therefore, some one-word answers would be given 2 points.                         |

*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*

## APPENDIX B – Oral Screening Rubric, Script, and Response Notes - continued

|  |  | SCORE   |  |   |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Question   | Response Notes   | 0   | 1  | 2   |
| <b>What's your name?</b>   | This question is not scored.<br>Omit if you know the student.  |   | My name<br>Robert Torres.                            | Maria<br>Alvarez.   |
| <b>1. What country are you from?</b>   | Naming a country is the correct response.<br><br>Score <b>0</b> if the response is a city, state or province.  | Yo no hablo inglés.                             | I from Peru.   | I'm from Mexico.<br>Mexico.   |
| <b>2. How long have you been in the United States?</b><br>To clarify, ask:<br><b>When did you come to the United States?</b>                 | Some possible responses:<br><i>Four years; 1987; etc.</i>  | ¿Cómo?<br><br>Last time.                        | Two year.  | I've been here since 1980.  |
| <b>3. Tell me why you want to learn English.</b><br>To clarify, ask:<br><b>Why do you want to study English?</b>                             | Any appropriate reason may be acceptable.  | Want? Learn?<br><br>English. Good.              | Improve study.                                       | Because I want a better job.  |
| <b>4. Do you read in your native language?</b><br><br>If Yes, ask:<br><b>What do you like to read?</b><br><br>If No, ask:<br><b>Why not?</b> | Yes.<br>Some possible responses:<br>names of books, types of books, subjects.<br><br>No.<br>Some possible responses:<br><i>I didn't go to school in my country; I can't read; I have no time to read; etc.</i> | Sí. Yes.<br><br>Read. . . .<br>I no understand. | In Spanish? Yes.<br><br>Oh, book, magazine           | Not much.<br>I try to read in English to get more English practice. |
| <b>5. What work did you do in your country? or What work are you doing now?</b>  | Any appropriate response is acceptable.<br>If the person has not worked, expressing that is also correct.  | Uh . . . work.<br><br>[No response]             | Before, right?<br>Fix machine.<br>Now work mechanic. | I never worked in Mexico.   |
| <b>6. How many years did you go to school in your country?</b><br>To clarify, ask:<br><b>How long did you go to school in your country?</b>  | Any appropriate response is acceptable.  | School?<br><br>[No response]                    | Go school six year                                   | Ten years.  |

Permission granted to duplicate for intake.



## APPENDIX C – Writing Screening Student Response Sheet

Name

|  |              |             |
|--|--------------|-------------|
|  | <b>First</b> | <b>Last</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------|

Date

---

**Why do you want to study here?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Instructor Comments**

---

---

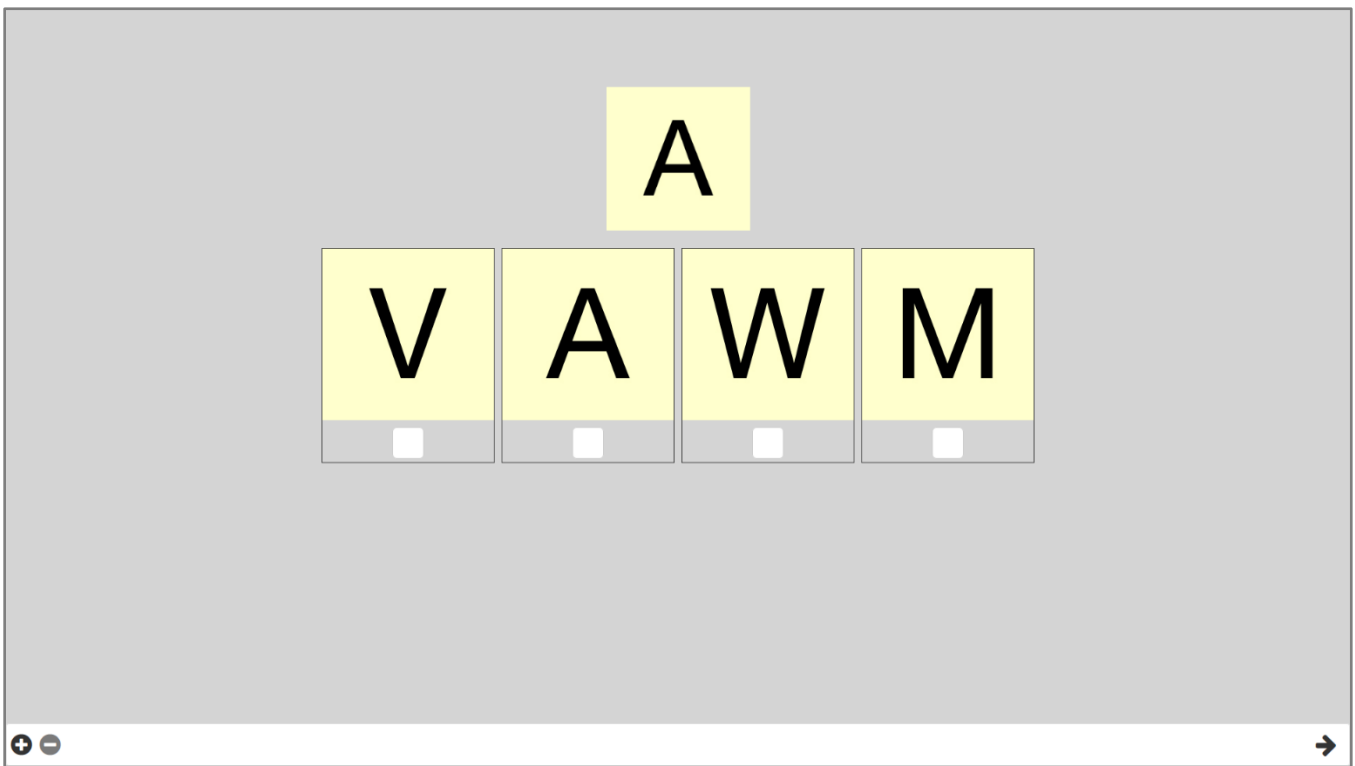
---

---

*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*

## APPENDIX D – Reading Screening

#1







*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*

#2

*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*

#3

bus





|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <br><input type="checkbox"/> | <br><input type="checkbox"/> | <br><input type="checkbox"/> | <br><input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|---|---|--|

Navigation icons: +, -, and →

*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*

#4

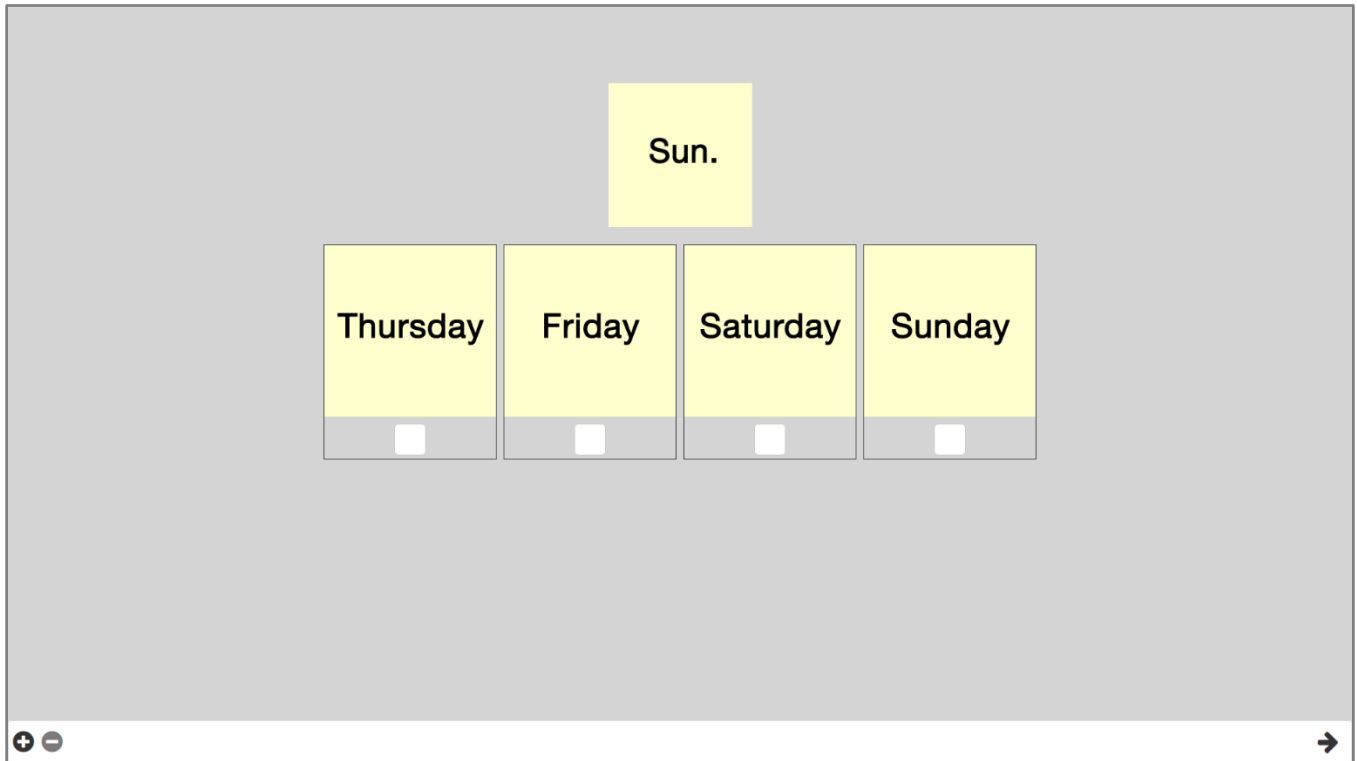
telephone

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>  |

+ - →

*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*

#5



*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*

Blank Page

*Permission granted to duplicate for intake.*