

Reader's Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____ <p style="text-align: center;">Excerpt from <i>One Bird</i>, by Kyoko More, pp. 1-3 Level Y 787 words</p>	Independent Level: Yes No  Accuracy Rate: _____
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**Book Introduction:** (*Say this to the reader before beginning he or she begins the student copy of the text*)

“In this story, Megumi’s mother has planted flowers such as pansies, chrysanthemums, and impatiens. Megumi thinks about these flowers while her mother packs a suitcase. Please read aloud the first section. 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.*

“Tell me the truth,” I insist while my mother keeps shoving sweaters into her suitcase.

Though she is kneeling on the floor just a few feet away, she won’t look up at me. Frowning, she pretends to examine the sleeve of her gray cashmere pullover, as if she had found a hole or a stain that demanded her attention. I sigh loudly and start pacing in front of her.

On the windowsill behind her, the late-afternoon sun is hitting the four plastic containers in which she had planted her spring seeds two weeks ago. The rectangular containers are large but (**100 words**) shallow, holding just a finger of dirt around each seed. Half the plants have sprouted, their heads bent down with the cracked seeds stuck on top like tiny helmets: pansies, spring chrysanthemums, impatiens. The lavenders and the petunias are taking their time, their slow-germinating seeds hidden in the soil.

\*\*\*\* (Reader may read silently from this point on) \*\*\*\*

My mother has covered the containers with clear plastic and placed them on heating pads, with a spray bottle ready for their daily misting. As long as I can remember, she has coaxed seeds to grow in the middle of winter and has had the seedlings ready for her garden in (**200 words**) early March. But not this year, or ever again. I know she is not coming back.

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

**More observations & notes to inform instruction:**

In late November, when Mother first mentioned spending the winter with her father in their old home in a small village north of Kyoto, I knew right a way that something was wrong. The more she kept explaining her reasons, the more I knew that she wasn't telling the truth. "Grandfather Kurihara has a difficult time managing alone," she said. "I want to help him get through the winter. I'll write to Grandmother Shimizu in Tokyo. She won't mind staying with you and your (300 words) father until I come back." Grandfather Kurihara is old, and he has been alone since my grandmother's death almost three years ago, but he is strong and healthy. My mother—or anyone's mother—would not leave her own home to take care of her father unless he were sick. Besides, if Mother were leaving to help him, she would have left right away, back in November. Instead she has waited till now, the last week of January. Winter is already half gone.

Mother has put away the cashmere sweater and is now reaching for her wool skirt. I kneel down (400 words) beside her. Without a word she stops what she is doing.

Putting my arms around her shoulders, I try to reason with her. "It's easier for me if I know. You don't have to pretend in order to spare my feelings. You didn't have to start up the plants to fool me." A whining tone creeps into my voice, so I pause and take a deep breath. At fifteen I am too old to cry or speak in the sad, nasal voice of a child.

Slowly, my mother leans forward and hugs me. "I wish I could take you (500 words) with me, Megumi," she says into my hair, each word warm and distinct, her wish ending with my name. Megumi means "God's blessing."

"The day you were born was the happiest day of my life," Mother has told me many times. "I knew that God had given me the most important blessing ever." Thinking about that makes me miss the old times—the two of us drinking hot chocolate in the winter and looking at pictures in my album, laughing about what a fat little baby I used to be, wondering how I ended up big-boned and thin. My mother (600 words) keeps holding me tight. I wish this afternoon would go no further. It's four-thirty; the sun-light is bright and orange, the way it gets an hour before sunset. If I sit still and say nothing more, maybe the day will pass without anything happening. But on my way home from school, I promised myself that I would speak nothing but the truth on our last afternoon together. "I'll be honest," I said over and over as I walked past the bare branches of the cherry and maple trees planted along the sidewalk; when the leaves come out in March or (700 words) April, they will be reminders of my promise. By then, Mother will be long gone, living with Grandfather in their quiet home far from here. How can she leave me if I really am the greatest blessing of her life? Was she lying to me even back then?

I drop my arms from around her shoulders and pull myself out of her embrace.

"It's no use wishing," I tell her. "I know you can't take me. I'm not stupid."

Without a word, she looks down at the floor. (787 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.

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

**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:* Why do you think Megumi's mother planted the flowers?
  
2. *Literal Question:* What promise did Megumi make to herself on her way home from school?
  
3. *Inferential Question:* Do you think Megumi's mother is really going to live with Grandfather?
  
4. *Inferential Question:* What does this story teach about the difficulty of telling the truth sometimes?

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**

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

**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. \*