

**Handwriting Legibility Scale (HLS)**  
**Barnett, A.L, Prunty, M. & Rosenblum, S. (2014)**

Name/ID of writer: \_\_\_\_\_ Male / Female. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of assessor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years of experience working with children in this capacity: \_\_\_\_\_

Learning to produce legible handwriting at sufficient speed allows children to keep up with class work and demonstrate their knowledge. However some children struggle to learn this skill and it is important to identify those with difficulties.

The purpose of this scale is to obtain your **overall impression** of the quality of the **written product** (not the content of the writing), to establish the extent to which the handwriting allows for effective communication. The scale provides an overall evaluation **to identify** those with difficulties in producing legible and/or sufficiently fast handwriting. Please note that if a difficulty is identified, then a more detailed analysis of the handwriting may be required in order to plan how best to support the child to develop their skill.

The scale is designed for children aged 9 years and older. It contains five components, each of which should be rated on a five-point scale (1-5), with higher scores indicating poorer performance. Compute the total score by summing the five component scores.

The assessment should be based on a piece of 'free writing' produced by the child, ideally on an A4 sized sheet of lined paper. The text should be approximately 10 lines in length.

The focus of this scale is on **legibility** of the handwriting. However, since speed is also an important element you should also time the writing task. Start to time when the child begins to write and mark their text after six minutes. This will give you a record of the child's rate of production, useful for comparing against other children of the same age and for monitoring performance over time.

Sometimes legibility is affected by spelling errors. You should therefore indicate below whether or not the child has made spelling errors in the text.

### Legibility

**Sum score (from over page):** \_\_\_\_\_

### Speed

**Number of words produced in 6 minutes:** \_\_\_\_\_

[Include all abbreviations, unfinished and crossed out words]

### Spelling

**Did the child have many spelling errors in the text compared to other children in the class? Yes / No**

For the first three components, consider your overall impression of the writing:

**A. Legibility** - An overall impression of global legibility based on your first reading of the text.

1 – On first reading, **all** words are legible

5 – On first reading, **only few** words are legible

1	2	3	4	5

**B. Effort** - An overall impression of the amount of effort required for you to read the script the first time.

1 – On first reading, no effort is required to read the script

5 – On first read reading, the script is extremely effortful to read

1	2	3	4	5

**C. Layout on the page** - An overall impression of the layout of writing on the page. Well organised handwriting is consistent, with elements appropriately positioned in relation to each other (e.g. the position of the margin, placement of letters on the baseline, spaces within and between words).

1 – Very **good** layout on the page.

5 – Very **poor** layout on the page.

1	2	3	4	5

Now focus on **individual letters/words** in more detail:

**D. Letter formation** - An overall impression of letter formation. Well formed letters are appropriately shaped, contain all necessary elements, neat letter closures and are consistent in size and slope.

1 – All letters very well formed

5 – Most letters very **poorly** formed

1	2	3	4	5

**E. Alterations** - An overall impression of the attempts made to rectify letters within words. Includes the addition of elements, re-tracing or re-writing of letters.

1 – There are **no** additional elements, re-tracing or over-writing of letters within words.

5 – **Most** words contain additional elements, re-tracing or over-writing of letters.

1	2	3	4	5

<p><b>Sum score</b> (quality of the written product): _____</p>
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