

Letter Length Reading: Instructions for Use

When word reading speed is measured under experimental conditions, skilled adult readers show negligible effects of letter length. In contrast, in some forms of acquired dyslexia, single word reading is particularly affected by letter length: the longer the word, the longer a person takes to read it aloud (eg. Patterson, K.E. & Kay, J. (1982) *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 34A, 411-441). This task is designed to reveal letter length effects in single word reading. All the materials are monosyllabic words and vary in letter length from 3 letters to 6 letters. Across each letter length, words are matched as closely as possible for frequency, imageability and morphemic complexity.

Special Points:

As well as counting up number correct and analysing reading error patterns, measuring reading speed can sometimes provide useful additional information. Use a stopwatch to measure reading times (start measuring as the stimulus is first shown and stop with the subject's first response).

Descriptive Statistics (for 32 control subjects):

3-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 6
4-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 6
5-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 6
6-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 6

Suggestions for Where to go next: If reading times are longer for longer words, try and find out why (you will need some help to do this in detail - begin with Chapter 8 in Ellis, A.W. & Young, A.W. (1988) *Human Cognitive Neuropsychology*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates). Some patients who read 'letter-by-letter' are poor at letter identification, so check performance on letter processing tasks (eg. letter discrimination [18, 19, 20, 21], letter naming [22] and sounding [22]). It seems that letter length and not syllable length is the pertinent variable in 'letter-by-letter' reading, so examine performance when letter length is kept constant but syllable length is systematically manipulated [30].

Reading Task

Please read each word aloud as clearly as you can

key	car
fox	bed
cup	bat
ship	door
duck	book
bird	soup
knife	house
glove	smoke
horse	ghost
bridge	church
cheese	square
tongue	priest

Letter Length Reading:

Marking Form

Name:

Date:

3-Letter		RT(s)	Response
1	key		
2	car		
3	fox		
4	bed		
5	cup		
6	bat		
Total Correct		/6	
4-Letter			
1	ship		
2	door		
3	duck		
4	book		
5	bird		
6	soup		
Total Correct		/6	
5-Letter			
1	knife		
2	house		
3	glove		
4	smoke		
5	horse		
6	ghost		
Total Correct		/6	
6-Letter			
1	bridge		
2	church		
3	cheese		
4	square		
5	tongue		
6	priest		
Total Correct		/6	