

Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

How to Assess Blank levels

Why?

- Blank Level framework, developed by Blank, Rose, and Berlin (1978), can be used to assess and develop a child's verbal reasoning and abstract language skills.
- Having a clear understanding of a child's Blank level will help practitioners ensure that language, interactions, and questioning across the curriculum are at the most appropriate level to promote engagement and learning.



What you will need?

Formal Assessment:

- Eklan provides a comprehensive assessment known as the Test of Abstract Language Comprehension (TALC). There are two versions: [TALC 1 for Under 5s/Primary](#) and [TALC 2 for over 11s \(Secondary\)](#).

Informal Alternatives:

- You can use the [Language and Reading Comprehension](#) assessment tool from the Cognition and Learning Baseline Assessment.
- You can create questions around a book the pupil is reading (attached are some examples for "Handa's Surprise" by Eileen Browne and "Dolphin Boy" by Michael Morpurgo). Where appropriate, incorporate resources such as story sacks and physical objects. For more details about levelling questions, refer to the Help Sheet 'Using Blank Levels'.

How?

- Make sure your pupil is in a secure and comfortable environment.
- Have all your resources ready, including visual aids, pictures etc., linked to the story.
- Read the story or extract to the pupil and incorporate questions as part of the discussion about the story.
- Ask 20-30 questions at each level. For a pupil to be secure at a level, they should achieve at least 80% accuracy.
- Allow 10 seconds of processing time, and if the pupil is unable to answer, model a response.

Examples of questions for "Handa's Surprise" by Eileen Browne

Level 1: Naming Things – when looking at objects, pictures or reading a story

Matching Objects

Find one like this (pointing to the tree, fly, cow, giraffe's ear etc - various pages)

Naming Objects/People

What is that? (Point to the giraffe - page 7). What is that? (Point to the monkey - page 3)

Who is that? (Point to the little girl - page 1)

Point to or select an object

Show me the elephant (page 6). Find me a pineapple (page 7). Find the parrot (page 9)

Level 2: Describing Things – when looking at objects, pictures or reading a story

Function

What is the basket for? (page 2)

What do you do with a banana? (page 3)

What do the animals do with the fruits they take? (various pages)

Linguistic concepts (colour shape size)

What colour is Handa's dress? (page 1)

What colour is the guava? (page 4)

Which fruit is the biggest? (page 8)

Show me two animals (various pages)

Point to the big tree (various pages)

Things that go together

Which fruit goes with the monkey? (p.3)

Which animal goes with the pineapple? (p.6)

Sentence completion

Handa put a _____ in her basket (page 2).

The monkey took the _____ (page 3)

Categories

Find an animal. Tell me another animal?
(Various).

Name all the fruits/animals in the story
(Various).

Who/What/Where/What doing

Who is Handa visiting? (page 1)

What is Handa carrying? (page 2)

Where is Handa going? (page 1)

What is the monkey doing? (page 3)

Describing a scene: Tell me what is happening in this picture (pointing to a picture).

Level 3: Talking About Stories and Events (Re-telling)

Following Instructions

Put the fruits in the order Handa placed them in her basket. (page 2)

Point to the tree and then point to two fruits (pages 2, 3, and 4)

Sequencing

Arrange the pictures in the correct order.

Which picture comes next? (various)

Can you tell me the story in order?

Tell the story/Describe an event

Tell me what Handa did.

What happened after the Zebra took the fruit?

Tell the story of "Handa's Surprise" in your own words (Various pages)

Prediction

What will happen on the next page?

What do you think will happen when Handa reaches Akeyo's village? (Page 11)

How does the character feel?

How does Handa feel when she sees the tangerines in the basket? (page 12)

How does Akeyo feel when she sees the tangerines in the basket? (page 12).

How does Akeyo feel when she sees Handa? (page 12)

How did the animals feel when they took the fruits? (various)

How did the animals feel when they saw the fruits in Handa's basket? (various)

What does a character say?

What does Akeyo say at the end of the story?

Define a word

What is a village? (page 1)

What does "surprise" mean? (page 12)

Negatives

Show me something that is not a fruit? (various)

What fruit did Handa not put in her basket? (Various)

Level 4: Solving Problems (Justifying)	
<p>Inference</p> <p>How do we know that it is not night-time? (page 1)</p> <p>Why do you think Handa didn't notice the animals taking the fruits? (various)</p> <p>Why do you think the animals take the fruit? (various)</p> <p>Why do you think the goat knocked over the tangerine tree? (page 10)</p> <p>Why was Handa surprised to see the tangerines in her basket? (page 12)</p>	<p>Why do you think Akeyo was surprised to see the tangerines in the basket? (page 12)</p> <p>How can we tell that the animals enjoyed the fruit? (various)</p> <p>How can we tell that Handa was happy at the end? (page 12)</p> <p>Explain why something can't be done</p> <p>Why can't Handa see the animals taking the fruits? (various)</p> <p>Why can't Handa stop the animals from taking the fruits while she is walking? (various)</p>
<p>Solving a problem</p> <p>What could Handa do differently next time to ensure the fruits reach Akeyo? (Various pages)</p> <p>Justify</p> <p>Why is it important for Handa to walk carefully with the basket on her head? (Various pages)</p> <p>Why might Handa have chosen to surprise Akeyo instead of telling her she was bringing fruits? (Page 1)</p>	<p>Why do you think Handa didn't notice the animals taking the fruits? (Various pages)</p> <p>Why did Handa choose a variety of fruits for Akeyo? (Page 1)</p> <p>Why do you think Akeyo was happy with the fruit Handa brought, even though they were different from what Handa intended? (Page 12)</p>
<p>Identifying a cause</p> <p>What caused the animals to be interested in Handa's basket? (Various pages)</p> <p>What caused Handa to continue walking without noticing the missing fruits? (Various pages)</p>	<p>Explain the logic of compound words</p> <p>Explain the word "pineapple" - why do you think it is called that? (page 6).</p> <p>Explain the word "basketball" and how it relates to the basket Handa carries. Why do you think the game is named after a basket? (various)</p>
<p>Explanations</p> <p>Why is it called "Handa's Surprise"?</p> <p>Why did Handa choose to carry the fruits in a basket on her head? (Page 2)</p> <p>Why did Handa decide to visit Akeyo with the fruits? (Page 2)</p>	

Examples of questions for "Dolphin Boy" by Michael Morpurgo

Level 1: Naming Things – when looking at objects, pictures or reading a story		
Matching Objects: Find one like this (pointing to the fishing boat - page 1) Find one like this (pointing to the sail - page 1) Find one like this (pointing to the dolphin - various) Find one like this (pointing to a seagull - various) Find one like this (pointing to a house - various)	Naming Objects/People: What is that? (Point to the fishing boat - page 1) Who is that? (Point to the fisherman - page 1) Who is that? (Point to Jim - page 3) What is that? (Point to the dolphin - various) What is that? (Point to the lighthouse - page 11)	Point to or Select an Object: Find me a fishing boat/cat. (page 1) Show me the stairs. (page 4) Find a girl. (page 4) Show me the dolphin. (various) Find the seagull. (various) Find the sun. (page 13) Find the Sally May. (various)
Level 2: Describing Things – when looking at objects, pictures or reading a story		
Function What do dolphins do in the water? (various) What is the function of a fishing boat? Or what is a fishing boat for? (page 4) What do children do at school? (page 4) What do people use stairs for? (page 4) What do seagulls use their wings for? Or Dolphins use their fins for? (various)	Linguistic concepts (colour shape size) What colour is the fishing boat? (page 1) What colour is the dolphin? (various) Is the dolphin/seagull big or small? (various) What colour is Jim's shirt? (page 7) Is the sun big or small? (page 13) What colour is the sky, sea? (various) Describe the shape of the lighthouse. (page 11)	
Things that go together Which two things go together: the children and the school, or the fisherman and the school? (Page 4) Which two things go together: fishing boat and water, or fishing boat and sand? (various)	Sentence completion Jim found a _____ on the beach. (Page 3) Jim stayed in the water until the dolphin _____. (Page 6) That day at school, Jim could think of nothing but _____. (page 7) Suddenly, the sea began to boil and bubble as if it were _____ (page 14)	
Categories Name some sea animals. (various) Name some things you can find in a fishing village. (various) Name some things you can find on a beach. (various) Is a dolphin a mammal or a fish? (various)	Who/What/Where/What doing What did Jim find on the beach (page 3) Where does the boy find the dolphin? (page 3) Who helped Jim save the dolphin? (page 4/5) What did Jim call the dolphin? (page 7) Who rode Smiler? (page 9) What did Jim get for his birthday? (page 12) What did Jim and his dad see in the water? (page 14)	
Describing a scene: Describe what is happening in the picture (various)		
Level 3: Talking About Stories and Events (Re-telling)		
Following Instructions Draw a picture of the boy and the dolphin. (various) Point to a seagull, the lighthouse and the Sally May (page 2)	Sequencing Arrange the pictures in the correct order. Which picture comes next? (various) Put these events in order: Jim helps the dolphin, Jim finds the dolphin, The dolphin swims away.	

<p>Tell the story/Describe an event Explain how the boy helps the dolphin get back to the sea. What steps does he take? Describe the moment when the boy first sees the dolphin. What does he do? How does he react? (page 3/4) Tell the story of how Jim helped the dolphin. (Various pages)</p>	<p>Prediction What do you think will happen next after the boy helps the dolphin? (page 5) What might the dolphin do after it swims away? What do you think will happen when Dad and Jim go out in the boat? (page 13)</p>
<p>How does the character feel? How does Jim feel when he first sees the dolphin? (page 3) How does Jim feel after he helps the dolphin? (page 6) How do the villagers feel when the dolphin doesn't come back? (page 11)</p>	<p>How does Jim feel on his birthday? (page 12)</p> <p>What does a character say? What does Jim say to the Dolphin? What does Jim's mum say? (page 4) What does Jim say at the pier? (page 7) What does Jim's dad say? (page 12)</p>
<p>Define a word What does "shallows" mean? (page 5) What does "broken hearted" mean? (page 11). What is a "pier"? (page 7) What does "harbour" mean? (various) What does "hauled" mean? (page 13)</p>	<p>Negatives Show me something that is not a bird/boat/dolphin? (various) What is something the boy did not do when he saw the dolphin? (page 3)</p>

Level 4: Solving Problems (Justifying)

<p>Inference Why do you think the boy decided to help the dolphin? (page 3) What might the boy be thinking when he sees the dolphin stranded on the beach? (page 3) Why do you think the dolphin trusted the boy? (various) How might the arrival of the visitors affect the villagers and Jim's dad?</p>	<p>Explain why something can't be done Why can't the fishermen go fishing anymore? (page 1) Why can't the dolphin stay on the beach? (page 3) Why can't the dolphin find its way back to the sea by itself? (page 3) Why can't the dolphin survive without help? (page 3). Why can't Jim help the dolphin by himself? (pages 3-5)</p>
<p>Solving a problem How can the boy help the dolphin get back to the sea? <p>Justify</p> Why is the village a sad place? (page 1) Why did Jim fetch help? (page 3)</p>	<p>Why do they need the sail? (page 4) Why is it important for the boy to stay calm when he sees the stranded dolphin? (page 3) Why should Jim feel proud? (pages 3-5) Why was Jim the only person who smiler would take for a ride? (page 18)</p>
<p>Identifying a cause What might have caused the dolphin to swim away from the beach? (page 7) What caused Jim to be sad? (page 12) Why could Jim's dad and the villagers get their boat and sails fixed? Why was the village a happy place? (page 17)</p>	<p>Explain the logic of compound words. Explain the word "fishermen" (page 1) Explain the word "seaweed" - why do you think it is called that? (page 3). Explain the word "lighthouse" (page 11). Explain the word "lifetime" (page 17)</p>
<p>Explanations: Why is it called "Dolphin Boy"? Explain why the boy decided to go to the beach that day (page 3) Explain why everyone was happy at the end of the story? (page 17-18)</p>	