

# Educator Observation Checklist: Identifying Reading Struggles

## GRADES 9-12

This checklist is a guide to help educators recognize observable signs of reading struggles. These observations can be used in conjunction with data collected from assessments and progress monitoring tools to better support struggling readers.

Once struggles are identified, use the **Educator Action Steps** to support these students in your classroom.



# Grades 9–12

## Literacy Foundations for College & Career Readiness

Look for challenges with advanced texts, analysis, and independent learning. Also, watch for increasing disengagement from school and peers.

### ACADEMIC

- ☐ Reads slower than peers, especially with lengthy or technical material
- ☐ Struggles to analyze arguments, evaluate evidence, or identify author's purpose
- ☐ Lacks strategies for handling advanced vocabulary in subject area texts
- ☐ Avoids reading-intensive assignments, relying on summaries or peers
- ☐ Coursework/test performance doesn't match classroom engagement or effort
- ☐ Avoids advanced or elective courses requiring heavy reading

### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

- ☐ Shows low confidence and resistance toward especially reading-heavy subjects
- ☐ Expresses negative self-image as a learner ("I'm dumb" or "I can't do this")
- ☐ Struggles with goal setting and future planning for higher learning opportunities or career planning
- ☐ Experiences anxiety around standardized or high-stakes tests
- ☐ Coping strategies lead to low participation and learned helplessness

### BEHAVIORAL

- ☐ Behavioral problems in school increase
- ☐ Chronic disengagement from reading and coursework
- ☐ Increasing absences, tardiness, or classroom avoidance
- ☐ Withdraws from teacher relationships
- ☐ Peer comparison and embarrassment, acting out and distancing from academic tasks, especially in reading activities
- ☐ Seeking peer acceptance through nonacademic means
- ☐ Isolation from higher-performing peer groups
- ☐ Displays defiance or sarcasm to mask frustration



# Educator Action Steps

## Supporting their Reading Journey

### Review data regularly

- ☐ Monitor oral reading fluency regularly across grade levels with digital or teacher-delivered resources. Some free resources include the ROAR and DIBELS.
- ☐ Review assessment data for gaps in decoding, word recognition, fluency and comprehension.

### Create and implement a plan

- ☐ Share with students what they are missing and make a shared plan to fill in the gaps.
- ☐ Help your students realize the value of reading and writing through authentic exchanges (read notes of encouragement, write stick-it-notes to reflect and remember tasks to do).
- ☐ Make sure that students have success every day—small wins mark their progress and support their willingness to continue on a journey that they buy into and articulate.
- ☐ Use tools like the **WordFlight Screener** to pinpoint word recognition issues.
- ☐ If appropriate, provide targeted intervention or refer for additional reading support.
- ☐ Communicate with parents early about observable concerns and supports available.

**QUESTIONS?** We're here to help.







## About WordFlight

WordFlight is a research-based literacy intervention designed to help students achieve reading fluency and build their confidence in reading.

Through the engaging, structured and systematic practice combined with teacher-led instruction, WordFlight makes learning stick.



**Get in touch to see  
how WordFlight  
helps students.**

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