

Reader's Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____
 Excerpt from *Nightjohn*, by Gary Paulsen, pp. 32-37
 Level W 316 words

Independent Level: Yes No
 Accuracy Rate: _____

Book Introduction: *(Say this to the reader before he or she begins the student copy of the text)*
 “Sarny, a female slave at the Waller Plantation, meets a newly purchased slave named Nightjohn. One of her chores is to chew tobacco leaves and spit the juices on the rosebushes to kill the bugs. Please read aloud the first section to find out how she uses some of this left over tobacco to make a trade with Nightjohn that opens a whole new world to her. When you get to the line, you may read the rest silently. When you’re finished reading, I’ll ask you to retell what you read.”

- During & after the running record, you may make these observations & notes to inform instruction**
- Responds to punctuation by changing his/her voice
 - Self corrects before asking for help
 - Pauses while reading to think
 - Flexible word-solver
 - Reads in phrases rather than word by word
 - Miscues make sense
 - Miscues fit the syntax or structure of the sentence
 - Miscues look similar to words in the text

Running Record: *For the first 100 words, record the reader’s miscues (or errors) above the word as he or she reads. Later, you may or may not code them, using miscue analysis (MSV). Stop when the child has made five miscues and go back to the previous level.*

“Who’s got tobacco? I need some tobacco.”

It was a whisper from the corner where the new man sat. I had me some tobacco.

It was just shredded bottom leaf that I’d been chewing to spit on the roses.

“I’ll trade,” he whispered. “I’ll trade for something for a lip of tobacco.”

I thought, *What you got to trade? You come in naked as the day you was born, come in bad with whip marks all up and down your back, and you’re ready to go to trading?* I didn’t say it, but I thought it. And he like to **(100 words)** read my thoughts.

***** *(Reader may continue silently from this point on)* *****

“What I got to trade, what I got to trade is letters. I knows letters. I’ll trade A, B, and C for a lip of chew.” He laughed again.

Teacher Copy: Assessment for Independent Reading Levels
Levels L-Z (Fiction/Narrative)

More observations & notes to inform instruction:

I didn't know what letters was, nor what they meant, but I thought it might be something I wanted to know. To learn.

I moved to the dark corner and set next to him. "What's a letter?"

He smiled. "You sound like you've got tobacco."

"Not until I know what a letter is..."

"Why, it's reading. You learn the letters first and when you know them you string (**200 words**) them together into words. I'll trade you three letters for a lipful."

I knew about reading. It was something that the people in the white house did from paper. But we weren't allowed to read nothing.

Mammy told me, "You learn to read and they'll whip you till your skin hangs like torn rags. Or cut your thumb off. Stay away from writing and reading."

So I did.

"You saying you can read?"

"I can."

"Can you teach me that?"

"To read?" He rubbed his chin. "Well, might be if I had some tobacco..."

I dug the sack out of (**300 words**) my shirdress and gave him a pinch. He put it in the side of his mouth. (**316 words**)

Total miscues including self corrected: _____

Self-Corrections _____

Miscues reader did not self-correct: _____

Accuracy Rate: Circle the number of miscues the reader did not self correct.

100%	99%	98%	97%	96%
0 miscues	1 miscue	2 miscues	3 miscues	4 miscues

96%-100% accuracy is necessary to determine the reader's independent reading level. Try another text if the reader made 5 or more miscues.

* If the child makes the same miscue repeatedly, count it as one miscue.

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Literal and Inferential Retelling

Say, "In writing, retell the important parts of what you just read and answer the four questions. You may look back at the text if you need to." The reader will write the retelling and answers to Part 1 on the student copy. You may assess the reader's comprehension when finished. If the reader has difficulty writing the retelling or the answers to Part 1, you may complete any or all of this section orally.

Optional: Say, "Retell the important parts of what you just read." Write notes regarding the student's retelling in this box and on the back of this page. If the reader has trouble getting started, prompt him/her to look at the text. Say, "What happened first?" Make a note that you prompted their retelling.

Comprehension Questions Section:

The reader will answer these four questions on the student copy, along with the written retelling.

Optional: Listen to the reader's retelling for the following information and take note of the reader's answers, based on the retelling. If the retelling did not already contain the following information, ask the reader the remaining questions and take note of the answers.

1. *Literal Question:* What did Nightjohn want to trade with Sarny?

2. *Literal Question:* Why didn't Sarny's mother want her to read?

3. *Inferential Question:* Why do you think Sarny was surprised that Nightjohn offered to trade something for her tobacco?

4. *Inferential Question:* In the story Sarny says, "We weren't allowed to read nothing." Who wasn't allowed to read?

The reader must answer at least three of these questions adequately to determine if this is the child's independent reading level. Try another text if the child could not answer at least three of these questions.

Final Score

- Yes No Was the reader's accuracy rate at least 96%?
 Yes No Did the reader read with fluency?
 Yes No Did the reader answer at least three comprehension questions in the Comprehension Questions Section correctly?
 Yes No Did the retelling express the important things that happened in the text?

If the answer is "Yes" to all four questions, this is the child's independent reading level.

* Continue trying more difficult texts until you have found the child's highest independent level. *