

Teaching Reading Fluency

What is reading fluency?

When fluent readers read silently, they recognise words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the text and their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognise words and comprehend at the same time.

Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy. Less fluent readers must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the meaning of text or using expression.

Developing reading fluency

There are several ways to develop fluency.

- Using **expression** by varying voice tone, pitch and volume to reflect the meaning of the text.
- **Pausing** at punctuation. Fluent readers take short breaths for commas, voice stopping and going down for periods, and stopping and going up for question marks.
- **Smoothness** of reading by avoiding pauses, hesitations, repetitions or multiple attempts at words in the text.
- **Stress** by creating emphasis (louder tones) on particular words, e.g. I *love* reading.
- **Decoding/ reading of unknown words**

Choral reading

Try reading aloud in unison with your child. Your child should follow the text, pointing with their finger. This way, if they are less confident, they can join in with the words they can read, while the adult continues to read. The adult should stop when coming to a tricky word, sound it out, discuss the meaning of it and then your child can repeat the sentence again fluently.

Repeated reading

Your child should read a section of text. Stop and discuss together, e.g. reading tricky words again and asking comprehension questions. Your child should then reread the section of text 2 or 3 times. They can then focus on the fluency rather than decoding words or understanding the text.

Echo reading

The adult reads a phrase or sentence while emphasising their expression and intonation. The number of sentences read should increase as your child's reading improves. Your child should then repeat the sentence trying to mimic the adult's speed and expression.

Sight words and phrases

Help your child practise reading harder to read words and phonic words with speed and accuracy.