FAST - Frequently Asked Questions

aReading	
Question	**Answer**
Can we tell the students an answer to help them with the test … or just to give them practice?	No, this is very important. The adaptive nature of the test requires that students answer all items to the best of THEIR ability—even if they just guess.
What if some test items are too hard?	Still no. The adaptive nature of the test requires that students answer all items to the best of THEIR ability—even if they just guess. It will get easier if they perform poorly on the items selected.
What is the highest level of achievement this test can be used to assess?	The items range in difficulty from pre-K to 12th grade. But, only the most relevant items are selected by the algorithm and test engine.
How can a 30 item test predict performance on state-tests or other tests that are much longer?	The assessment is individualized for the examinee. The adaptive nature of the test reduces test length by half to two-thirds. • It has equivalent validity and reliability to tests two or three times as long.
What if we need to stop or take a break?	There is a pause button. Breaks are fine. The entire test must be completed before a score is estimated and reported.
Are scores comparable across grades?	Yes. aReading is vertically scaled up and down the grade range. Scores are directly comparable across grades.

CBM Reading

Question	Answer
Isn't this just about seeing how fast students read?	No. CBM-Reading is intended to solicit a sample of the student's BEST reading. This is <u>not a speed reading test</u>. Speed reading without grade appropriate prosody (intonation, pauses) violates standardization. CBM-Reading is intended to provide a sample of student behavior for teacher observation. The primary outcomes are BOTH accuracy and rate of correct reading performance. Together, this sample of BEST reading indicates how well the student has automatized the written cypher.
Why would I do this over doing a Running Record?	They take <u>too long</u>. • A large and extended sample of reading behavior is not necessary. Too few or <u>inadequate forms</u>. • Monitoring requires parallel alternate forms Little evidence on <u>technical adequacy</u>. Running records have a <u>different purpose </u>(as do DRA, F&P). • They provide in-depth—and often qualitative—information about the strength and weaknesses. They might be useful for skills analysis and instructional design
Does this assess comprehension?	No, CBM-Reading does not provide a direct measure of reading comprehension. But, publish research indicates that 1. CBM-Reading <u>indicates</u> comprehension. Shinn et al., 1992; Marcotte & Hintze, 2009 2. Automaticity is a <u>pre-requisite</u> to reading comprehension. Free up cognitive resources to focus on comprehension (Slocum et al., 1995) 3. Comprehension enables reading rate/fluency Jenkin et al., 2003

What about word callers?	Word Caller – a person with sufficient reading rate without good comprehension
	
	Publish research indicates that
	
	• Teachers over-identify word callers
	  ▪ Incorrect nomination 93%
	
	• VERY few students are word callers
	  ▪ 2% of students at 3rd grade
	  ▪ 10% of students in 5th grade

What happens if the student finishes early?	Not a problem Stop the timer and mark the last word. The student's score is prorated by the software.
Our last CBM tool included passages that seemed to vary significantly from one to the next, making it difficult to interpret progress. **How are the FAST passages determined to be consistent from one to the next?**	The US Department of Education funded a four year study to examine this issue and improve the quality of passages. The FAST passages were extensively field tested and are highly similar to minimize variability due to instrumentation. Published studies document this (Ardoin & Christ, 2009; Christ & Ardoin, 2009) Student scores will still vary across occasions. Highly standardized conditions (quiet, clear directions, consistent time of day, consistent student motivation) will reduce variability.
If we've screened and found a student to be above the Benchmark score for low-risk, do we need to screen again that year (or ever)? **Why/why not?**	Yes, high functioning students have the right to benefit from instruction and continue with their progress monitored. The teacher and screening system must consider all students. • Students on both ends of the spectrum are at risk to not benefit from core instruction, which is often targeted at typically developing students. • Teachers and students should all have goals. Ongoing monitoring—at least three times per year—will inform progress toward those goals.

Are these passages written at grade level? **How is that determined?**	Passages were written below the Lexile (readability) band that typically defines "grade level" material. Why? • The evidence supports <u>equivalent validity and reliability</u> for high and low difficulty passages. • Less difficulty passages ensure a larger sample of reading behavior (i.e., teachers observe students reading more words). • Less difficult passages ensure <u>accessibility for less skilled readers</u>, who are those most frequently monitored. • Automaticity of reading skills is most closely related to high frequency words, phrases, and patterns that are familiar to most readers. Note: This is the reason why the FAST Benchmarks are typically higher than benchmarks from other vendors…Thus, do not use the FAST materials in combination with the benchmarks from another vendor.
Do the passages use fiction or non-fiction? **Why?**	All of the passages are narrative fiction. Why? • The passages are highly controlled to ensure that performance across passages is comparable. This requires a consistent text structure. The passages include controls for ▪ Decodability of words ▪ Frequency of words ▪ Goal-Action-Outcome story structure • There is equivalent reliability and validity of fiction and nonfiction along with informational and narrative story structures.
If I have a struggling student, can I give him/her a lower grade level passage?	For Universal Screening purposes, it is required that grade level passages be used. Whenever possible, monitor the student in grade level passages. The goal for the student is to meet grade level standards. If a student reads fewer than 10 words on grade level then it might be appropriate to monitor them with materials at a lower grade. Those have more controlled text that include shorter sentences and many more decodable and high frequency words.

What accommodations can be used for students with disabilities? **Why/why not?** **Applies to all FAST measures**	The application of benchmarks require standardized administration. Accommodations related to a student's disability are allowed, and decided by the IEP team. Consider these carefully before they are used. If they are used, be sure to include a description of those procedures whenever the score is reported or used to guide instruction. Accommodations are provided that allow students to access the assessment while holding the purpose of the assessment constant. For example, with a reading fluency assessment, it is inappropriate to either read the assessment to the student or change the nature of the timing of the assessment, as those modifications alter the ability to assess the student's reading fluency. The test developers at FAST/Fast Bridge Learning do not have a specific statement in regard to deaf, hard-of-hearing, or visually impaired students but generally speaking they do allow for the following accommodations: • FAST's CBM measures are available via paper-pencil as needed for any reason. • Text Magnification • Sound Amplification • Extended Time in the following measures: aReading, and untimed portions of earlyReading • Extra Breaks • Preferential seating and use of quiet space • Students with differing needs or disabilities may take the computer-based assessments such as aReading via a tablet-type device (e.g., Chromebook, iPad, etc.), facilitating screen optimization
I notice students do better if they can read the passages silently, first. Is this OK?	No, these are standardized "cold" readings, which requires that we measure the student's performance during their initial reading. • We use the same screening passages all year. These are still "cold" readings. • Evidence suggests that practice effects on CBM-Reading materials subside after approximately four weeks. This supports the use of the same screening passages three to four times per years. "Hot" readings (with practice) invalidate the assessment.
Can parents have a copy of the passages to take home? **Can we share the passages with others?**	The passages should not be shared in a manner that would result in any student having exposure to the passages outside of testing purposes at school. This is to ensure that the data you collect are accurate and not influenced by practice effect. Generally speaking, it should be made extremely clear to all staff and parents that the passages are not to be used for practice or other purposes.

	earlyReading

Question	**Answer**
Why use composite benchmarks?	Composites combine scores from an optimal set of measures. This provides a more complete score that better represents broad reading Benchmarks are designed to predict student performance at or about the 40th percentile on nationally normed assessments and state tests. • Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test • Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) • Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment III • Pending: Georgia, Iowa, Massachusetts
How are the benchmark / cut scores determined?	Benchmarks are selected to optimize correct classification. We try to predict whether students are likely to performance above the 40th percentile on nationally normed assessments in the spring (end of year). earlyReading benchmarks include composites, which improves classification (prediction) accuracy.
What makes-up a composite?	A weighted combination of the required subtests • High • Moderate • Low The weights change each season

earlyReading Subtests	Kindergarten			First Grade		
	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring
Concepts of Print	H					
Onset Sounds	H	H				
Letter Names	L					
Letter Sounds	L	L	M			
Word Segmenting		L	H	H	H	H
Nonsense Words		L	M	M	M	L
Sight Words			L	M	M	L
Sentence Reading				L		
CBMReading					M	H
Benchmark scores for composite	40	47	60	28	37	51

Should I interpret sub-test scores?	Yes, consider performance on both the individual tests and the composite.
	LS are often used as the general indicator in Kindergarten
	CBM-Reading is often used as the general indicator in 1st Grade
	The other scores "round out" our estimate of generalized reading achievement.
Why are some scores not timed?	Careful analysis helped the developers determine the skills for which automaticity was important.
	It seemed easier to eliminate timing from the administration if it was not important.
	Automaticity did not seem important for some skills.