

# Renaissance

See Every Student.



## Using Renaissance Star Assessments for the NebraskaREADS Initiative

### Overview

The goal of the [NebraskaREADS initiative](#) is to provide a comprehensive approach to improving early literacy skills and developing successful readers through strong early reading instruction and individualized supports for students demonstrating reading deficiencies in grades K-3.

According to the guidelines outlined in the [Nebraska Reading Improvement Act](#), students in grades K-3 must be assessed with an approved reading assessment three times each year. Best practices for assessment recommend that this screening occurs in the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Kindergarten students must be screened during the first 45 calendar days while students in grades 1-3 must be screened during the first 30 calendar days.

The Renaissance Star suite of assessments is [approved](#) as a valid and reliable assessment that meets the screening requirements in Nebraska. The Star suite includes Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, and Star CBM Reading, all of which are reliable and valid assessments that align with appropriate academic content standards for reading adopted by the State Board of Education.

### Step 1: Universal Screening for all K-3 students

View [The Star Assessment Toolkit](#) for additional guidance on the five basic steps that are key to a sound implementation with Star Assessments.

Students in grades K-3 must be screened with a state-approved assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Star Early Literacy and Star Reading are approved in Nebraska for this purpose.

- [Star Early Literacy Test Administration Manual](#)
- [Star Reading Test Administration Manual](#)

Assess students who are emerging readers with Star Early Literacy. As they become independent readers, administer Star Reading. See [K-3 Guidance for Star](#) for further information on choosing the appropriate assessment for students.

**Table 1: Star Assessments for Universal Screening**

Assessment	Typical Grade Levels	Considerations
Star Early Literacy	Grades K-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best for students K-3 who are not yet reading simple sentences</li><li>• Takes about 10 minutes to administer whole group</li></ul>
Star Reading	Grades 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best for students K-3 who are already independent readers</li><li>• Takes about 20 minutes to administer whole group</li></ul>

## Threshold levels

Students scoring at or above the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile rank (PR) are considered to be performing at or above the threshold, or benchmark, “progressing” toward future reading success. They will likely meet end-of-year performance goals, and no further assessment is required. Students scoring below 40 PR are considered to be “at risk” for future reading difficulty and should be further assessed as outlined in Step 2.

Threshold levels (cut points)		
Assessment	At Risk	Progressing
Star Early Literacy OR Star Reading	1-39 PR	40-99 PR

According to the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, students identified as having a reading deficiency must receive an individual reading improvement plan within 30 days of their identification. View [Individual Reading Improvement Plans \(IRIPs\)](#) for additional guidance.

**Continue to Step 2 *only* for those students identified as “at risk” for future reading difficulty.**

## Step 2: Additional screening for students “at risk”

Students scoring below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile rank on Star Early Literacy or Star Reading are potentially at risk for reading difficulties and should be further screened with Star CBM Reading. The purpose of this secondary screening is to identify areas of focus for instruction and intervention. It is not necessary to administer each Star CBM Reading for all students identified as “at risk”.

## Administration guidance for Star CBM Reading

**Kindergarten:** Based on the assumption that Kindergarten students who score at low levels on the initial screening assessment may need instruction to improve skills in naming letters of the alphabet, knowing sounds that correspond with letters, and/or hearing sounds in words, it is recommended to administer *three* measures in Star CBM Reading—Letter Naming, Letter Sounds, and Phoneme Segmentation—for all K students scoring below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile rank on Star Early Literacy. See Table 2 for more information.

**Grades 1-3:** For students scoring below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile rank on Star Early Literacy (grades 1-3) or Star Reading (grades 2-3), begin with the first measure listed in Table 2 for the corresponding grade level. The measures are listed in an order that is a relative progression of skills from most difficult to least difficult. Students may acquire these skills earlier or later than others. Progress through the list until the scores are at/above benchmark (40<sup>th</sup> percentile rank).

Scores for Star CBM Reading are reported as correct per minute (CPM). The cut scores listed in Table 2 represent the 40<sup>th</sup> PR threshold by grade and season. Scores shown in the software on a red or blue background fall below the threshold and indicate a risk area for the student. For more information view [Star CBM Score and Benchmark Tables](#).

Star CBM Reading Measures	Star CBM Rapid Automatic Naming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> At/Above (40 PR and above)</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> On Watch (20-39 PR)</li> <li><span style="color: red;">■</span> Intervention (1-19 PR)</li> <li><span style="color: gray;">■</span> Assessed outside of normed grade levels (benchmarks not reported!)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> At/Above (20 PR and above)</li> <li><span style="color: red;">■</span> At Risk (1-19 PR)</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Star CBM Reading administration and cut scores by grade level**

Grade Level	Star CBM Reading measure	Threshold Level (40 PR benchmark)		
		Beginning of Year (BOY)	Middle of Year (MOY)	End of Year (EOY)
K	Letter Sounds	16	30	42
	Phoneme Segmentation	8	15	20
	Letter Naming	25	38	49
	The measures listed below have greater utility for K students who have not been identified at risk. They are intended for students who are moderately or higher performing.			
	Sight and High-Frequency Words			11
	Receptive Nonsense Words	7	11	14
1	Passage Oral Reading <sup>1</sup>	23	35	49
	Sight and High-Frequency Words	11	12	25
	Expressive Nonsense Words	13	16	21
	Phoneme Segmentation	20	22	24
	Letter Sounds	47	47	47
	Letter Naming	49	49	49
2	Passage Oral Reading <sup>1</sup>	81	91	102
	Sight and High-Frequency Words	47	54	63
	Expressive Nonsense Words	24	28	33
3	Passage Oral Reading <sup>1</sup>	106	112	118
	Sight and High-Frequency Words	53	57	61

## Rapid Automatic Naming

If a student scores below 20 PR (score shown with a red background) on all recommended Star CBM Reading measures for the grade level, Renaissance suggests administering one or more Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN) measures (the content should be familiar to the student to ensure valid results). Students scoring below 20 PR (score shown with a red background) on any RAN measures may be at risk for characteristic of dyslexia.

Star CBM Rapid Automatic Naming Measure	Threshold Level (20 PR benchmark)			
	Grade level (CPM) cut scores			
	K	1	2	3
Pictures	30	38	46	49
Colors	33	40	48	51
Letters	25	40	59	62
Numbers	33	48	61	68

*Note: Correct per minute (CPM) cut scores for Rapid Automatic Naming do not change seasonally.*

<sup>1</sup>Students scoring below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile rank on Star Early Literacy or Star Reading but at/above 40 PR on Passage Oral Reading (indicated by a score shown on a green background) may be deficient in higher order comprehension skills rather than foundational skills. For these students, target instruction and intervention on comprehension skills.

## Instruction and intervention guidance (K-3)

Ideally, instruction, intervention, and related progress monitoring would be focused in one measure area where the student scored below 40 PR, indicated by a score shown on a blue (39-20 PR) or red (below 20 PR) background. Students scoring at/above 40 PR likely don't need intensive or supplemental intervention in that measure area at this time (see footnote for Passage Oral Reading). View [Star CBM English Assessments \(Star Record Book\)](#) for more information on administering Star Reading CBM measures and viewing scores.

## Score definitions

### Star Early Literacy and Star Reading

**Percentile Rank (PR):** A percentile rank provides the best measure of a student's level of achievement compared to other students in the same grade nationally. A percentile rank ranges from 1-99, and it indicates the percentage of a student's peers whose scores were equal to or lower than the student's score. For example, a student who has a percentile rank of 85 performed as well as or better than 85 percent of students in the same grade.

**Unified Scaled Score (SS):** Many users of Star Reading use Star Early Literacy to assess their students until they are ready to take Star Reading itself. Until recently, Star Reading and Star Early Literacy used different score scales, making it difficult to monitor growth as students transitioned from one assessment to the other. To ameliorate that disparity in the two tests' score scales, Renaissance developed a single score scale that applies to both assessments: the Unified score scale. That development began with equating the two tests' underlying Rasch ability scales; the result was the "unified Rasch scale", which is a downward extension of the Rasch scale used in all Star Reading. The end result was a reported score scale that extends from 200 to 1400: Star Early Literacy Unified scale scores range from 200 to 1100; Star Reading Unified scale scores range from 600 to 1400.

### Star CBM Reading

**Correct per Minute (CPM):** Star CBM Reading consists of several measures and multiple forms within each measure. In order to make the results of all forms in a measure comparable, and in order to provide a basis for deriving the norm-referenced scores, it is necessary to convert (or equate) all the scores of Star CBM Reading forms to a common or base form within each measure. Equating is a statistical process used to eliminate form difficulty differences to allow for interpretation of scores on a common scale. Star CBM Reading does this in steps. First, the number of correct responses on a form (Correct Count) is recorded. Second, the easiest form in each Star CBM Reading measure is identified and the Correct Count score on all of the other forms is equated to the easiest form, referred to as the base form. Finally, the equated correct count is converted to a Correct per Minute (CPM) score for reporting by multiplying the equated correct count by 60 and dividing by the total time the student took on the assessment. As a result, CPM scores indicate the same level of performance and can be interpreted regardless of the specific form taken in a measure.

**Percentile Rank (PR):** A percentile rank provides the best measure of a student's level of achievement compared to other students in the same grade nationally. A percentile rank ranges from 1-99, and it indicates the percentage of a student's peers whose scores were equal to or lower than the student's score. For example, a student who has a percentile rank of 85 performed as well as or better than 85 percent of students in the same grade.

# Viewing Assessment Data

The following reports provide student results and help identify which students need secondary testing with Star CBM Reading and which students may need supplemental or intensive intervention.

## Star Record Book (recommended for teachers and intervention specialists)

The [Star Record Book](#) is a great starting point for teachers to check student performance on Star assessments. It shows overall scores, benchmarks, and any fidelity indicators (i.e., students who took the test too quickly), and it is the hub for creating groups, setting goals for progress monitoring, and viewing instructional recommendations for a group or individual student.

Use the Latest Assessments tab to identify students at risk or significantly at risk for reading difficulties. Refer to Table 3 for benchmarks and cut scores for Universal Screening.

The Star Record book is also where teachers access [Star CBM](#) for use as a screener or progress monitoring tool. For information on how to administer measures in Star CBM Reading, visit [Smart Start for Star CBM](#). Learn more about [Goal Setting and Progress Monitoring](#) with Star CBM.

Star Record Book interface showing the Latest Assessments tab. The interface includes filters for Subject (Reading), School (A Renaissance Data Elementary), and Class or Group (2nd Grade). It displays a table of student results for Star Reading, Star Early Literacy, and Star CBM Reading. A callout box points to the 'Administer Star CBM measures and view data from the CBM English Assessments tab.'

Star CBM interface showing a table of student scores for various reading measures. The table includes columns for Student, GL, Goal, Letter Naming, Letter Sounds, Phoneme Segmentation, Receptive Nonsense Words, Expressive Nonsense Words, and Passage Oral Reading. A callout box points to the 'Click the Rapid Naming, Encoding button to administer or view RAN or Encoding data.'

## Interpreting Star CBM Reading Data

1. A solid gray background is an indicator of risk for measures that don't have norms and benchmarks for a grade or season. A green checkmark next to the score indicates the score would fall within the At/Above Benchmark category in the nearest grade and season where benchmarks exist for the measure and the student is likely ready for a more difficult skill. See [Star CBM Score and Benchmark Tables](#) for more information on normed measures.
2. If more than one reading area is identified as at risk, focus on the most foundational or "easiest" skills first and then move up to the next set of skills when the first set is mastered. For example, if a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student scores at the risk level in both Phoneme Segmentation (Phonemic Awareness) and Expressive Nonsense Words (Phonics), teachers may choose to focus on Phonemic Awareness until the student is ready to move onto Phonics. The image shows the order of difficulty of the Star CBM measures from left to right.

Easier → More difficult

Student	GL	Goal	Letter Naming Grade K	Letter Sounds Grades K - 1	Phoneme Segmentation Grades K - 1	Receptive Nonsense Words Grade K	Expressive Nonsense Words Grades 1 - 2	Passage Oral Reading Grades 1 - 6
Adams, Rhonda	1	...	49	38	12	12	...	...
Berganza, Iris	1		...	...	23	...	...	21

# Reports and Guidance for Administrators

## **Star Screening Report** (recommended for school admins, including instructional coaches and intervention specialists)

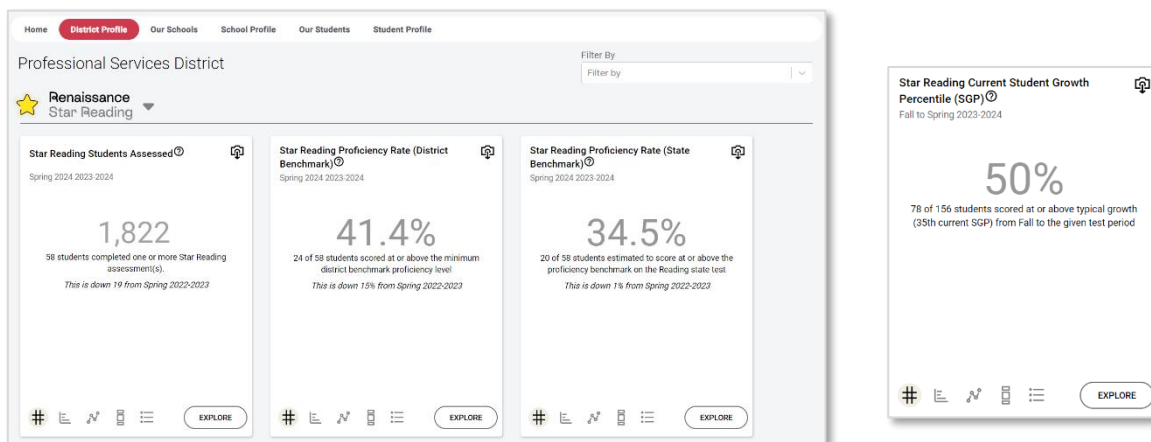
The [Star Screening Report](#) provides an overall count and percentage by grade, group, or class of students in each benchmark category, plus a list of individual students and scores. Select District Benchmarks when setting parameters for running this report.

District administrators in the software can customize district benchmarks to match state data and legislative requirements. This will make it easier for all staff to interpret assessment data. See [District Administrator Tasks](#) for more information.



## **Renaissance Next for Leaders** (available for staff with school and district admin permissions only)

[Renaissance Next for Leaders](#) provides overview information for administrators. Admins can track the number of students tested, as well as the results of the testing and growth. Data in Renaissance Next for Leaders can be disaggregated by student characteristics if they were entered into the Renaissance platform when student accounts and rosters were created.



## Additional Resources and Support

Assessment	Technical Resources	Training/Administration Resources
Star Early Literacy	<a href="#">Star Early Literacy Test Administration Manual</a> <a href="#">Star Early Literacy Technical Manual</a> <a href="#">Unified Benchmarks and Cut Scores</a>	<a href="#">Smart Start for Star Assessments</a> <a href="#">How to Get Started with Star</a> <a href="#">How to Interpret Star Data</a> <a href="#">How to Enhance Instruction with Star</a>
Star Reading	<a href="#">Star Reading Test Administration Manual</a> <a href="#">Star Reading Technical Manual</a> <a href="#">Unified Benchmarks and Cut Scores</a>	
Star CBM Reading	<a href="#">Star CBM Test Administration Manual</a> <a href="#">Star CBM Reading Technical Manual</a> <a href="#">Star CBM Score and Benchmark Tables</a>	<a href="#">Smart Start for Star CBM</a> <a href="#">How to Get Started with Star CBM</a> <a href="#">How to Interpret Star CBM Data</a> <a href="#">How to Enhance Instruction with Star CBM</a>

### Contacting Renaissance Support

- Phone: 1-800-338-4204
- Web Form: <https://www.renaissance.com/request-support/>
- Help Center: <https://renhelpcenter.renaissance.com/>
- Live Chat is available at [Renaissance.com](https://www.renaissance.com) or on your Renaissance Home Screen