Checking Initial Placement

Checking initial placement evaluates whether the student's level and goal are appropriate after he or she has completed the first three stories in the initial level. Consider using either the Checking Initial Placement Calculator on www.readnaturally.com or the Instructions and Worksheet provided at the end of this document to help you through the process.

> **Important!** A teacher must be present for the first three cold timings in the initial level to ensure accurate data.

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Checking Initial Placement Summary

The criteria used for checking initial placement are based on the student's scores on the Students At-a-Glance Report for the first three stories (see sample below).* Scores that meet the criteria below indicate that the level or goal may be appropriate. Scores that do not meet these criteria indicate that a level or goal adjustment may be necessary.

Criteria for an Appropriate Initial Level

- The student's cold-timing score (CT) falls within the range listed for the initial level on the Initial Placement Ranges table.
- The student's Quiz % correct score (%Quiz) is at least 60%.

Initial Placement Ranges

Initial Level	WCPM Score
1.0 to 3.0	30 to 60
3.5 to 5.0	60 to 80
5.6 to 7.0	80 to 100
8.0	100 to 140

Criteria for an Appropriate Initial Goal

- The student's CT is lower than the goal by approximately:
  - 30 if in grade 4 or below.
  - 40 if in grade 5 or above.
- The student's hot-timing score (HT) is equal to or slightly higher than the goal.
- The student's number of practices (#P) is 3 to 10.

*__Important__: Checking initial placement should occur after the first three stories. However, if done after story 4, 5, or 6, use the scores from the three most recent stories. The Initial Placement Ranges table is no longer valid after six stories.

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Students At-a-Glance

(Sample Report)

Current Grade	Student	Current Homeroom	Series/Level Series/Level	Date Level started	Stories passed	Cold timing (first 3/last 3)	Goal (first/last)	Hot timing (first 3/last 3)	Expression (first 3/last 3)	Practices (first 3/last 3)	Quiz % correct (first 3/last 3)
3	Her, Lee	Goss, H	Seq 2.5	09/27/2021	3	41 (41)	70 (70)	74 / 74	2/2	6/6	87 (87)

Step 1: Check the initial level

To see if the student's initial level is appropriate, you need to analyze the relationship between the initial placement range (IPR) and these values from the Student's At-a-Glance Report:

- Cold-timing score (CT)
- Quiz-%-correct on the first attempt of the quiz questions (%Quiz)

First, compare the student's CT to the Initial Placement Ranges table at right. Does the score fall above, within, or below the WCPM Score range for the student's initial level?

Initial Placement Ranges

Initial Level	WCPM Score
1.0 to 3.0	30 to 60
3.5 to 5.0	60 to 80
5.6 to 7.0	80 to 100
8.0	100 to 140

Second, find the row in the Level Analysis table below that matches the results of the comparison.

Third, find the column in the Level Analysis table for the student's %Quiz.

Level Analysis

If the CT is...	If the %Quiz is...		
	80% or higher, the level may be **appropriate**.	60–79%, the level may be **challenging**.*	59% or lower, the level may be **too difficult**.*
above placement range, the level may be **too easy**.	Raise level.	Continue level.	Lower level.
within placement range, the level may be **appropriate**.	Continue level.	Continue level.	Lower level.
below placement range, the level may be **too difficult**.	Lower level.	Lower level.	Lower level.

*Support comprehension if %Quiz is below 80%.

Then, find the point on the Level Analysis table where those comparisons intersect. This is the suggested action.

Next, based on the suggested action from the Level Analysis table and your knowledge of the student, decide if you should raise, continue, or lower the initial level.

- If you decide the student should continue in the initial level, skip ahead to Step 2: Check the Initial Goal.
- If you decide to adjust the initial level (IL), raise or lower it based on the Level Adjustment table below.

Note: Because placement in a Phonics level must align to a student's earliest phonics need, you will move the student from the Phonics level to a Sequenced level.

If the student's earliest phonics need cannot be met in the level that is appropriate for his or her fluency needs, assign a level that matches the student's fluency needs and support phonics separately. (Consider using Word Warm-ups Live to address the phonics need in this case.)

Level Adjustment

If initial level is...	0.8 1.0[1]	1.3 1.5	1.8 2.0	2.3 2.5	2.6 2.7 3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.6	6.0	7.0	8.0[2]
Raise to...	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.6	6.0	7.0	8.0	8.0
Lower to...	0.8	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.6	6.0	7.0

[1]If the student is in Level 0.8, knows beginning sounds and about 50 words, and the suggested action is to lower the level, continue the level. Go to Step 2 and check the initial goal.

[2]If the student is in Level 1.0, knows beginning sounds and about 50 words, and the suggested action is to lower the level, lower to Phonics Level 0.8.

[3]If the student is in Level 8.0 and the suggested action is to raise the level, continue the level. Go to Step 2 and check the initial goal.

Finally, if you adjusted the student's level, conduct his or her first cold timing in the new level and assign a new goal using the Goal Setting table below and your knowledge of the student.

Goal Setting

Grade	Guideline
Grade 4 and below	Add 30 to the student's wcpm score for the selected level and round down to the nearest 5.
Grade 5 and above	Add 40 to the student's wcpm score for the selected level and round down to the nearest 5.

You have completed the checking initial placement process and do not need Step 2 because the student will be working in a new level with a new goal.

Note: After the student completes three stories in the new level with the new goal, begin the process of checking placement (level and goal) again.

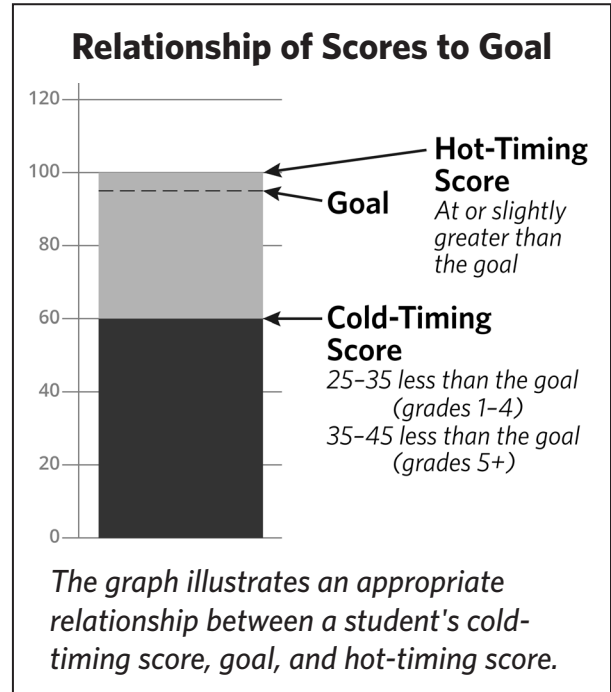# Step 2: Check the initial goal

If the student continues in the same level, your next step is to check the initial goal. For this step, you will need to look at the initial goal (IG) and three of the values from the Students At-a-Glance Report:

- Cold-timing score (CT)
- Hot-timing score (HT)
- Number of practices (#P)

How the CT and HT compare to the goal and whether the #P is appropriate are important signs indicating whether the initial goal is too low, appropriate, or too high.

First, use the Goal Analysis table below to analyze these values. Select one statement in each row that best describes the student's progress:

- the student's goal compared to CT (top row),
- the student's goal compared to HT (middle row),
- and the student's #P (third row).

Relationship of Scores to Goal

The graph illustrates an appropriate relationship between a student's cold-timing score, goal, and hot-timing score.

Goal Analysis

Signs that the goal may be...		
Too Low	**Appropriate**	**Too High**
The student's goal is lower than, at, or too close to the **CT**: ▪ *24 or fewer words above the CT is too close for grades 1–4* ▪ *34 or fewer words above the CT is too close for grades 5+*	The student's goal is an appropriate amount above the **CT**: ▪ *25–35 words above the CT is appropriate for grades 1–4* ▪ *35–45 words above the CT is appropriate for grades 5+*	The student's goal is too far above the **CT**: ▪ *36 or more words above the CT is too far for grades 1–4* ▪ *46 or more words above the CT is too far for grades 5+*
The student's **HT** is more than 10 words above the goal.	The student's **HT** is 0–10 words above the goal.	The student's **HT** is below the goal.
The student's **#P** is less than 3.	The student's **#P** is 3 to 10.	The student's **#P** is more than 10.

Second, count how many statements you selected under each column heading: Too Low, Appropriate, and Too High. Use these totals to find the suggested action on the Goal Adjustment table on the next page.

Third, using your totals from the Goal Analysis table, find the row in the Goal Adjustment table at right that matches the number of signs that the goal may be too low, appropriate, or too high. Read across to the last column to determine the suggested action.

Goal Adjustment
Number of signs the goal may be...

Too Low	Appropriate	Too High	Suggested Action
3	0	0	Raise Goal
2	1	0	Raise Goal
2	0	1	Raise or Continue Goal
1	2	0	Raise or Continue Goal
1	1	1	Continue Goal
0	3	0	Continue Goal
1	0	2	Continue or Lower Goal
0	2	1	Continue or Lower Goal
0	1	2	Lower Goal
0	0	3	Lower Goal

Next, based on the suggested action and your knowledge of the student, decide if you should raise, continue, or lower the goal.

- If you decide to continue the goal, you have completed the checking initial placement process.

- If you decide to adjust the goal, use the Setting an Adjusted Goal table below to set a new goal.

Setting an Adjusted Goal

Grade	Guideline
Grade 4 and below	Add 30 to the student's CT score for the selected level and round down to the nearest 5.
Grade 5 and above	Add 40 to the student's CT score for the selected level and round down to the nearest 5.

If the new goal is above the HT, consider setting the goal at the HT or slightly below. As the student completes more stories and his or her cold timings improve, you will increase the goal.

You have now completed the checking initial placement process.

Note: After the student completes the next three stories in the level, check the goal again.

Checking Initial Placement Calculator

An online calculator to check initial placement after the student has completed three stories is available. The calculator analyzes the student's scores and provides a level and goal recommendation.

Note: Checking initial placement should occur after the first three stories. However, if done after story 4, 5, or 6, use the scores from the most recent three stories. The Initial Placement Ranges table is no longer valid after six stories.

Visit the Read Naturally website (**readnaturally.com/article/rnl-checking-initial-placement-calc**) to check initial placement for your Read Naturally Live students.