

Appendix H: Reading and Writing Skills Checklists

These checklists can be used by facilitators in informal discussions to determine the approximate skill level of adult new readers and writers. These checklists are not meant to be assessment tools. The facilitator should begin discussions by asking the adult participant how reading and writing is used in his/her everyday life. The bulleted prompts under each skills checklist can be used to help initiate discussions.

Reading and writing are presented in separate charts because adults are often better readers than writers. They may be comfortable reading newspapers but are in the beginning stages of writing.

Reading Skills Checklist

Reading ability is not only determined by what people read but also by how they use reading in their lives.

Level I

The adult new reader may recognize only a few words, names, and signs, including identifying his/her own name and address on an envelope and reading the names of family members on greeting cards.

Beginning Reading Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Create a greeting card.
- Use a word processor to make a list of new words that feature center alignment, enlarged font sizes, or the bullets or numbers feature. Have the adult learner print out the list to review at home.

Level II

The beginning reader often uses reading only to solve immediate information needs, such as using an electronic display to find the airport terminal of an arriving plane by matching up letters from a piece of paper, matching a coupon to a shelf item, or finding a price on a store flyer or the amount owed on a utility bill.

Beginning Reading Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Use a word processor to practice reading with language experiences.
- Create cards, flyers, and banners.
- Organize names and addresses into a database.
- Use a word processor to write, print out, and practice reading language experiences and take the printed assignment home to reread.

Level III

The adult reader can read simple text, with varied success, to find information or follow instructions. He/she can read a jury summons, prepared instructions, a menu, and highway signs; interpret train and bus schedules; and use an automatic teller machine (ATM).

Beginning Reading Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Create cards, flyers, and banners. If the adult learner is self-employed, help him/her create business flyers.

- Learn about reading information in a table by organizing names and addresses, a CD collection, books read, or another topic of interest into a database.
- Find Web sites of interest and write about the experience using a word processor.
- Use the word processor to write a recipe and use numbers and bullets to organize it.
- Use the Internet to find a news site that has audio and listen to a story that is also visually displayed on the screen. Then ask the adult learner to write about the experience using a word processor.
- Find a picture of a famous person or map of a place on a CD-ROM program and write about it.

Level IV

The adult learner is comfortable with reading but needs to improve his/her test-taking skills. The adult reads newspapers and mail at home and memos and instructions at work. The adult also reads out loud to children at home.

Beginning Reading Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Use CD-ROM encyclopedias to research information for short reports.
- Find information using the Internet on a favorite hobby or television program or research information on an upcoming examination or available employment opportunities.
- Develop the ability to read and use the menu bars, drop-down menus, and text boxes of productivity tools by creating such applications as a database of personal addresses, a spreadsheet of expenses, or a letter and résumé inquiring about a job.

Writing Skills Checklist

Level I

The adult learner limits writing to filling in his/her name and address on forms or signing greeting cards.

Beginning Writing Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Add one to two sentences to a language experience story.
- Make a greeting card or letterhead.

Level II

Through conversation, the facilitator has learned that the adult learner uses a limited selection of words to address needs, such as filling out a money order, jotting down items on a shopping list, or keeping information on a calendar.

Beginning Writing Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Write short narratives about himself/herself, goals, family members, or important events using a word processor. Then add a graphic or scan a photograph into the document.
- Make a greeting card, calendar, or letterhead.
- Organize vocabulary words into a database.
- Create bulleted and numbered lists.

Level III

The adult learner can write complete thoughts on paper and is confident enough to participate in written communication with others, including jotting down notes to himself/herself, writing notes to a child's teacher, or writing letters to family members.

Beginning Writing Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Write narratives about himself/herself, goals, family members, or important events using a word processor. Then add graphics or scan photographs into the document.
- Make a greeting card, calendar, or letterhead.
- Find a map or photograph on CD-ROM and add it to a word processing document.
- Use CD-ROM encyclopedias to write a short research paper about an event or hero.
- Send e-mail to a “keypal.”
- Use an online chat program.

Level IV

The adult learner uses writing to think and communicate and is ready to work on passing an entrance test or improving business-writing skills. He/she can complete a job application in a timely fashion, write business letters such as requests for information or letters of complaint, and keep a journal.

Beginning Writing Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Create a business letter on a word processor using tabs and margins.
- Create a résumé using a word processor using font, bullet, and margin features.
- Write narratives about himself/herself, goals, family members, or important events using a word processor, adding graphics or scanning photographs.
- Create a newsletter on a topic of interest such as events at the technology center or a news item.
- Use a spreadsheet to set up a budget.

