

WJ

PERSPECTIVES



Getting to Know The Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement and Oral Language: An Introduction for Special Education Teachers

Beth Varner,
M.Ed., NCSP,
National Clinical
Account Executive



*The WJ IV™ suite of assessments offers
A comprehensive, easy-to-use
method of evaluating academic
and academic-related abilities.*

Comprehensive Evaluation Tool

The **WJ IV ACH** provides 20 tests measuring reading, writing, mathematics, and academic knowledge. The **WJ IV OL** provides 12 tests that measure oral language skills (9 in English and 3 in Spanish) and the specific learning disability (SLD) eligibility areas of Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension. Together, the **WJ IV ACH** and **WJ IV OL** provide a flexible and thorough evaluation tool to assess key areas such as reading, writing, mathematics, and oral language ability.

Special education teachers who have utilized the **WJ III ACH** will find familiar tests in both the **WJ IV ACH** and the **WJ IV OL**. Tests that were previously in the Oral Language, Listening Comprehension, and Oral Expression clusters of the **WJ III ACH** are now located in the **WJ IV OL**. Additionally, the **WJ IV OL** offers further assessment of language-related areas that diagnose learning disabilities and contains multiple Oral Language clusters in Spanish.

*The Woodcock-Johnson® IV (WJ IV™) suite of assessments offers a comprehensive, easy-to-use method of evaluating academic and academic-related abilities for the purposes of determining special education eligibility and informing instruction. **The Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement (WJ IV ACH)** and **Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Oral Language (WJ IV OL)** offer evaluators a powerful assessment toolkit that allows them to meet regulatory requirements for special education evaluation while also gaining insight into a student's unique profile of strengths and weaknesses.*

The **WJ IV ACH** and **WJ IV OL** require Medium level examiner qualifications: a bachelor's degree in an educational field and undergraduate level coursework in assessment, including ethical administration, scoring, and interpretation. For many school settings, special education teachers are the primary administrators of the **WJ IV ACH** and **WJ IV OL**.

WJ PERSPECTIVES

Academic Assessment With the WJ IV ACH

The Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement provides an updated version of the industry-leading academic assessment. The **WJ IV ACH** is used to measure a student's ability in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics. Cross-domain clusters allow for in-depth analysis of academic skills at the level of basic skills, fluency, applications, and academic knowledge.

Reading

The **WJ IV ACH** includes 8 tests and 6 clusters used to comprehensively evaluate the multifaceted area of reading, including the SLD qualification areas of Reading, Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, and Reading Comprehension. The **WJ IV ACH** also provides measures of Broad Reading and Reading Rate.

The WJ IV ACH introduces 3 new tests that are used to measure reading:

- **Test 8:** Oral Reading—This test measures a student's ability to read connected text at the sentence level accurately and fluently. It is part of the new Reading Fluency cluster.
- **Test 12:** Reading Recall—This test, along with Passage Comprehension and Reading Vocabulary, is used to measure a student's reading comprehension abilities. A student is required to silently read phrases, sentences, or short paragraphs and retell them to the examiner accurately and completely. This method of reading comprehension assessment closely mirrors common methods of evaluating comprehension in the classroom.
- **Test 15:** Word Reading Fluency—This test measures a student's ability to rapidly and accurately identify two words that are semantically related from a group of four words. It contributes to the new Reading Rate cluster

Written Language

The **WJ IV ACH** includes 4 tests and 4 clusters that measure writing. A student's overall writing ability can be broken down into the areas of basic writing skills and written expression. The Basic Writing Skills cluster includes measures of spelling and writing mechanics, while the Written Expression cluster focuses on a student's ability to use words to communicate ideas. By assessing these two areas, special education teachers can identify specific areas of deficit in a student's writing ability and utilize this knowledge to create targeted interventions.

WJ IV ACH introduces 3 new tests that are used to measure reading.

Mathematics

The **WJ IV ACH** includes 4 tests and 4 clusters that measure math ability. This includes the SLD qualification areas of mathematics calculation and mathematics problem solving. The **WJ IV** introduces one new test in the area of mathematics, Test 13: Number Matrices. This test requires a student to identify a missing number from a number matrix. It is used to measure math problem solving ability and contributes to the Math Problem Solving cluster.



Academic Knowledge

The final area of skill measured by the **WJ IV ACH** is academic knowledge, which is comprised of Test 18: Science, Test 19: Social Studies, and Test 20: Humanities. Together, these tests create the new Academic Knowledge cluster. All tasks in these 3 tests involve items presented orally by the examiner. This allows students to demonstrate their academic knowledge without a reading or writing requirement.

The Other Piece of the Puzzle: The WJ IV OL

The Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Oral Language is a new addition to the WJ family of assessments. This battery updates a number of tests previously found in the **WJ III** and adds new elements. **WJ IV OL** test kit contains a single easel that assesses a number of key academic-related abilities, such as:

- Overall oral language ability
- The SLD qualification areas of Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension
- Targeted skills that diagnose reading disabilities such as dyslexia
- Comparison of oral language skills in English and Spanish

Oral language ability is a primary component of learning in the classroom, making it an essential part of any psychoeducational evaluation. The **WJ IV OL** emphasizes the importance of oral language assessment by providing a flexible diagnostic battery that specifically targets this area. Teachers will find the **WJ IV OL** to be an essential component of their special education evaluation because it provides a standardized method of assessing key oral language areas that relate directly to students' classroom and academic functioning.

The WJ IV Tests of Oral Language includes tests that assess the SLD qualification areas of Listening Comprehension and Oral Expression. These are key areas of analysis for any special education evaluation because students rely on these skills to function in classroom, home, and community environments.

The **WJ IV OL** also provides tests and clusters that allow for further assessment of specific reading disabilities such as dyslexia. Two new clusters, Speed of Lexical Access and Phonetic Coding, as well as one new test, Segmentation, can be used in conjunction with selected tests from the **WJ IV ACH** and **WJ IV OL** to assess a number of areas to diagnose specific learning disabilities, particularly in the area of reading. (For a more detailed analysis, see "WJ IV Assessment Service Bulletin #6: Use of the Woodcock-Johnson IV for the Assessment of Dyslexia.")

Finally, the **WJ IV OL** provides examiners with three tests in Spanish. These Spanish tests are parallel to the English tests Picture Vocabulary, Oral Comprehension, and

Understanding Directions. Due to the frequently limited availability of bilingual individuals who meet examiner qualifications, **The Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Oral Language** Examiner's Manual includes an ancillary examiner training procedure. This allows school teams to train a Spanish-English bilingual individual to administer the 3 Spanish tests even if that individual does not meet the qualifications to administer the entire test. When these 6 parallel tests have been administered (3 in English and 3 in Spanish), a Spanish/English Comparative Language Index score is calculated. This score provides a direct comparison of the examinee's Oral Language proficiency in each language and can be a useful tool in determining Spanish-English language dominance.

Conclusion

The Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement and **The Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Oral Language** equip special education teachers and other school-based examiners with a robust set of tools for the standardized evaluation of academic and language-related skill areas. When the **WJ IV ACH** and the **WJ IV OL** are used together, examiners can measure a comprehensive set of reading, writing, mathematics, academic knowledge, and oral language skills, including all 8 SLD eligibility areas under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.





Contact Us

Tel: 800.323.9540

Fax: 630.467.7192

e-Mail Orders:

assessmentsorders@hnhco.com

e-Mail Inquiries:

assessmentsCS@hnhco.com

Customer Service Hours

Monday–Friday

8:00 AM–6:00 PM CST

Connect with us



Woodcock-Johnson®, WJ IV™, the WJ IV® logo, WJ III® and the WJ III logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Riverside Assessments LLC.

© Riverside Assessments. All rights reserved. 2/19 PERSP100

Riverside Insights™ is the new name of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's former clinical and standardized testing business, which was divested from HMH in October 2018 and is now independent.