

# Measuring Word Recognition Using a Picture

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## Introduction

One clearly important learning objective for children is to learn written single words. Therefore, there is a need to test the achievement and proficiency of word knowledge in children. The task specifications below show an alternative test method using matching that we have developed to measure the ability of grade school students to recognize written single words. This task type was first developed for children in the Korean/English Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Program for learning two languages (Korean and English), and has been successfully implemented for these students. Since its first development in 1994, it has become one of the students' favorite task types.

Test task specifications function as guidelines for generating a number of items. They serve as an explanation to test users and item-writers about what a specific task is about (i.e., they specify ability being tested and the means used to test the ability). Using the specifications introduced below, teachers and testers can generate many homogenous tasks (items) . We hope these specifications are useful for classroom achievement and proficiency tests for those wanting to assess the word knowledge of children in similar contexts.

Advantages and limitations of this alternative task type can readily be discussed. Those interested in offering feedback on this task and/or contributing items to be produced based on these specifications are welcome to contact the author.

## Title of Specifications: Reading Concrete Words Using Matching

### General Description

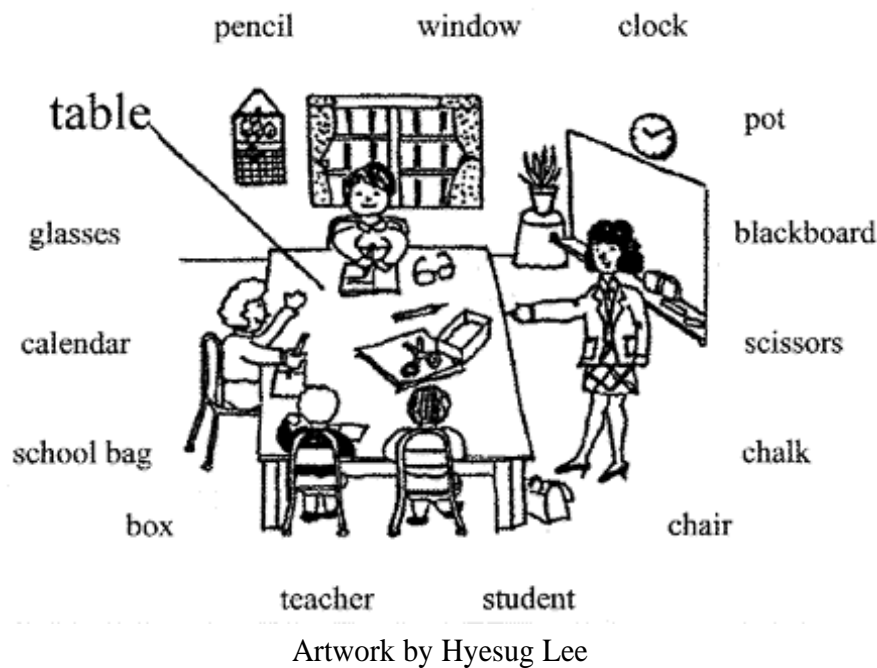
- Reading ability being tested: The ability to recognize single written words that are concrete nouns and to comprehend their meaning.
- This task uses pictures that illustrate settings common to the students' daily lives and school experiences. The pictures depict a number of concrete nouns.
- The target language is English, but may also be another language.
- Level: Beginning level elementary school students (flexible).

### Sample Task

#### Instructions (In two languages)

"Look at the picture (Pause). Look at the words around the picture (Pause.)

Find the biggest word. What is that word? (Students will say, "Table.") A line has been drawn from that word to the TABLE to match them. In the same way, please find all the words that you know and draw a line to match them with the right object in the picture. Make sure that the ends of your lines touch the words and the things in the picture. You will have five minutes to complete the exercise."



## Prompt Attributes

### Instructions

- Instructions will be delivered in the students' dominant languages (two languages).
- Oral instructions will be given for lower grade students (K to Grade 2) because of their lack of ability to comprehend written instructions.
- Written instructions (in a shorter version of the instructions above) will be given when the task is given to higher grades (Grade 3 or higher).

### Written Words Should...

- Be concrete nouns.
- Not be highly culture-specific.
- Consist of 12 to 20 different words.
- Be scattered around the picture but not too far from the objects.
- Be scattered randomly, so that the directions of the lines, when drawn by the students, will show random patterns to prevent students from guessing from a systematic pattern of lining.
- Have one example word that is familiar to all students and is bigger than the rest of the words.

### Difficulty of Items

The task will contain words of varying degrees of difficulty, ranging from very easy items to difficult items. About 10% of the written items will be words that may be challenging to the advanced level students of the test-taker group. About 20% of the words will be very easy. The difficulty will be determined on the basis of the frequency of word use, complexity of the graphic image, and the meaning of the word.

## Response Attributes

- Response: Students will look at the picture and the words and then draw lines as instructed.
- Scoring criteria:  
One point for each item matched correctly and unambiguously with a line. No partial credit should be given. When there are more than one objects for the same word (e.g., chairs), any line drawn to the corresponding objects will be treated as correct.

## Specifications Supplement

- Testers can use this task type as one of a multiple of task types in a reading test. Teachers may also apply this task type to classroom exercises and homework assignments.

## Acknowledgments

- The author thanks Hyesug Lee for her picture and item contribution.
- The task specifications above utilize the format that appears in Lynch and Davidson (1994), "Criterion-referenced language test development: Linking curricular, teachers, and tests." TESOL Quarterly. 28(4), 727-43.
- The development of this task type was supported by UCLA Language Resource Program under the directorship of Russell N. Campbell. The author also thanks Lyle F. Bachman for his support during the development of this task type.

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The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. VII, No. 12, December 2001

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