

1. From the information in this chapter, create a checklist you might use to help determine if a student is ready to learn to read. Include such factors as language development, interest in reading, and understanding of the English writing system. For each of these main headings, create ways to evaluate each of the factors. For example, you might say for language development, “Asks many complex questions containing five or more words,” or for interest in reading, “Listens attentively when read to” or “Often talks about books he has heard.”
  
2. Spend time observing in a kindergarten class. Observe how oral language skills are enhanced. Observe how teachers and caretakers promote critical-thinking skills as they interact with the children in centers and other times.
  
3. Research the emergent literacy issues of a country outside North America. Find out the following: (a) When do children begin formal reading instruction? (b) What methods are used for instruction? (c) Are there any noticeable differences in achievement levels of boys and girls on standardized reading tests in later years? (d) If there is a discrepancy in test results between boys and girls, to what do educational practitioners attribute this difference? What do you think accounts for the difference?

4. Read a picture book to a child in preschool and observe what he seems to understand about the concepts of print. Record your observations using the Concepts About Print Assessment in Appendix E. For concepts with which the student seems unfamiliar, list several ways parents or preschool teachers can work with the child to help him become familiar with the concepts of print.