

# Afrikaans Reading Benchmarks

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**Reading Benchmarks** for African Languages



# Sample characteristics

AFRIKAANS READING BENCHMARKS

100 schools: 50 treatment and 50 control–  
matched pairs

Assessed learners in Grades 4 and 7

+/- 890 Grade 4 and 950 Grade 7 learners

30% Quintile 1-2

25% Quintile 3

45% Quintile 4-5

86% no-fee schools, average fees at R13  
600 p.a

81% urban

60% had libraries

2% of Grade 4 learners had many books at home

16% of Grade 7 learners had many books at home

90%+ learners spoke  
Afrikaans at home

50% female

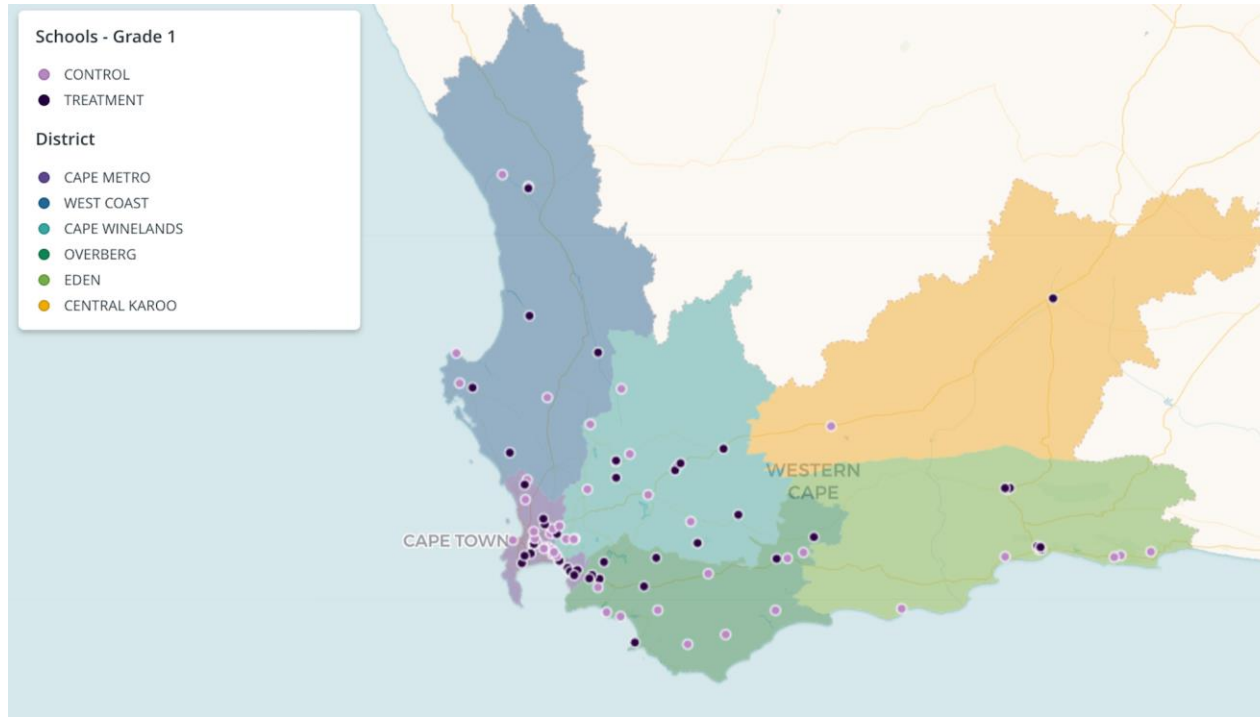
9.6 years old in Grade 4 and  
12.6 years old in Grade 7

13% repetition rate on  
average



# Sample characteristics

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# Reading Assessments

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Grade	Oral reading fluency					Written comprehension			
	#	Passage description	Max possible words	N comprehension questions	Time allowed	#	Passage description	N comprehension questions	Time allowed
4	1	Pret op die Strand (narrative)	114	10	3 mins	1	Die Reënboogvis – Anoniem (narrative)	11	
	2	Nelson Mandela (informational)	176	7	3 mins	2	Warm Roosterbrood (narrative)	7	
7	1	Paul and Stefan (narrative)	252	7	3 mins	1	Honde (narrative)	7	15 mins
	2	Die Taxibestuurder (informational)	226	9	3 mins	2	Die Bestuurder: Vullisverwydering (informational)	6	15 mins
						3	Rotte, goed en sleg (informational)	9	15 mins



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# Reading Performance

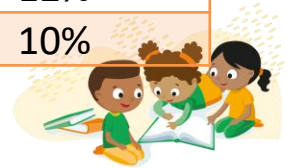
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	Grade 4		Grade 7	
	Mean	% scoring zero	Mean	% scoring zero
Phonemic awareness	55%	1%		
Letter sounds	58	1%		
Complex sounds	29	4%		
Familiar words	45	5%		
Oral reading fluency - passage 1	41	8%	94	2%
Comprehension - passage 1	34%	23%	53%	4%
Oral reading fluency - passage 2	42	7%	88	2%
Comprehension - passage 2	38%	16%	61%	3%
Written comprehension - passage 1	17%	50%	32%	11%
Written comprehension - passage 2	18%	42%	29%	13%
Written comprehension - passage 3			34%	12%
Vocabulary			39%	10%



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# Comprehension Question Difficulty

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- A shared understanding of comprehension difficulty is important for benchmarks
- Questions differ in difficulty by type AND within each type
- **We classified the questions using the PIRLS taxonomy into four comprehension processes:**
  1. Retrieving explicitly stated information;
  2. Making straightforward inferences;
  3. Interpreting and integrating ideas and information; and
  4. Evaluating and examining content, language and textual elements

In benchmarks setting practices adopted were:

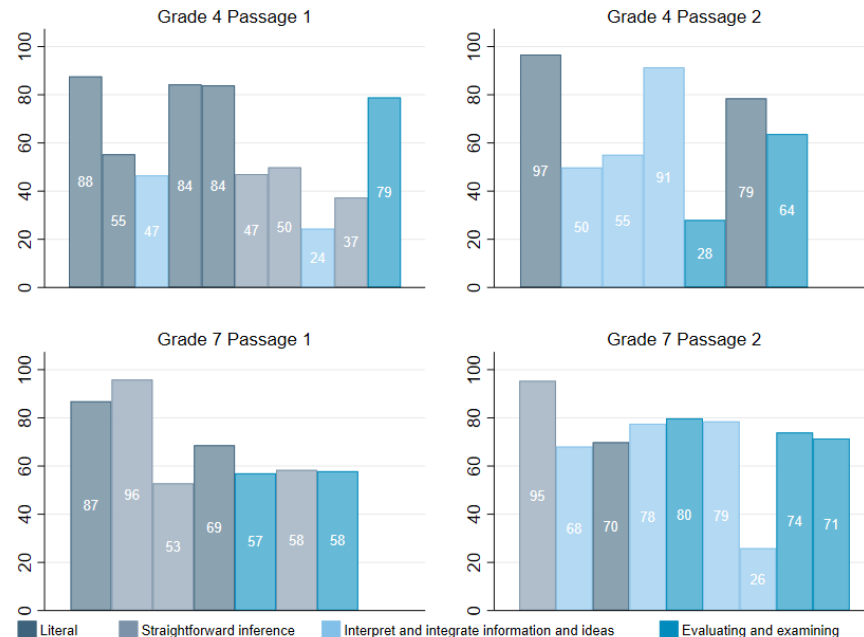
- Adapted EGRA practice from 1 minute for ORF to 3 minutes
- Learners only asked questions related to the parts of the passage they read



# Comprehension Question Difficulty

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Percent correct on each comprehension question for learners attempting all questions



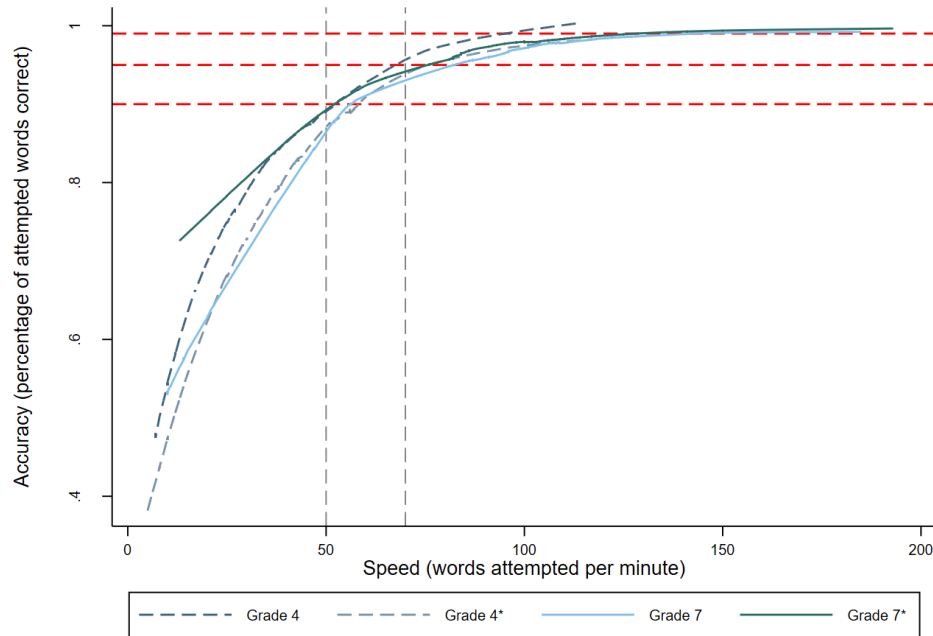
- 479 for grade 4 passage1
- 303 for grade 4 passage 2
- 582 for grade 7 passage 1
- 743 for grade 7 passage 2



# Accuracy and Speed

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Percent accurate compared to words per minute



Number of words attempted trimmed to the 1st and 99th percentile, \* = second passage



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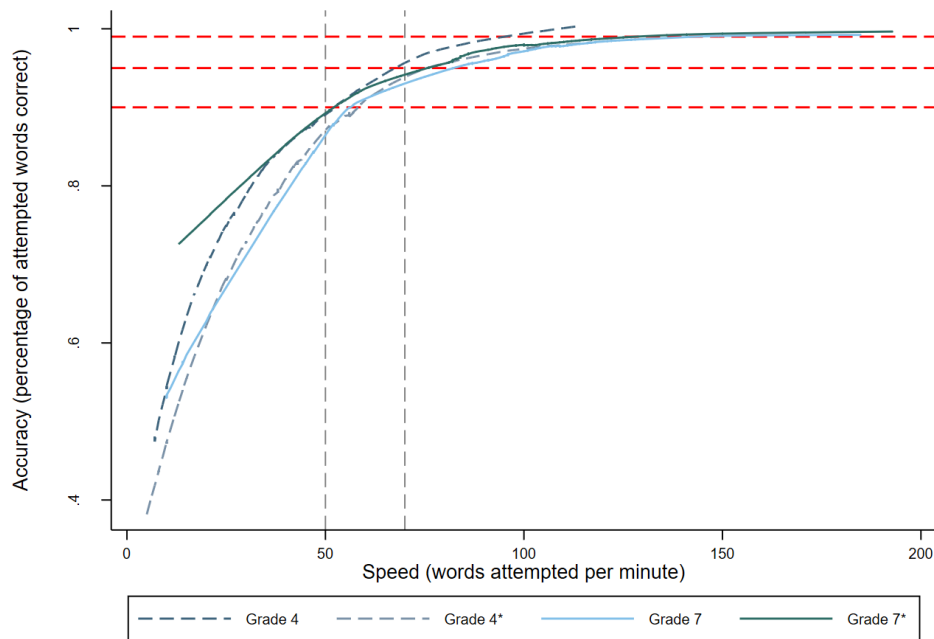




# Accuracy and Speed

AFRIKAANS READING BENCHMARKS

Percent accurate compared to words per minute



Number of words attempted trimmed to the 1st and 99th percentile, \* = second passage

- Typically 95% accuracy speed for the end of grade 2 benchmark.
- In the Afrikaans sample, only 19% of learners are reading 70 correct words per minute or faster at the beginning of grade 4
- This fluency point is not contextually appropriate for the end of grade 2 for Afrikaans
- 90% accuracy was more appropriate for the benchmark



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# Reading benchmarks and thresholds for early grade reading in Afrikaans home language

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**80**

## End of Grade 3

All learners should be able to read at least **80 CORRECT WORDS** per minute when reading a passage



**50**

## End of Grade 2

All learners should be able to read at least **50 CORRECT WORDS** per minute when reading a passage



**40**

## End of Grade 1

All learners should know their **LETTER SOUNDS** well, sounding at least **40 CORRECT LETTERS** per minute



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# Grade 1 Afrikaans Benchmark

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40

## End of Grade 1

All learners should know their LETTER SOUNDS well, sounding at least 40 correct letters per minute

### Why Letters?

- Letters are a good early **predictor** of oral reading fluency (ORF) later in Foundation Phase.
- The same benchmark has been adopted across all the languages
- Improvements in letter-sound speed stagnate at 40 letters.



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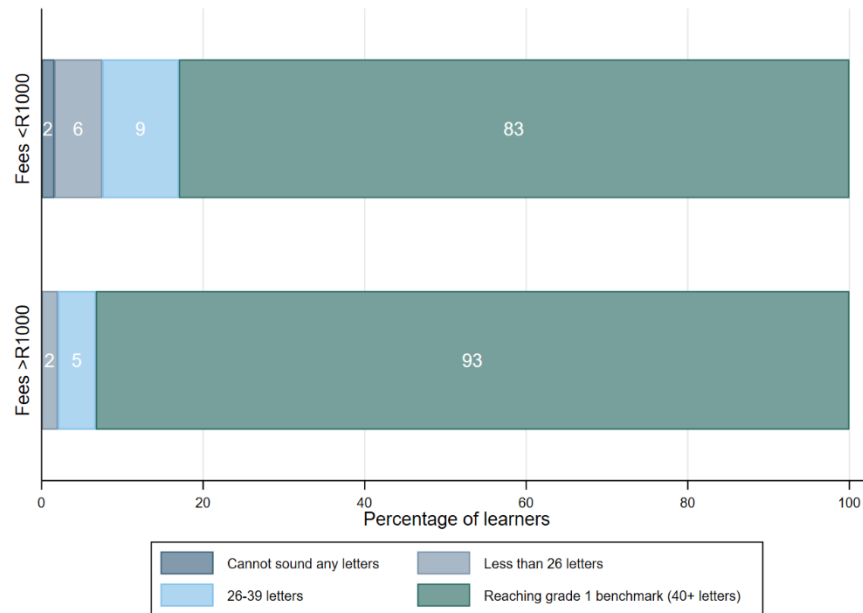
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# Grade 1 Afrikaans Benchmark

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Percentage of grade 4 learners reaching letter-sound benchmark by fee group



# Grade 2 Afrikaans Benchmark

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50

## End of Grade 2

All learners should be able to read at least 50 correct WORDS per minute when reading a passage

### Why 50 words per minute in a passage for Grade2?

- Below this threshold, accuracy is poor and we find little evidence that learners can comprehend what they have read.
- This is therefore a minimum benchmark, if learners do not reach this level of fluency, higher-order reading skills are very unlikely to develop.
- In this sample, 34 percent of learners had reached this benchmark at the end of grade 3



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# Grade 3 Afrikaans Benchmark

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**80**

## End of Grade 3

All learners should be able to read at least 80 correct WORDS per minute when reading a passage

### Why 80 words in a passage for Grade 3?

- At this level of fluency reading comprehension becomes increasingly possible when learners read on their own.
- Once learners reach this level of fluency, it appears that poor comprehension skills become the limiting factor to further literacy development.
- At the beginning of 2022, only 15 percent of learners in this sample had reached this benchmark at the end of grade 3.
- However, 69 percent of learners in the same schools had reached the benchmark at the end of grade 6.



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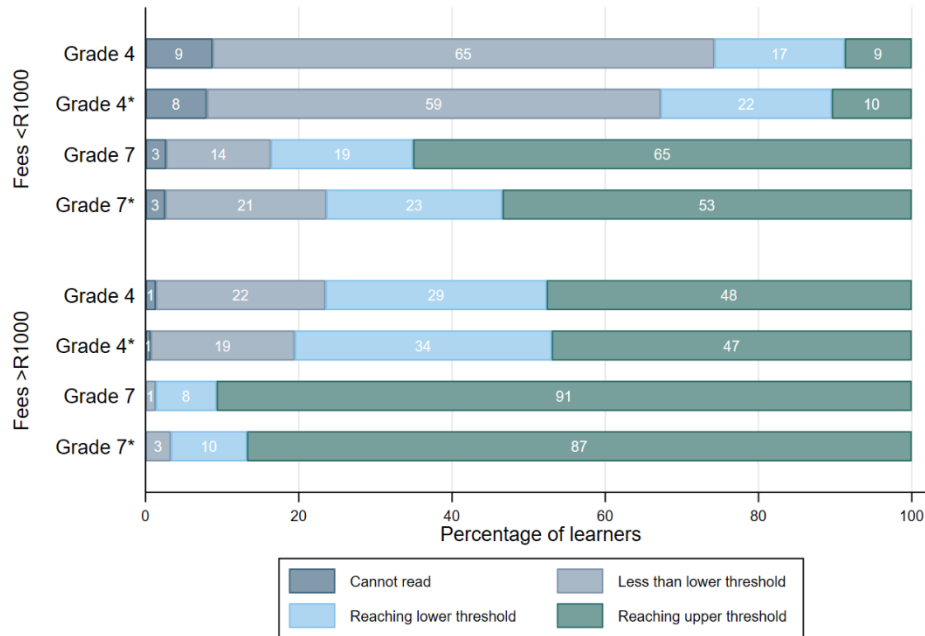
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# Grade 2 and 3 benchmarks

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Learners reaching the Grade 2 and 3 benchmarks



\* = second passage



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# Thank you



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