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Overview

The *Scholastic Phonics Inventory* (SPI) tests basic letter recognition, sight word knowledge, and decoding skills, to determine whether students should be placed in *System 44™* and, if so, at which point in the program. Students who show proficiency with the tested skills are recommended for placement in *READ 180®*. Students who require foundational reading instruction are recommended for placement in *System 44*. The test should take students between 8 to 12 minutes to complete.

Students recommended for *System 44* are placed in either Series 1, which focuses on consonant and short vowel sound-letter correspondences, or Series 4, which continues development of decoding skills.

This manual outlines the experience of taking an SPI test, and the scoring and placement recommendations that result. The SPI test is made up of these sections:

1. Practice
2. Letter Names
3. Sight Words
4. Nonsense Words (in three parts)

To learn how to enroll students, change students’ program settings, or access reports, see *SAM Settings and Reports for Scholastic Phonics Inventory*. 
Student Log-In

To log in to the SPI, students should:

1. Double-click the SPI icon on their desktop. This opens the Log In screen.
2. Enter their Username and Password, then click Go On.
   - If students have never used the SPI before, they proceed to the first screen.
   - If students have previously started but not finished the SPI, they proceed to the beginning of the section where they left off.
Practice

The first task in the SPI ensures that students are able to hear the instructions and use the mouse effectively. It also familiarizes students with the format of the test. These items do not factor into students’ scores.

Students see a screen with four circles, one of which is shaded gray. Audio instructions ask students to click the circle that is different as fast as they can.

Teachers and administrators can change students’ settings in SAM so that students enrolled in the program as Spanish speakers hear the instructions in Spanish, rather than in English. For more information on changing students’ settings, see **SAM Settings and Reports for Scholastic Phonics Inventory**.

Students may click **Pause** to temporarily halt the test and **Play** to resume the test. Students may pause only once in each section of the test.

When finished, students click **Go On** to go to the next part of the test.
Letter Names

The Letter Names subtest measures students’ ability to recognize letters of the alphabet.

Students hear a letter name and must use the mouse to select the corresponding letter from a list of four choices. The SPI measures how quickly and accurately students respond to each item.

Students may click Pause to temporarily halt the test and Play to resume the test. Students may pause only once in each section of the test. Students may click Play to hear the letter name again.

When finished, students click Go On to go to the next part of the test.
Sight Words

The Sight Words subtest measures students’ ability to recognize high-frequency sight words.

Students hear a word and must use the mouse to select the corresponding word from a list of four words. The SPI measures how quickly and accurately students respond to each item.

Students may click Pause to temporarily halt the test and Play to resume the test. Students may pause only once in each section of the test. Students may click Replay to hear the word again.

When finished, students click Go On to go to the next part of the test.
**Nonsense Words**

The Nonsense Words subtest measures students’ ability to decode. Nonsense words are used to prevent students from recognizing words by memory.

Students hear a nonsense word and must use the mouse to select the corresponding word from a list of four choices. The SPI measures how quickly and accurately students respond to each item.

The Nonsense Words subtest is divided into three sections containing items of increasing difficulty.

Students may click **Pause** to temporarily halt the test and **Play** to resume the test. Students may pause only once in each section of the test. Students may click **Replay** to hear the word again.

When finished, students click **Go On** to finish the test.
Scoring and Placement

Students’ scores on the SPI are used to place them into System 44 or recommend them for READ 180®.

To determine placement, SPI considers sight word and nonsense word decoding performance. Letter name performance is included in identifying decoders but does not impact placement decisions. Students who accurately identify a given letter, sight word, or nonsense word are scored “correct” for that item. Students who correctly identify a given sight word or nonsense word within the allotted time are scored as “fluent.” Fluency thresholds are unique to each item. SPI thus identifies students as follows:

- **Pre-Decoder:** Students whose fluency score is less than 38 and who identify fewer than 70% of the Letter Names or fluently decode fewer than 30% of the consonants and vowels in Nonsense Words. These students are placed in Series 1 of System 44 and recommended for supplemental instruction in Phonemic Awareness and Alphabet Recognition found in the System 44 Teaching Guide.

- **Beginning Decoder:** Students whose fluency score is less than 38 and who identify at least 70% of the Letter Names or fluently decode at least 30% of the consonants and vowels in Nonsense Words. These students are placed in Series 1 of System 44.

- **Developing Decoder:** Students whose fluency score is between 38 and 67, and who fluently decode less than 70% of the blends and digraphs in Nonsense Words. These students are placed in Series 4 of System 44.

- **Advancing Decoder:** Students whose fluency score is between 38 and 67, and who fluently decode at least 70% of the blends and digraphs in Nonsense Words. These students are placed in Series 4 of System 44.

- **Proficient Decoder:** Students whose fluency score is 67 or higher. These students are recommended for placement in READ 180®.

Automatic placement is the default setting in SAM. However, teachers may place students in any System 44 Series, depending on the teacher’s judgment and a student’s circumstances. To see how to override automatic placement and manually place a student in a System 44 Series, see SAM Settings and Reports for System 44. This may only be done at the time of System 44 enrollment.