



# The Kindergarten Chronicles

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## Revisiting Assessment

The count down to the end of the year has begun. Although we assess our students throughout the year using checklists, running records, and teacher observations, the focus now is on more measurable assessments. These include some of the same assessments I discussed in the September edition - phonemic awareness, letter and sound identification, a spelling inventory, writing samples, and reading level assessments. Rest assured that completing these final assessments is much easier than it was at the beginning of the school year. Assessments drive our instruction and guide us in making modifications for students.

I use the phonemic awareness assessment used in the GRIP-K class. Rhyming, isolating initial and final sounds, segmenting phonemes, blending phonemes, and substituting phonemes are all assessed. As I introduce and review these skills throughout the year, I choose one to assess every few weeks. I then met with those students who are still struggling with these skills. I assess students during journal time and independent work time. The skills are also reviewed with the whole class through songs, chants, and games.

For the letter and sound identification assessment, I use the checklist from GRIP-K containing all of the letters and sounds. From February to May, I set aside two days a month to formally assess students on these skills. Usually, I do this on Fridays during our class book projects. Stu-

dents who continue to struggle receive extra support in literacy and guided reading groups as well as assistance from parent volunteers.

Every few months, I administer a spelling inventory to my students during their guided reading groups. I use the inventories from *Words Their Way*. Looking at the skills my students know, use but confuse, and miss completely helps me plan my guided writing lessons.

Each month, my students write in "special" monthly journals. We write in journals daily, but the students have deemed the monthly journals as "special" because they can see how much they have learned. Students choose their own topic and are encouraged to use their best handwriting and spelling to share their ideas. I remind them of punctuation and capitalization. The students surprise me with their growth from month to month.

The final assessment of the year is to determine students' reading levels. There are many different assessments available. My school uses the DRA in primary grades. I begin in April because the students read texts to determine reading miscues and comprehension. I usually am able to assess three students a week during literacy station time.

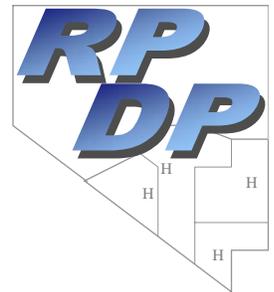
These assessments provide me with a comprehensive understanding of my students' strengths and weaknesses. I share this information with parents and the first grade teachers. Best of luck as you continue to watch your students blossom!

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Bill Hanlon, Director

## Food for Thought

*Does spring have you going "buggy"? Be sure to read the back of this newsletter for great ideas and resources for teaching an insect unit!*



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## Insect Texts

*Old Black Fly* by James Alyesworth

*I Like Bugs* by Margaret Wise Brown

*The Big Bug Book* by Margery Facklam

*Insectlopedia* by Douglas Florian

*Backyard Bugs* by Robin Kittrell Laughlin

*Have You Seen Bugs?* By Joann Openheim

*The Icky Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta

*The Icky Bug Counting Book* by Jerry Pallotta

*Amazing Insects* - Eyewitness Juniors

*Ladybug, Ladybug* by Ruth Brown

*The Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle

*What About Ladybugs?* By Celia Godwin

*A Ladybug's Life* by John Himmelman

## Going "Buggy"

With the weather warming, we are beginning a thematic unit on insects in my classroom. The students delight in this unit because they have schema for insects and this is the time of year when ladybugs hatch in droves on our playground. Below is a brief overview of the texts, pocket charts, and activities I use for the first two weeks of the unit.

**Week One:** For shared reading, I use *I Like Bugs* by Margaret Wise Brown. For a pocket chart activity, the text follows the poem and reads *I like \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ bugs*. After being introduced during shared reading, the students create their own words (a number word and a color word) to create their own sentences which they read and illustrate during work stations.

**Art Center:** The students create their own bugs with circles and collage materials.

**Word Knowledge Center:** Using letter rods, students make words that rhyme with *bug* and write them with fluorescent markers.

**ABC Center:** The students catch the letters in a net or swat them with a fly swatter and try to spell one of our word wall words.

**Science Center:** Students use magnifying glasses to watch our ladybug larvae and record what they see in their Bug Journals.

**Pocket Chart Center:** The students practice the pocket chart activity described previously.

**Writing Center:** The students write and illustrate step books about the life cycle of a ladybug.

**Poetry Center:** The students will use the poem, *I Like Bugs* on the overhead. They will read the poem, circle sight words, and illustrate their own copy of the poem.

**Computer Center:** The students visit a website on insects to view photos.

**Math Center:** The students play the game, Cootie. In this game, they roll a die to get various insect parts.

**Library Center:** The students will explore insect related books of various levels and genres.

**Week Two:** For shared reading, I use *The Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle. For a pocket chart activity, the text reads, *The grouchy ladybug came to a \_\_\_\_\_.* "Hey, you! Want to fight," said the grouchy ladybug. "If you insist," said the \_\_\_\_\_. "Oh, you're not big enough," said the grouchy ladybug. The student use animal cards to retell the story during shared reading and then at the pocket chart center.

**Centers:** These remain the same for two or three weeks as the students only visit one center per day.

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