

Across Five Aprils By Irene Hunt
(New York: Berkley JAM, 2002)

The Cloze Procedure

Purpose of the Strategy

Originated by Taylor (1953), a Cloze passage contains systematically deleted words. The Cloze procedure is used to (1) determine what students already know about a given topic and (2) to assess the suitability of a new text for students by testing their prior knowledge and language competence as they attempt to fill in the deletions.

Using the Cloze Procedure

ADMINISTRATION

1. Copy the attached Cloze passage and distribute one blank copy to each student
2. Read through instructions as class and clarify that students should fill in the one word that seems most appropriate for each blank
3. Verbally emphasize the following:
 - Take time
 - Test will not be graded
 - Guessing is encouraged—you should fill in all the blanks
 - Spelling does not count
4. Prior to filling in the blanks, direct students to silently read through text and then read text aloud to class.

SCORING

1. Compare student Cloze passage to Cloze passage key
2. Score one point for each exact replacement
 - a. Synonyms are incorrect
 - b. Incorrect spelling is not penalized
 - c. Different word endings are incorrect
3. Double raw score (number of correct words) to find percentage
(Ex. If there are 35 correct replacements, $35 \times 2 = 70\%$)

Interpret Results Using the Chart below:

Independent Level 60% and Above (Material is too Easy)	* Instructional Level * 40%-60% (Material is About Right)	Frustration Level 40 % and Below (Material is Too Difficult)
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Cloze Procedure
for Across Five Aprils (New York: Berkley JAM, 2002)
by Irene Hunt

Instructions: Read through the entire passage once. Then go through the passage again and attempt to fill each blank with a word you think the author may have used. Use only one word for each blank.

The road in front of the house ran due north through that line where the last glacier had melted in some distant age and left its final load of _____, a line that separated _____ rich, black loam culture _____ northern Illinois from the _____, hard-packed clay culture _____ the south.

Jethro regretted _____ melting of that glacier; _____ it could have hung _____ another hundred miles, life _____ have been very different _____ him and his family. _____ then it hadn't, and _____ he loved the dog _____ and the silver poplars _____ the hedge of lilacs _____ the south that separated _____ well-drained kitchen garden _____ the dooryard. He doubted _____ there were such wooded _____ or winding creeks in _____ cornbelt of the north _____ one could find by _____ dozens in the clay _____, and he could not _____ contentment in any other _____ than this one, which _____ father had chosen thirty _____ before. But it was _____ pity about the glacier. _____ another hundred miles!

Jenny _____ poured fresh water into _____ big basin so that _____ mother and Jethro could _____ their faces and wash _____ dirt and grime from _____ hands.

“Nancy and the _____ tykes are here,” she _____ to Ellen. “We got _____ nice meal fixed fer _____.”

Jenny had swept back _____ shining black hair high _____ her head because of _____ heat in the kitchen _____ the food was prepared _____ an open fireplace, and _____ drops of sweat stood _____ under her eyes and _____ a very firm chin. _____ grinned at Jethro and _____ him briskly on the _____ as he came up to the kitchen well.

“I’ve got a crock of lettuce fer you, Jeth, though I’m terr’ble wasteful in pickin’ it too young. But I know how you been dreamin’ green things as fur back as last December.”

(Hunt 15)



Across Five Aprils (New York: Berkley JAM, 2002)
Cloze Procedure Key

The road in front of the house ran due north through that line where the last glacier had melted in some distant age and left its final load of **drift**, a line that separated **the** rich, black loam culture **of** northern Illinois from the **poor**, hard-packed clay culture **to** the south.

Jethro regretted **the** melting of that glacier; **if** it could have hung **on** another hundred miles, life **might** have been very different **for** him and his family. **But** then it hadn't, and **anyway** he loved the dog **fennel** and the silver poplars **and** the hedge of lilacs **on** the south that separated **Jenny's** well-drained kitchen garden **from** the dooryard. He doubted **that** there were such wooded **hills** or winding creeks in **the** cornbelt of the north **as** one could find by **the** dozens in the clay **lands**, and he could not **imagine** contentment in any other **spot** than this one, which **his** father had chosen thirty **years** before. But it was **a** pity about the glacier. **Only** another hundred miles!

Jenny **had** poured fresh water into **a** big basin so that **her** mother and Jethro could **cool** their faces and wash **the** dirt and grime from **their** hands.

“Nancy and the **little** tykes are here,” she **called** to Ellen. “We got **a** nice meal fixed for **you**.”

Jenny had swept back **her** shining black hair high **upon** her head because of **the** heat in the kitchen **where** the food was prepared **over** an open fireplace, and **little** drops of sweat stood **out** under her eyes and **over** a very firm chin. **She** grinned at Jethro and **whacked** him briskly on the **seat** as he came up to the kitchen well.

“I’ve got a crock of lettuce fer you, Jeth, though I’m terr’ble wasteful in pickin’ it too young. But I know how you been dreamin’ green things as fur back as last December.”

(Hunt 15)



Across Five Aprils Cloze Procedure Reflection
Kristen Anderson

Because *Across Five Aprils* contains somewhat specific farm terminology, Revolutionary War vocabulary, and rural dialect, the cloze procedure is an important strategy to use before reading the book to make sure students have sufficient background knowledge and can comprehend the sentence constructions in this particular book. While a book may be leveled for a specific grade, there can be a wide range of topics and sentence constructions within the same grade level. Because each group of students is unique in their knowledge and comprehension abilities, this strategy provides a nice way for a teacher to get an overall glance at whether this book is a good reading level for the majority of students, and especially struggling students, before beginning the book as a class.

However, a couple disadvantages arise with the cloze procedure. One boy to whom I administered this particular test, expressed frustration that there were several words that might have fit in the blank. It seems somewhat senseless that if a student doesn't guess the exact word that the author used, they are counted off for not having sufficient background knowledge or not understanding sentence structure—even if they picked an equally appropriate or synonymous word. For example, my college friend scored a 44% on this test, even though he reads at a college level. He was counted down for writing “said” instead of “called,” and “on” instead of “upon”. Clearly he understood the sentence structure; he just couldn't read the author's mind. These observations lead me to question the accuracy of this

strategy; while it seems like it would be helpful to assess whether a text is too easy for a student, it may inaccurately measure the difficulty of the text for the students.

While the Cloze Procedure has many drawbacks, I can see it being helpful in my future classroom to assess students' knowledge of sentence construction and flow. Seeing whether or not the answers they inserted make sense in the flow of the sentence will not only help me know if the reading level is too hard or easy, but will also help me to see what else they need to learn about sentence construction.