

1. Discuss the prevalent practice of “red shirting”—holding children back a year before sending them to kindergarten. What is your opinion of this practice? How might such a practice stratify our society along socioeconomic lines?
2. What might you say to parents of a kindergarten student who ask you what they can do at home to help their child become “ready to learn to read”? Explore some websites that discuss emergent literacy. (See Appendix C as well as the box earlier in the chapter with links to websites with videos for some suggestions.) Note the source: who wrote the information and for what purpose? Share the information you find with the class.
3. Schools often use a teacher’s judgment in addition to the data derived from reading readiness assessments to decide whether children are ready to begin formal reading instruction. Do you think these two sources of data are equally reliable? Why or why not? What might be some advantages of each of these forms of evaluation? What might be some limitations?