



Part III: Reading Fluency

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Reading fluency is the ability to read a passage with speed, accuracy and correct intonation. Fluent readers effortlessly read each word and use appropriate expression to help convey the meaning of a passage. Since fluent readers have already mastered reading decoding, they are able to focus their attention on connecting new ideas within the text to their own background knowledge (Armbruster, Lehr and Osborn, 2001).

Non-fluent readers tend to break every word down phonetically, which makes their reading slow, choppy and difficult to follow in you aren't looking at the text they are reading. Non-fluent readers spend so much energy and effort on pronouncing each word that they are unable to focus much attention on the content of the passage they are reading (Feifer and De Fina, 2000).

After reviewing over 1000 studies, the 2000 National Reading Panel discovered that independent, silent reading **does not** improve reading fluency or overall reading achievement.

How to Increase Reading Fluency:

Model fluent reading, and then have students re-read the text on their own. By reading aloud effortlessly and with expression, teachers can provide a model for what fluent reading sounds like. This also helps students learn how a reader's voice gives meaning to a written passage. Teachers can explain why they paused in certain places of the text and how the punctuation indicated when to lower or raise their voice. After the teacher models fluent reading, students need to re-read that same text. Reading fluency usually improves after students have read a text three to four times (It is not necessary for them to re-read the text three to four times on the same day).

Have students repeatedly read passages aloud with guidance. Repeated and monitored oral reading improves both reading fluency and overall reading achievement. Teachers can provide many opportunities to read the same passage orally several times. Students should re-read text that is relatively short and reasonably easy for them. Different ways to have students practice orally re-reading passages include:

- **Student-Adult Reading:** First the adult models fluent reading, then the student reads the same text back with the adult providing help and assistance as needed. The student continues to re-read the passage until the reading sounds natural and fluid.
- **Choral Reading:** After the teacher models how to fluently read a short passage, students are encouraged to read the same passage aloud along with the teacher. This technique works best with patterned stories or predictable books that repeat phrases. After re-reading the story several times, students should be able to fluently read the story by themselves.
- **Audio-Assisted Reading:** Students listen to an audio recording of a story as they follow along in their book. After hearing the story read fluently on the audio recording, students then read out loud along with the recording. Students continue to re-read the story until they can read it fluently without the support of the recording.
- **Partner Reading:** Paired students take turns reading to each other. The more fluent student reads first to model how the passage should be read. If both students are of equal ability, the teacher can read the passage first to correctly model fluent reading.
- **Readers' Theatre:** Students rehearse and then perform in front of an audience using scripts with lots of dialogue and drama. This technique provides a practical and fun way for students to re-read and practice their fluency.