

How to...administer a test

1. Be prepared! Read the manual before administration. Failing to administer the test correctly can invalidate your results. Have the right sections, forms, tape recorders etc ready. If possible do a practice run with a friend.
2. Gain rapport with the client first. Maintain this through the session. They are probably just as nervous as you are.
3. Think carefully about the words you use to introduce the 'test' e.g. it may be fine to say: 'we're going to do some tests' to an adult, but the same words will make a child decide not to co-operate.
4. Introduce the "testing situation" before introducing the test, i.e. discuss with the client what is going to happen and why, e.g. "We need to have a close look at your listening and understanding, so I want to ask you to do some activities using words & pictures. Because of the way the test is set out, I won't talk to you about how you're doing until the end but then we can talk about how you've done."
5. Some tests give you specific wording for explaining the test and these must be used.
6. Use the appropriate recording forms and know what you have to write down. If the client has to speak, record the session. Then you can always check things later.
7. Know basal and ceiling performance requirements (i.e. when do you start and stop the test? If you discontinue a test before the manual instructs, you may invalidate the results and therefore waste the client's time).
8. Consider such factors as fatigue, poor concentration/attention, and perseveration in continuing test.
9. Avoid abandoning tests part way through without good reason. Tests (unless stated) are designed to be completed to make the results meaningful.
10. Don't give specific feedback about accuracy of performance during test, but be supportive where necessary - "You're doing well". Giving feedback on early items may affect the person's performance on later items.
11. Randomise any comments - don't provide after each item.
Don't be dishonest/misleading in feedback.
12. Don't give 'clues' to the answer, e.g. eye pointing when the person has to choose 1 of 4 pictures, reading out words versus non-words differently in a lexical decision task.
13. Don't trust your memory - record as you go, including transcribing responses.
Always record *everything* the person said in response to the item, not just part of the item.
Record *how* a client responds to tests as well as recording a score, e.g. do they respond quickly or are they hesitant, are they confident of their responses, aware of their errors, were they attending etc.

14. Many tests involve practice items which can be used many times, and feedback given so that you are sure the patient has understood what is required of him/her in the task. There is little point in doing an assessment where the person fails purely because they have not understood the task.
15. Record when the person asks for a repetition of the stimulus before responding. An example of this would be the person asking to hear the word again in a word-picture matching test. In general, mark items where the person asked for a repetition as INCORRECT (but record their response after the repetition).