

Test of Auditory Analysis Skills

Rosner, J. (1993). Helping Children Overcome Learning Difficulties, 3rd Ed. Walker and Company: NY.

The TAAS evaluates the child's ability to identify the separate sounds in spoken words and the temporal sequence of those sounds. It does this by asking the child to delete sounds and to show that s/he can do this by voicing what is left after the deletion. Children are first able to grasp this concept at about age four and become better at it from then on. The TAAS is for use with kindergarten children (and some preschool children).

Demonstration Items

The first two items of the test (items *A* and *B*) are for demonstration, for familiarizing the child with the test. For example, item *A* asks the child to "Say 'steamboat,'" and then once s/he has said it (thereby demonstrating that he heard and remembers it, at least for the moment), "Now say it again, but this time don't say 'boat'; just say what's left." The average 4-year-old can do this – delete a syllable from a two-syllable, compound word.

If the child does not understand the task, try teaching it to him/her in the following way:

1. Have the child extend his/her two hands forward.
2. Repeat the item slowly, emphasizing the two separate syllables by pausing between them.
3. Touch his/her left hand as you say the first syllable ("steam") and his/her right hand as you say the second syllable ("boat"), thereby giving him/her a visual/spatial reference point for each of the syllables.
4. If he/she is still unable to comprehend the task, explain to him/her that "this hand" (touch his/her left hand) "says 'steam,'" and "this hand" (touch his/her right hand) "says 'boat'."
5. Then repeat the item: "Say 'steamboat'." (Again, touch each hand as you say its syllable.) Then, after s/he has said "steamboat": "Now say it again, but leave off 'boat.' Just say what's left." (As you say the last two sentences, move his/her right hand to his/her side, allowing only the left hand to extend forward.)

If your teaching efforts work, then go on with the test. If it fails to teach him/her the concept, simply accept the fact that the test is too demanding, that s/he has not yet developed the basic auditory analysis skills that four-year-olds are normally able to display.

If the child understands the test, as illustrated by his/her being able to answer items *A* and *B* correctly, you can begin formal testing with item one. This item, like the two demonstration items, asks the child to delete one syllable from a two-syllable, compound word.

If the child does not respond to an item once you have gotten past the demonstration words, repeat the item once but *do not teach* – all teaching must be limited to the demonstration items.

TAAS

Item	Clinician says:	Question	Correct Response	Performance
A	Say cowboy	Now say it again, but don't say boy	cow	
B	Say steamboat	Now say it again, but don't say steam	boat	
1	Say sunshine	Now say it again, but don't say shine	sun	
2	Say picnic	Now say it again, but don't say pic	nic	
3	Say cucumber	Now say it again, but don't say "q"	cumber	
4	Say coat	Now say it again, but don't say /k/ (the k sound)	oat	
5	Say meat	Now say it again, but don't say /m/ (the m sound)	eat	
6	Say take	Now say it again, but don't say /t/	ache	
7	Say game	Now say it again, but don't say /m/	gay	
8	Say wrote	Now say it again, but don't say /t/	row	
9	Say please	Now say it again, but don't say /z/	plea	
10	Say clap	Now say it again, but don't say /k/	lap	
11	Say play	Now say it again, but don't say /p/	lay	
12	Say stale	Now say it again, but don't say /t/	sale	
13	Say smack	Now say it again, but don't say /m/	sack	

To Score the TAAS

If item 1 is passed, go on to item 2, and continue testing until the child has failed two successive items. The score is the number of the last correct item.

For example, if the child passes item 1, 2, and 3, then fails item 4, passes items 5 and 6, then fails items 7 and 8, the test stops and his score is recorded as 6.

Interpreting the Test Results

Use the grade-equivalent chart that follows to determine whether the child's performance on the TAAS was adequate for his/her grade level.

To read the chart, find the child's TAAS score in the left-hand column. Opposite that number is the grade level of children who customarily earn this score on the TAAS. For example, if the child's score is six, we would expect him/her to be in first grade. If in fact, s/he is in first grade, you can assume that his/her auditory analysis skills are developing at a normal rate. If s/he is only in kindergarten, he is probably precocious. If on the other hand, s/he is in second grade or beyond, you can assume that his/her auditory analysis skills are below the expected level and are contributing to his/her school-learning problem.

TAAS Score	Expected for Children in:	Level *
1	Kindergarten	1
2	Kindergarten	2
3	Kindergarten	2
4	Grade 1	3
5	Grade 1	3
6	Grade 1	3
7	Grade 1	4
8	Grade 1	4
9	Grade 1	4
10	Grade 2	5
11	Grade 2	5
12	Grade 3	6
13	Grade 3	complete

* refers to level training program provided in *Helping Children Overcome Learning Difficulties* appendix B.

Why care about this?

- This is a basic underlying linguistic skill for reading (decoding) and spelling.
- Helps determine if child has the ability to attend to certain identifying concrete acoustical characteristics.
- Gives evidence of child being able to demonstrate an understanding of the fact that spoken words not only have meaning they also consist of concrete sensory components (sounds) that are independent of semantics. Being able to identify these sensory components and their relative position in spoken words is evidence of auditory analysis skills.
- Further, the test gives evidence of the child's ability to analyze spoken words into phonemes – (sounds that can be represented by letters) and to map out the temporal interrelationships among those sounds.