

FLUENCY

ACTIVITIES

and

PASSAGES

Repeated Reading

Focus Area: Fluency

Timing: 5-10 minutes

Materials:

- A copy of independent reading material for the student (50 – 200 words in length)
- Timer

Procedure:

1. Choose assisted or unassisted approach.
 - Assisted: The teacher (or coach) reads aloud with the student. Use the assisted approach when children are reading with few errors, but below 45 words per minute. The model gives children support and a sense of the proper phrasing and speed of fluent reading.
 - i. Predetermine a goal level for speed, particularly for very slow word-by-word readers and delayed students. Students move to a new passage once they reach the goal for wpm on the passage they have been practicing. 100-120 wpm is reasonable for most students, while 85wpm is better for older dysfluent students. Check out grade level norms.... but keep in mind those are for first time readings and we're looking at rates for repeated readings.
 - Unassisted: The student reads independently, but the teacher (or coach) supplies any unknown words. Use the unassisted approach as soon as a student reaches a rate of over 60 wpm on their first reading of a practice passage. This approach supplies more practice with less support.
2. Have the student read the selection orally while the teacher (or coach) times the reading and counts the number of words that are pronounced incorrectly. Record the reading time and the number of words pronounced incorrectly. You may use two different color pencils for recording time and errors, or you may use a circle to indicate points on the line for time and an X or a square to indicate points on the line for errors.
3. Between timings, ask the student to look over the selection, reread it, and practice words that caused difficulty in the initial reading. When the student is ready, have him or her reread the same passage. Once again, time the reading, and record the time and number of errors. Have the student repeatedly practice reading the selection as you chart progress after each trial until a predetermined goal is reached or until the student is able to read the passage fluently with few mistakes. Research on repeated reading suggests that fluency can be improved as long as students are provided with specific instructions and procedures are used to monitor their progress (Mastropieri et al., 1999). Word recognition on the passage should be at about 85% the first time through – otherwise the passage is too hard. Keep passages at the same level of difficulty until an acceptable rate of speed and accuracy is reached on the first or second reading. Then move to a harder passage. During one session, students minimally read the same passage at least two times. Research has shown that repeated reading is an effective way for students to develop reading fluency. When reading the same passage over and over, the number of word recognition errors decreases, reading speed increases, and oral reading expression improves. (Samuels, 2002).

Paired Partner Reading

Focus Area: Fluency

Timing: 10-15 minutes

Materials:

- A copy of independent reading material for each student of about 50 words
- Paired Partner Reading form

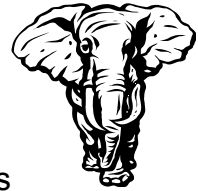
Procedure:

1. Pre-teach students the reading and partner feedback procedures, including:
 - How partners will move to a shared space
 - How partners will sit together?
 - Who will read first? (Stronger reader should read first)
 - What students will say when an error is made: ("Try again," or "That word is...")
 - Examples of praise at the end of each practice ("Good reading," or "Well done," etc.)
 - How to use the Paired Reading form
2. Partners silently read the passage
3. Reader 1 reads the passage 3 times in a row
 - Stopping each time to self-evaluate reading
 - Getting feedback on 2nd/3rd reading from partner
4. Reader 2 reads the passage 3 times in a row
 - Stopping each time to self-evaluate reading
 - Getting feedback on 2nd/3rd reading from partner

I noticed that my partner.

After the 2nd reading After the 3rd reading

Remembered more words



Read faster



Read smoother



Read with expression



Phrasing

Focus Area: Fluency

Timing: 10 minutes

Materials:

- A copy of independent level reading material for each student (independent sentences to begin with – moving to connected text as the technique is mastered)
- Colored pencils or pens for scooping phrases

Procedure:

1. Present simple sentences on an overhead or chart paper and demonstrate scooping the sentence into phrases for smooth fluent reading. Point out that there is more than one correct way to break a sentence into phrases. Teach students to pay attention to mid sentence and ending punctuation.

- “Everything happened just the way Big Eddie said it would.”



- “There was no doubt Bluebell was a star.”



6. Provide students with copies of sentences initially (begin with simple sentences and move to more complex sentences as students become more efficient with phrasing) and then move on to paragraphs. Allow students time to read the sentences silently and to scoop the phrases with a colored pen.
 - There isn't one right or wrong way to scoop the phrases, but there are breakpoints that won't sound fluent. Use this opportunity to point out that prepositions begin phrases.
7. Read the scooped sentences chorally or in pairs 2-3 times each.
8. As students begin to recognize phrases in sentences more easily move away from the colored pen and begin having students read silently and scoop with their fingers or the eraser end of a pencil before reading and practicing smooth fluent reading.

NOTE: Do not use slashmarks to indicate phrases as these can be visually confusing to students and disrupt fluency.

Being Friends

“You said no backsies,” said Frances. “So, I don’t have to tell you. I don’t have to say how much money is in the sugar bowl.”

“Well,” said Thelma, “it is my money, and I want it.”

“Do you want backsies?” said Frances. “Do you want your tea set back and you will give my money back?”

“I can’t,” said Thelma, “because I used the money for a new tea set. There is only a dime left over. I will give you the new tea set and the dime. The new tea set is the china kind you want. It has pictures all in blue.”

“You said they don’t make that kind anymore,” said Frances.

“This one was very hard to find,” said Thelma. “And I think it was the very last one in the store.”

“All right,” said Frances. “Bring it over.”

Thelma brought over the china tea set and the dime, and Frances gave back the plastic tea set. Then Thelma took the lid off the sugar bowl and saw the penny.

“That is not a very nice trick to play on a friend,” said Thelma.

“No,” said Frances, “it is not. And that was not a nice trick you played on me when you sold me your tea set.”

“Well,” said Thelma, “from now on I will have to be careful when I play with you.”

“Being careful is not as much fun as being friends,” said Frances. “Do you want to be careful, or do you want to be friends?”

“I want to be friends,” said Thelma.

“All right,” said Frances. “Then I will give you halfies on the dime.”

Frances and Thelma went to the candy store with the dime. Frances bought bubble gum, and Thelma bought Life Savers. Then they went back to Frances’s house to skip rope. Gloria came out to turn the rope and skip too.

“You and Gloria can skip first,” said Frances to Thelma. “I will go last.” Thelma skipped first, then Gloria. Then Frances skipped, and she sang.

Being Afraid

“And when I did remember,” Grandfather went on, “I had the most awful time making myself wriggle out from under the bed and go looking for my father or my mother to ask them to go out and find Melvin for me.”

“Grandfather!”

“I told you I was afraid. This is a true story you’re hearing so I have to tell the truth.”

“Of course,” said Thomas, admiring his grandfather for telling a truth like that. “Did you find them?”

“I did not. They had gone out someplace for an hour or so, but I’d forgotten. Thomas, fear does strange things to people ... makes them forget everything but how afraid they are. You wouldn’t know about that, of course.”

Thomas stroked his cat and said nothing.

“In any case,” Grandfather went on, “there I was alone and afraid in the kitchen, and there was my poor little dog alone and afraid in the storm.”

“What did you do?” Thomas demanded. “You didn’t leave him out there, did you, Grandfather?”

“Thomas – I put on my raincoat and opened the kitchen door and stepped out on the back porch just as a flash of lightning shook the whole sky and a clap of thunder barreled down and a huge man appeared out of the darkness, holding Melvin in his arms! That man was seven feet tall and had a face like a crack in the ice.”

“Grandfather! You said you were telling me a true story.”

“It’s true, because that’s how he looked to me. He stood there, scowling at me, and said, ‘Son, is this your dog?’ And I nodded, because I was too scared to speak. ‘If you don’t take better care of him, you shouldn’t have him at all,’ said the terrible man. He pushed Melvin at me and stormed off into the dark.”

A Strange Tomato

I wondered if Chester hadn't dreamed the whole thing. He did admit he's fallen asleep and, as I've said, he has quite an imagination. But I was game. After all, there hadn't been any excitement in this place for days. Chester and I took our positions under the kitchen table. We didn't have long to wait.

"Holy cow!" Mr. Monroe yelled as he opened the refrigerator door. He took this funny-looking white thing out of the fridge and held it at arm's length.

"Peter, come down here!"

"What is that?" I whispered.

"Beats me," Chester answered. "It looks like a white tomato."

"Very funny," I said, as Pete came into the kitchen.

"Peter, have you been playing with your chemistry set in here?"

"No, Dad. Why?"

"I thought this might be one of your experiments. Do you know what it is?"

"Gee, Dad, it looks like a white tomato."

Just then, Mrs. Monroe and Toby came in the door.

"What's all the fuss about?" Mrs. Monroe asked.

"We were just trying to figure out what this is."

Toby pulled it down so he could get a better look.

"Well," he said, "it looks to me like a white tomato."

Mr. Monroe took a good long look.

What's Happening

As Chester was being buttoned into his bright yellow sweater (with little purple mice in cowboy hats all over it), Mr. Monroe said, "What about those vegetables? Shall I speak to Tom Cragin?"

"Yes, dear," Mrs. Monroe said, "why don't you? I'm sure there's some explanation. In the meantime, I'll change markets. To tell you the truth, I'm really much more worried about Chester. We'd better keep our eye on him."

Chester and I did not speak until late afternoon. I was busy nursing my neck, and Chester was busy hiding under the sofa, too embarrassed to be seen. When we did speak at last, it was a brief exchange.

"Hey, Chester," I called when he finally crawled out from under, "we don't have to worry about any vampire bunnies anymore. All you have to do is stand outside his cage in that sweater, and he'll laugh himself to death."

Chester was not amused. "That's right, make fun. All of you. No one understands. I tried to warn them, and they wouldn't heed. Now I'm going to take matters into my own hands."

Whereupon, Chester and his sixteen purple mice went into the kitchen for dinner.

That night, I had an uneasy sleep.

A Great Team

Justin looks down at the card. "I'll do the pasting. You do the cursive."

Looking at the gobs of paste, I think "messy." If neatness counts, with me the count hardly gets to one.

Justin, on the other hand, is very neat about pasting things.

My handwriting is much better.

Another example of what a great team we are. We help each other out. We also learn things about the same time, and when one of us learns first, he or she helps the other one out. When I learned to make the "e" go forward, not backward, I taught Justin. He helps me with fractions, which I only half understand. We both whisper words to each other in reading group when we need help – a great team.

Justin keeps pasting.

I keep writing.

We "send" one postcard to Justin's father, who got a new job and has to live alone in Alabama. Justin, Danny, and his mother are staying here, in New Jersey, until their house gets sold.

That's taking a long time.

Secretly, I'm glad.

Sometimes Justin gets a little sad.

I'm not glad about that.

I know how Justin feels about missing his father. When my parents got a divorce, my dad moved far away, to another country, so I never get to see him and he hardly ever calls.

Justin's Trip

I chew on a strand of my hair. "They got back real late last night. It was foggy or something and they couldn't land right away and then they missed a connection or something and they didn't get in until three in the morning. That's what Mrs. Daniels told my mom when we called her this morning. She said that they were going to try to get some sleep."

"Wow. That sounds so exciting," Brandi says. "Their trip, I mean, not the going to sleep part."

"Yea. Exciting," I say, in what my mother calls "Little Ms. Amber's sarcastic voice." Justin got to go on a real plane before I did. Life sure isn't fair some days ... some years.

Mr. Cohen flicks the lights off and on. "Continue working on your China project."

I reach into the desk and pull out half of a peanut butter and M&M sandwich. I made it one day when my mother overslept and asked me to make my own lunch.

When I look at the sandwich, I think about the joke that Justin told me before he went away ... about the person so dumb that he got fired from his job at the M&M factory for throwing away every piece of candy with a "W" on it.

Going to Africa

Then one day when Grace got home from school, she saw a letter on the table with a crocodile stamp on it. Grace knew it must be from Papa, but it wasn't Christmas or her birthday.

"Guess what!" Ma said. "Your papa sent the money for two tickets to visit him in Africa for your spring vacation. Nana says she'll go with you if you want. What do you say?"

But Grace was speechless. She had made up so many fathers for herself, she forgot what the real one was like.

Grace and Nana left for Africa on a very cold gray day. They arrived in the Gambia in golden sunshine like the hottest summer back home. It had been a long, long trip. Grace barely noticed the strange sights and sounds that greeted her. She was thinking of Papa.

I wonder if Papa will still love me? thought Grace. He has other children now, and in stories the youngest is always the favorite. She held tightly to Nana. Outside the airport was a man who looked like Papa's photo. He swung Grace up in his arms and held her close. Grace buried her nose in his shirt and thought, I do remember.

In the car she started to notice how different everything seemed. There were sheep wandering along the roadside and people selling watermelons under the trees.

And when they reached her father's compound, there was the biggest difference of all. A pretty young woman with a little girl and a baby boy came to meet them. Grace said hello, but couldn't manage another word all evening. Everyone thought she was just tired. Except Nana.

"What's the matter, honey?" she asked when they went to bed. "You've got a father and a brother now, and they even have a dog!"

But Grace thought, "They make a storybook family without me."

Different Families

“Seems to me there is enough of you, Grace,” said Nana. “Plenty to go around. And remember, families are what you make them.”

Soon it was their last evening and there was a big farewell party at the compound. Grace and Nana wore their African clothes and Grace ate twice as much benachin as everyone else. “Now you really might burst,” said Nana.

On their last morning Papa took Grace to see some real crocodiles. “This is a special holy place,” he said. “The crocodiles are so tame you can stroke them.”

“Not like the one in Peter Pan!” said Grace.

“No. These are so special, you can make a wish on them,” said Papa.

Grace closed her eyes and made a wish, but she wouldn't say what it was.

Later at the compound, Grace asked Nana, “Why aren't there any stories about families like mine, that don't live together?”

“Well, at least you've stopped thinking that it's your family that's wrong,” said Nana. “Now, until we get back home and find some books about families like yours, you'll just have to make up a new story of your own.”

“I'll do that,” said Grace, “and when we're home again, I'll write it down and send it to Jatou to read to Neneh and Bakary.”

The whole family came to see them off at the airport. Grace was sorry to say goodbye to her new brother and sister and even to her stepmother. But leaving Papa was hardest of all.

Waiting for the plane, Nana asked Grace if she had thought any more about her story.

“Yes, but I can't think of the right ending,” said Grace, “because they are still going on.”

“How about they lived happily ever after?” asked Nana.

“That's a good one,” said Grace. “Or they lived happily ever after, though not all at the same place?”

“Stories are what you make them,” said Nana.

“Just like families,” said Grace.

Special Talents

He was pleased to learn that Chibi knew all the places where the wild grapes and wild potatoes grew. He was amazed to find how much Chibi knew about all the flowers in our class garden. He liked Chibi's black and white drawings and tacked them up on the wall to be admired. He liked Chibi's own handwriting, which no one but Chibi could read, and he tacked that up on the wall. And often he spent time talking with Chibi when no one was around.

But, when Chibi appeared on the stage at the talent show of that year, no one could believe his eyes. "Who is that?" "What can that stupid do up there?"

Until Mr. Isobe announced that Chibi was going to imitate the voices of crows. "Voices?" "Voices of crows?"

First he imitated the voices of newly hatched crows. And he made the mother crow's voice. Then he imitated the father crow's voice. He showed how crows cry early in the morning. He showed how crows cry when the village people have some unhappy accident. He showed how crows call when they are happy and gay. Everybody's mind was taken to the far mountainside from which Chibi probably came to school.

At the end, to imitate a crow in an old tree, Chibi made very special sounds deep down in his throat. Now everybody could imagine exactly the far and lonely place where Chibi lived with his family.

Then Mr. Isobe explained how Chibi had learned those calls – leaving his home for school at dawn, and arriving home at sunset, every day for six long years.

Every one of us cried, thinking how much we had been wrong to Chibi all those long years.

Grandpa's Face

In the summer, Grandpa was an actor, and some Saturday afternoons he and his friend, Ms. Gladys, would take Tamika to the theater to watch him act on the stage, if Mama and Daddy said the play wasn't too grown-up.

The theater was Tamika's favorite place to go. Make-believe things happened there. She would sit in the front row and watch Grandpa turn into another person, changing his face and the way he walked and talked and sang. And even when he turned into somebody else's grandpa, Tamika didn't mind. It looked true and it felt true, but she knew it was just a play, and when it was over and all the actors came out to bow, and bow, and wave, she would clap so hard her hands hurt.

One day, Tamika went to Grandpa's room to ask for a story. She stopped at the door because Grandpa was rehearsing. He had his book in his hand and he was reading his lines aloud. Then he stopped reading and looked into the mirror, slowly changing his face into a face that Tamika had never seen before. It was a hard face. It had a tight mouth and cold, cold eyes. It was a face that could never love her or anyone.

Tamika stood watching, as Grandpa changed his face back and read some more lines from his book. Then she went to her room and sat on the bed. Her stomach was filled with scared places that made her cry. She had not known that Grandpa could look like that, and now that she did know she couldn't be sure he might not someday look at her with that face that could not love.

She got her jigsaw puzzle and played with it quietly until Mama and Daddy had finished cooking dinner.

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Music Class

When her voice began rising again, Charley once more tilted his chair forward. The children sitting near him tilted theirs forward too. When Miss Sturgill reached another exciting part, *bump* went Charlie's chair. *Bump, bump, bump* went the other chairs.

"Charley," said Miss Sturgill, "bring your chair up here and sit beside me."

With Miss Sturgill's hand on the back of his chair, Charley couldn't bump. But the other children could. And Charley could make faces at them. Only one or two were listening to the story. The others were giggling at Charley.

Miss Sturgill sighed. She asked, "How would you like to play 'Bring a comb and play upon it, Marching here we come'?"

The boys and girls had played that game the week before. Noisily they shoved their chairs into a corner.

"Vinnie," said Miss Sturgill, "you may go in front and play on the comb. The rest may march behind you."

Vinnie, pretending she was playing on a comb, tooted a tune and marched in and out among the bookshelves from one end of the library to the other. The other boys and girls stomped noisily behind her. Charley, at the end of the line, was behind the farthest shelf of books when Vinnie reached the story-telling corner.

As he glanced at the books, he wondered why all of them stood on the shelves with their backs turned out. He stood for a minute, looking at them. It seemed to him they ought to have their faces toward people.

"Let's play 'Tippy Toes' next," he heard Miss Sturgill say. "See how quietly you can tiptoe. Lisa Ann, you lead this time."

Off in the story-telling corner, the boys and girls began to tiptoe. They were so quiet Charley could scarcely hear them. He too was quiet as he sat on the floor, and turned the books on the bottom shelf one by one with their faces out.

Visiting Dad

“Hi, Dad,” I said.

“Hi!” my dad said.

“We’re – ” Huey said.

I didn’t trust Huey. I stepped on his foot.

“We’re on a hike,” I said.

“Well, nice of you to stop by,” my father said. “If you want, you can stay awhile and help me.”

“O.K.” we said.

So Huey sorted nuts and bolts. Gloria shined fenders with a rag. I held a new windshield wiper while my dad put it on a car window.

“Nice work, Huey and Julian and Gloria!” my dad said when we were done. And he sent us to the store across the street to buy paper cups and ice cubes and a can of frozen lemonade. We mixed the lemonade in the shop. Then we sat out under the one tree by the side of the driveway and drank all of it.

“Good lemonade!” my father said. “So what are you kids going to do now?”

“Oh, hike!” I said.

“You know,” my father answered, “I’m surprised at you kids picking a hot day like today for a hike. The ground is so hot. On a day like this, frogs wear shoes!”

“They do?” Huey said.

“Especially if they go hiking,” my father said. “Of course, a lot of frogs, on a day like this, would stay home. So I wonder why you kids are hiking.”

Sometimes my father notices too much. Then he gets yellow lights shining in his eyes, asking you to tell the whole truth. That’s when I know to look at my feet.

“Oh,” I said, “we like hiking.”

But Gloria didn’t know any better. She looked into my father’s eyes.

Flat Stanley Has Fun

When Stanley got used to being flat, he enjoyed it. He could go in and out of rooms, even when the door was closed, just by lying down and sliding through the crack at the bottom.

Mr. and Mrs. Lambchop said it was silly, but they were quite proud of him. Arthur got jealous and tried to slide under a door, but just banged his head.

Being flat could also be helpful, Stanley found. He was taking a walk with Mrs. Lambchop one afternoon when her favorite ring fell from her finger. The ring rolled across the sidewalk and down between the bars of a grating that covered a dark, deep shaft. Mrs. Lambchop began to cry.

“I have an idea,” Stanley said.

He took the laces out of his shoes and an extra pair out of his pocket and tied them all together to make one long lace. Then he tied the end of that to the back of his belt and gave the other end to his mother.

“Lower me,” he said, “and I will look for the ring.”

“Thank you, Stanley,” Mrs. Lambchop said. She lowered him between the bars and moved him carefully up and down and from side to side, so that he could search the whole floor of the shaft.

Two policemen came by and stared at Mrs. Lambchop as she stood holding the long lace that ran down through the grating. She pretended not to notice them.

“What’s the matter, lady?” the first policeman asked. “Is your yo-yo stuck?”

“I am not playing with a yo-yo!” Mrs. Lambchop said sharply. “My son is at the other end of this lace, if you must know.”