

TEST:	Feifer Assessment of Writing
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Publisher:	PAR
Date of Standardisation:	2018-19 (Pub 2020)
Age Range:	4 – 22
Access:	User is expected to have adequate training and experience in psychological or educational assessment. More details available on suppliers' websites
Sample Size:	1048
Cost:	£778.80

OVERVIEW

FAW is a norm referenced diagnostic achievement test of writing. The FAW places greater emphasis on the reasons which may underly difficulties shown rather than on functional level in order to inform intervention.

The manual states that FAW can be used for general screening of dysgraphia (p12). Screening Index takes 15- 20 minutes and for pupils below Grade 2 (Year 3) includes the subtests of Alphabet Tracing Fluency, Motor Sequencing and Isolated Spelling. For older pupils the subtests of Alphabet Tracing Fluency, Isolated Spelling and Executive Working Memory are administered.

Younger age group can complete FAW subtests in about 20 minutes.

Older age groups can take 55 minutes, plus 10 minutes for optional FAW subtests, to complete the full test.

There is clear administration, marking and scoring guidance with skills and error analysis.

There are 10 primary subtests and 2 additional optional subtests which provides an overall Total Index plus 3 targeted index forms:

- **Graphomotor index** (assesses the ability to plan, sequence and execute the physical stroke of the writing process under timed conditions). The subtests in this index are all timed and include:
 - Alphabet Tracing Fluency - tracing over stencils of letters (for younger pupils) and words for older ones.
 - Motor Sequencing – matching a letter/group of letters with coloured symbols whilst keeping within the box.
 - Copying Speed – copying a series of sentences.
 - Motor Planning – copying letters, words or phrases into a series of boxes of different lengths (according to the length of the sentence).
- **Dyslexic Index** (extent to which developmental dyslexia may impact writing by disrupting the spelling process). Subtests include:
 - Homophone Spelling – choosing the correct spelling choice from a few different spellings of a word with a picture of the target word. 15 seconds for each item before moving on.

- Isolated Spelling – spelling letters/ words of increasing difficulty. No stimulus sentence is given. 10 seconds for each item before moving on.
- **Executive index** (retrieval fluency, sequencing, working memory and saliency determination). Subtests include:
 - Executive Working Memory – a timed test. A selection of words is given to the pupil (with a visual prompt) and they are then asked to write a sentence on a given topic using 2 of them.
 - Sentence Scaffolding – a timed test. The sequencing of a series of cards to construct a paragraph.
 - Retrieval Fluency – to name a number of items representative of a given category. Then to verbally generate a word that is related to a few other orally presented words. 10 seconds before moving on if no response.
 - Expository Writing – 5 minutes to write a paragraph about a given topic. Note: this does not provide a standard score for speed of writing but is marked on various areas concerning the quality of the composition.
- Plus an optional Compositional writing index which includes the subtests:
 - Copy Editing – a timed test. The pupil is given a series of sentences with errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar which they have to identify and correct. An editing key is provided.
 - Story Mapping – a timed test. Various elements of a story are given and the pupil has to write a story about them. Note: this does not provide a standard score for speed of writing but is marked on various areas concerning the quality of the composition.

Kit consists of:

One stimulus book, one administration and scoring guide, scoring templates and acetate overlays, sentence scaffolding cards, examiner record and examinee response forms, one professional manual

TECHNICAL DATA

[Size and spread of Standardisation Sample](#)

Based on a normative sample of 1048 prekindergarten to college individuals, representative of 2017 US population and including samples of more than 120 students with learning disabilities: ADHD, fine motor deficits and intellectual disability (p 1 FAW manual). 14 subtests created for FAW in 2015. Two expert reviews informed revisions and pilot testing took place between January and August 2017. This involved 424 individuals with the following demographic spread: 42.2 % recruited from the south, 26.4% from the west, 20% from the Midwest and 11.9% from the northeast. This was followed by two more expert reviews and a bias review (p110 manual). Standardisation sample collected from Spring 2018 – Spring 2019.

The authors state that (p86-87):

- Results below ss 85 in the Grapho motor index suggest the individual may be at risk of developing a writing disorder consistent with graphomotor dysgraphia/DCD (2nd paragraph p 86).
- Results below ss 85 on the Dyslexia Index suggest that the individual may be at risk of dyslexic dysgraphia.
- Results below ss85 on the Executive Index can indicate a writing disorder consistent with the poor planning and organisation of writing associated executive dysgraphia (p 88), which is often present in ADHD.

Continuous norming took place to develop grade based normative tables. This process corrects sampling irregularities and maximises accuracy of normative scores.

Appropriate representation of age range, socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, gender

VALIDITY

Content Validity

Content validity is evaluated using feedback and expert review of content and item bias. Authors are satisfied with the content validity.

Construct Validity

(p 123 manual) Correlation between grade level and raw scores conducted. Median for all grades **.70**

(p 124-5 manual) correlation with achievement tests. AAB letter word reading and Reading Comprehension and written expression through Spelling and Written Composition. FAW Homophone Spelling and Isolated Spelling strongly correlated with AAB Spelling subtest : $r = .47$ and $.45$. FAW also compared to oral language and written expression tests in WIAT 111 (p124 manual) and Reading, Maths and Intelligence tests (p126 manual).

RELIABILITY

For individual subtests – Table 5.1 (p120) details the reliability according to age and gives an overall median for each subtest, ranging from $.59$ to $.92$. The majority are in the $.80$ s and $.90$ s.

- a) For composite scores (this is the more important reliability data): Reliability coefficients of FAW Indexes by Grade. High degree of reliability Table 5.2 (p 120) total index $.95$
- b) SEMs for individual subtests and Indexes are also provided (Tables 5.3 and 5.4) p121. Median SEMS for each Index range from 3.7 to 5.0 with a total Median SEM of 3.2 .

ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- Some Americanisms could make the test items difficult to administer, e.g. Retrieval fluency subtests contains some Americanisms e.g. American states and type of shoes.
- Careful consideration of which tests/Indexes to administer to avoid over testing. Individual test/Index scores can be obtained.
- The examiner is permitted to record it if desired, but the required response is one word so responses should be easy to note down. (Equipment and materials p16 “The use of a voice recorder is optional but may be helpful for the Retrieval Fluency test.”)
- There is only one record form, no alternative forms are available.
- It is normed on individuals who understand and speak English.

STRENGTHS:

- The Manual is clearly laid out to provide an overview of the FAW, encompassing the specific neurocognitive processes which are the rationale for the test. It is rigorously linked to underpinning theory.
- Clear and detailed information of the scoring and interpretation of the test. It is easy to administer and to score. It is hand scored but an online platform for scoring is available at PariConnect (if this is used a brief interpretive statement is also produced.)
- Rigorously standardised
- Standardised scores and confidence intervals provided.
- Could be used to screen pupils in schools demonstrating difficulties with writing.
- Could be used in the Additional Diagnostic Evidence and Information section of a Full Diagnostic Assessment – information to support motor difficulties/DCD and difficulties with executive functioning inherent in the writing process. Homophone Spelling could provide useful additional evidence in the Spelling section. The Compositional Writing Index and the Expository Writing subtest may also provide additional information for the Writing section.
- Some tests could also be used to support Examination Access Arrangements e.g.
 - the Grapho Motor Index could be used as evidence for difficulties with visual/motor processing in the cognitive processing section of an F8 to provide evidence for extra time.
 - The Isolated Spelling test could be used as evidence of spelling difficulties.