



How can the Cloze Story Word Test and Sentence Dictation Test help teachers, students, and parents know which words a student needs to learn to become a more fluent writer?

The Cloze Story Word Test and Sentence Dictation Test represent what we refer to as formative tests (see *What's Current* for more information on the benefits of formative assessment vs. summative assessment). Formative tests assess whether students understand the material that teachers have presented. The results allow teachers to guide their instructional methods and to identify material that needs to be clarified or retaught. The Cloze Story Word Test and Sentence Dictation Test exemplify this purpose as they are designed to help teachers gather information about which words students have not learned how to spell. Students directly benefit from the tests because the missed words become their "spelling words" and are targeted for further study. Students record these missed spelling words on a take-home Words to Learn sheet and in their Spelling Notebooks. The Words to Learn sheet allows parents to become involved in helping their children practice their most challenging spelling words, while the Spelling Notebook maintains a running record of the words students need to study most.


It has been shown that formative assessments can raise standards of achievement and lead to higher quality learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Wiliam, Lee, Harrison, & Black, 2004) as they provide frequent feedback from students, allowing teachers to then modify and restructure their instruction. Formative assessments also allow students to check their progress as learners. In *Sitton Spelling*, students' spelling goals are clarified and modified through the use of formative assessments throughout each unit of instruction. Students' learning is well supported by the curriculum-based Cloze Story Word Test and the Sentence Dictation Test, which allow teachers to target specific lessons to the students who need them most. Parents are kept involved as the results of these tests are reported to parents, allowing them to see a trajectory of student learning throughout the year.

Word Test

Sing a Song

(1) _____ is a song you (2) _____ when you were
 (3) _____. You (4) _____ sing it (5) _____. It
 is (6) _____ to be sung to you (7) _____ a year. We are
 (8) _____ that (9) _____ the most (10) _____
 sung song! Mildred Hill, a Kentucky (11) _____ teacher, wrote the
 melody, and her sister, Patty Hill, a principal, wrote (12) _____
 words. (13) _____, long ago the words were (14) _____.
 The song (15) _____, "Good morning to all, Good morning to all."
 (16) _____ to sing this song with these words. (17) _____
 write the song the way all of us (18) _____ it best.

Level Three, Unit 17 Cloze Story Word Test



**SENTENCE
 DICTATION**

1. The school play and music show will begin soon.
2. It's sure to be an important night on the stage.
3. The children were told by everyone to try very hard.
4. Their mothers and fathers knew they wanted to do their best.

Level Three, Unit 17 Sentence Dictation Test