Name	Year/Class

Extract from *The Midnight Fox* by Betsy Byars

(246 words)

Above 130 Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) is an **approximate** indicator of good oral fluency for Year 6 with this text. The 130th word is in red on the teacher copy in case useful.

Read context to pupil before they read the text: *This is a story about Tom, a city boy in the USA, who moves to a farm in the countryside while his parents go on holiday. At the farm he becomes fascinated by a black fox.*

Sometimes at night when the wind is beating against the windows of my room, I think about that summer on the farm. It has been five years, but when I close my eyes I am once again by the creek watching the black fox come leaping over the green, green grass. She is as light and free as the wind, exactly as she was the first time I saw her.

Or sometimes it is that last terrible night, and I am standing beneath the oak tree with the rain beating against me. The lightning flashes, the world is turned white for a moment, and I see everything as it was – the broken lock, the empty cage, the small tracks disappearing into the rain. Then it seems to me that **I** can hear, as plainly as I heard it that August night, above the rain, beyond the years, the high clear bark of the midnight fox.

To begin with, I did not want to go to the farm. I was perfectly happy at home. I remember I was sitting at the desk in my room and I had a brand-new $1.88 Cessna 180 model. I was just taking off the cellophane when my mom came in. I was feeling good because I had the model, and all evening to work on it, and then my mom told me in an excited way that I was going to Aunt Millie's farm for two whole months. I felt terrible.

Fluency Scale Score

Expression and volume	Phrasing	Smoothness	Pace	**Total**

Scores range from 4-16. Generally, scores below 8 indicate that fluency may be a concern. Note any areas of fluency that may require further development.

Oral Comprehension Check

Note pupil responses and any other useful information. Informal follow-up questions can provide useful information for weaker domains. You may wish to ask the pupil to read the text again, or read it to them, before the comprehension element.

Clarify: What do you think the author means by "the world is turned white for a moment"?

Pupil response notes:	

Select and retrieve: Why was Tom "perfectly happy at home"?

Pupil response notes:	

Summarise: What do we know about the farm from the text?

Pupil response notes:	

Respond and explain: What do you think might happen on "that last terrible night"?

Pupil response notes:	

Inference: Tom still remembers the events on the farm clearly after five years. What does this tell us?

Pupil response notes:	

Language for effect: What impression do you get of the fox from the author's language in the first paragraph?

Pupil response notes:	

Themes and conventions: How do you know that the story is not set in the UK? What clues are there in the text?

Pupil response notes:	

Strengths	Potential targets for this pupil

Oral Comprehension Check: *possible responses*

Look for pupil understanding rather than verbatim 'right answers'.

Clarify: What do you think the author means by "the world is turned white for a moment"?

Possible response:	The flash of lightning is so bright the whole world appears white.

Select and retrieve: Why was Tom "perfectly happy at home"?

Possible response:	He was just about to build a model in his room.

Summarise: What do we know about the farm from the text?

Possible response:	It seems to be in a rural setting – green grass, a creek, an oak tree. Locks and cages suggest animals being kept there.

Respond and explain: What do you think might happen on "that last terrible night"?

Possible response:	A range of responses. Consider pupil justification.

Inference: Tom still remembers the events on the farm clearly after five years. What does this tell us?

Possible response:	That the events had a great impact upon him. That perhaps the fox and Tom form a close bond.

Language for effect: What impression do you get of the fox from the author's language in the first paragraph?

Possible response:	She is graceful, moving quickly and with ease.

Themes and conventions: How do you know that the story is not set in the UK? What clues are there in the text?

Possible response:	American terms such as 'creek'. Dollar sign in the price for the model.

Extract from *The Midnight Fox* by Betsy Byars

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Multidimensional Fluency Scale

Use the following rubric (1-4) to rate reader fluency in the areas of expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace.

EXPRESSION AND VOLUME

1. *Reads words as if simply to get them out*. Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language. Tends to read in a quiet voice.
2. *Begins to use voice to make text sound like natural language* in some areas of the text but not in others. Focus remains largely on pronouncing the word. Still reads in a quiet voice.
3. Make text sound like *natural language* throughout the better part of the passage. Occasionally slips into expressionless reading. Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text.
4. Reads with *good expression and enthusiasm throughout the text*. Varies expression and volume to match his or her interpretation of the passage.

PHRASING

1. Reads in a *monotone* with little sense of boundaries; frequently reads *word-by-word.*
2. Frequently reads in two- and three-word phrases, giving the impression of *choppy reading*; improper stress and intonation fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses.
3. Reads with a *mixture of run-ons*, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness, reasonable stress and intonation.
4. Generally reads with *good phrasing*, mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression.

SMOOTHNESS

1. Makes frequent *extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs*, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts.
2. Experiences *several "rough spots"* in text where extended pauses or hesitations are more frequent and disruptive.
3. *Occasionally breaks smooth rhythm* because of difficulties with specific words and/or structures.
4. *Generally reads smoothly* with some breaks, but resolves word and structure difficulties quickly, usually through self-correction.

PACE

1. Reads *slowly* and *laboriously*.
2. Reads *moderately slowly*.
3. Reads with an *uneven mixture of fast and slow pace*.
4. Consistently reads at *conversational pace*; appropriate rate throughout reading.

Scores range from 4-16. Generally, scores below 8 indicate that fluency may be a concern. Scores of 8 or above indicate that the student is making good progress in fluency.

Adapted from Zutell & Rasinski, 1991.