

Where Do I Start and Where Do I Stop? A Refresher on Basals, Ceilings, and the Complete Page Rule



Three Steps to Administering a Test

- Establish a basal
- Establish a ceiling
- Calculate the raw score



Basals and Ceilings

- Indicate the earliest (basal) and latest (ceiling) items that need to be administered
- Serve to reduce testing time by efficiently identifying a student's ability without administering every item on a test
- Basal/ceiling rules are found on the first page of each test in the testing easel and in the Examiners Manual



Start Points

- Start point:
 - Subject's estimated ability/achievement
 - Sample items/Item 1

Suggested Starting Points

Subject's Estimated Achievement	Preschool to Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grades 2 to 4	Grades 5 to 8	Grade 9 to Adult
Begin With	Item 1	Item 4	Item 10	Item 22	Item 32
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Types of Basal/Ceiling Rules

1. Test until a number of correct/incorrect responses
2. Test by complete pages
3. Timed tasks
4. Continuation instructions
5. Cutoff
6. Start and end point defined



1. Test Until # of Correct/Incorrect Responses

- When the student's side of the easel is blank
- **Start Point:** Subject's estimated ability/achievement
- **Basal:** Test until the ___ lowest-numbered items are correct, or until you have administered Item 1.
- **Ceiling:** Test until the ___ highest-numbered items are incorrect, or until you have administered [the final item].

Example: WJ IV Achievement Test 3: Spelling



2. Test by Complete Pages

- Applies when the student can see items on their side of the easel
- **Start Point:** Subject's estimated ability/achievement
- **Basal:** Test by complete pages until the ___ lowest-numbered items administered are correct, or until you have administered the page with Item 1.
- **Ceiling:** Test by complete pages until the ___ highest-numbered items administered are incorrect, or until you have administered the page with [the final item].

Example: WJ IV Achievement Test 1: Letter-Word Identification

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3. Timed Tasks

- Measures of fluency
- **Start Point:** Sample Items and Practice Exercise
- **Basal:** Item 1
- **Ceiling:** End of designated time, or final item

Example: WJ IV Achievement Test 9: Sentence Reading Fluency

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4. Continuation Instructions

- **Start Point:** Subject's estimated ability/achievement
- **Basal:** ___ or fewer points: Administer previous item block or discontinue testing
- **Ceiling:** ___ or more points: Administer next item block

Example: WJ IV Achievement Test 8: Oral Reading

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5. Cutoff

- Only on Cognitive batteries (WJ IV Cognitive, ECAD, Bateria IV Cognitive)
- **Start Point:** Introduction
- **Basal:** Item 1
- **Ceiling:** Cutoff at number of errors

Example: WJ IV Cognitive Test 13: Visual-Auditory Learning

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6. Start and end point defined

- Only example: WJ IV Achievement Test 6: Writing Samples
- **Start Point:** Subject's estimated achievement
- **End Point:** Subject's estimated achievement
- Only administer additional items in rare situations where student answers very few questions correct or almost all questions correct

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