Part A: Fluency Assessment

This reading assessment will help you determine if your child is ready for the reading, comprehension, and analysis that will be required in *Moving Beyond the Page*'s 8-10 age level curriculum. Use the provided excerpt from the 8-10 level book *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder to complete the assessment. Follow the directions below.

Directions

Explain to your child that the passage he is going to read is taken from an historical fiction book about the life of a pioneer family living in the woods.

Time your child as she reads the excerpt from *Little House in the Big Woods.* As she reads, make a mark on your copy any time she omits, adds, or mispronounces a word.

Little House in the Big Woods (excerpt*)

Pa and Ma and Aunt Eliza and Uncle Peter sat by the fire, talking. And just as Laura was drifting off to sleep, she heard Uncle Peter say:

"Eliza had a narrow squeak the other day, when I was away at Lake City. You know Prince, that big dog of mine?"

Laura was wide awake at once. She always liked to hear about dogs. She lay still as a mouse, and looked at the fire-light flickering on the log walls, and listened to Uncle Peter.

"Well," Uncle Peter said, "early in the morning Eliza started to the spring to get a pail of water, and Prince was following her. She got to the edge of the ravine, where the path goes down to the spring, and all of a sudden Prince set his teeth in the back of her skirt and pulled.

"You know what a big dog he is. Eliza scolded him, but he wouldn't let go, and he's so big and strong she couldn't get away from him. He kept backing and pulling, till he tore a piece out of her skirt…"

"He was so savage, I thought he was going to bite me," said Aunt Eliza. "I believe he would have."

"I never heard of such a thing!" said Ma. "What on earth did you do?"

"I turned right around and ran into the house where the children were, and slammed the door," Aunt Eliza answered…

"Along late in the afternoon," Uncle Peter said, "he got quiet, and lay down in front of the door… So she opened the door very quietly, but of course he woke up right away. When he saw she had the water pail in her hand, he got up and walked ahead of her to the spring, just the same as usual. And there, all around the spring in the snow, were the fresh tracks of a panther."

Time: _____ Errors: _____

This will help you to see how well your child decodes the words. If your child is spending too much of her focus simply sounding out the words, it may be difficult for her to also understand everything that is going on in the text. Use the numbers below as benchmarks to assess your child:

Strategic	Instructional	Independent	Advanced
>30 errors (<89%)	16–29 errors (90-94%)	8–15 errors (95-97%)	0–7 errors (>97%)
3:11 or longer	2:42 – 3:10 minutes	2:15 – 2:41 minutes	2:15 minutes or faster

Your child should be in at least the instructional range for both accuracy and fluency to continue the assessment. If your child scored in the strategic range for either of the two assessments, she is probably not ready for the reading required in the 8-10 age level.

* *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Harper & Row, Publishers: New York. 1932. (pp. 67-71).

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"You know what a big dog he is. Eliza scolded him, but he wouldn't let go, and he's so big and strong she couldn't get away from him. He kept backing and pulling, till he tore a piece out of her skirt…"

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Part B: Comprehension and Analysis

This portion of the assessment will check your child's comprehension of the text. While decoding is a critical first step of reading, sounding the words out will not do any good if your child does not understand the vocabulary and the sentence structure. These questions will help assess your child's understanding and ability to begin analyzing the information she learns in text. Follow the directions below:

1. Give your child the "Understanding Text" page and the excerpt from *Little House in the Big Woods.*
2. Allow her 5-10 minutes to answer the three questions on the "Understanding Text" page.
3. Encourage your child to refer back to the text for answers to the questions.
4. Then ask the following two questions and have your child provide an oral response:
    a. Why was Prince trying to keep Aunt Eliza away from the water spring?
    b. Do you think Prince was a good pet? Why or why not?

Sample answers have been provided but use your best judgment to determine if your child accurately comprehends the text.

Written Response

1. Why did Laura want to listen to her Uncle's story? *The text says that Laura liked to hear about dogs. Your child should answer that Laura wanted to listen as soon as she heard a dog (Prince) was in the story.*
2. What is one clue that the story took place a long time ago? *Answers will vary, but they may include the following. They were sitting around a fire talking. They were fetching water with a pail. Laura was sleeping in the same room that her parents were talking in.*
3. What did Aunt Eliza do when she thought Prince might bite her? *She went straight back to the house with the children and shut the door. This answer is straight from the text.*

Oral Response

4. Why was Prince trying to keep Aunt Eliza away from the water spring? *Your child should be able to analyze the information in the text to conclude that Prince was protecting Aunt Eliza from the panther that was likely near the spring. If your child struggles, ask her to reread the last paragraph in the text and try to answer again.*
5. Do you think Prince was a good pet? Why or why not? *Most children will answer yes even though he bit Aunt Eliza. He did it because he was trying to save her from the panther. Whatever her answer is, be sure that your child is able to support her answer with accurate details from the text.*

If your child struggles, in particular if her fluency scores were in the instructional range, consider testing her at the 7-9 age level. If your child scored an advanced and does not seem challenged by this text and questions, you might consider testing her at the 9-11 age level. She will likely benefit from the 8-10 age level as it provides a variety of texts, activities and assignments designed to challenge her thinking and develop her reading skills, but use the assessment for the next level up to better inform your decision.

Understanding Text

Respond to the following questions using complete sentences.

1. Why did Laura want to listen to her Uncle's story?

2. What is one clue that the story took place a long time ago?

3. What did Aunt Eliza do when she thought Prince might bite her?

Part C: Writing

This writing assessment will help you determine if your child is ready for the writing assignments in the 8-10 age level of *Moving Beyond the Page.* This age level requires more independent writing assignments from your child. In this age level, your child will begin working heavily with grammar so it is important that she has a strong grasp on parts of speech. Provide your child with the "Writing Response" page and give her time to complete the assignment (about 5-10 minutes). After she has completed the writing, ask your child to point out an example of a noun, verb, adjective, and adverb in her writing. If there are no examples of adjectives or adverbs in the writing sample, ask your child to come up with a list of them.

Use the "Writing Rubric" to grade your child's work. Score your child's writing and give her work a total. She should have a score of at least 6 to be on level in writing. It is probably more important though that you feel your child is comfortable expressing herself in writing. As she moves up through the levels of *Moving Beyond the Page,* your child will be asked more frequently to respond to, analyze, and reflect on material in writing. It is important as she enters this age level that she is fully comfortable using writing as a tool to express her thoughts and what she has learned.

Writing Rubric

Topic	1 (strategic)	2 (instructional)	3 (independent)
Main Idea	The sentences seem very disjointed and do not seem to focus on a single story or idea.	Some sentences go off topic although the whole piece clearly addresses a single story or idea.	All sentences discuss or relate to a time friends or family came to visit.
Full Sentences	All sentences lack a subject, verb, or are incomplete thoughts.	Some sentences lack a subject, verb, or are incomplete thoughts.	All sentences contain a subject, verb, and are complete thoughts.
Paragraph Structure	The paragraph lacks a topic sentence or supporting detail.	The paragraph lacks a topic sentence or is not fully supported (only 1-2 details).	The paragraph contains both a topic sentence and 3-4 supporting details.
Parts of Speech	Student can identify 1-2 parts of speech in her writing. Adjectives or adverbs may be missing.	Student can identify 3-4 parts of speech within her writing. Adjectives or adverbs may be missing.	Student can identify all parts of speech and the writing contains all four parts of speech.

Total: _____

Strategic	Instructional	Independent
0-4	4-8	9-12

Written Response

In one paragraph, write about a time when friends or family members came to visit.

Part D: Science and Social Studies Topics

While you should use the reading and writing assessments to determine the appropriate age level for your child, it is also helpful to know the topics that will be covered in the science and social studies units. These interactive units will develop your child's critical thinking skills and engage your child in the world around us.

Science Units	Social Studies Units
Dirt and Plants	Native Americans
Ecosystems and Ecology	The Power of People
Magnetism and Electricity	Africa and Asia
The Forces of Nature	Europe
Rocks and Minerals	Early Explorers
Animal Adaptations	
Work, Tools, and Simple Machines	