

Helping Your Child Build Fluency

Repeated Reading

What does it mean to be a fluent reader? It means that the reader is reading accurately, with appropriate speed and expression.

One way to think about becoming a fluent reader is to compare it to learning to ride a bike. When a child learns to ride a bike, he goes from those first days of wobbling along, needing someone to hold onto the bike, to riding cautiously down the sidewalk, to cruising! The child learns to feel comfortable on the bike, can swerve easily to miss something in his way, and can change speed and direction without losing control. Getting to this level of comfort on a bike takes a lot of practice.

Reading works the same way. In reading, as a child learns to recognize more and more words, he begins to read faster. He grows in his ability to figure out unknown words and adds expression in his voice. He can think about how to let his voice communicate the story. Learning to read—just like learning to ride a bike—takes a lot of practice.

Today we're going to talk about a strategy called repeated reading. Choose something for your child to read. Be sure it is not too difficult for him. It might be part of a story, a poem, or a few paragraphs from a library book that interests him. First, ask your child to read through the material and make sure he knows all the words. He may have to ask you about a word or two. Then, ask him to read it out loud to you as you time him. Note the time it takes. Then, ask him to read the same thing again and time him again.

With repeated readings, you will find that your child will recognize words more easily. He will read smoother each time. If your child misses any words, go over those words with him. One part of fluency is being able to read accurately.

Your child will love the challenge that the timing gives him. He will want to try reading the passage again to see if he can do it even faster. Time him reading the same passage three or four times. He should read with an appropriate rate, which means few hesitations or stops. Eventually, his reading should sound natural, like talking.

Another part of reading fluently is reading with expression. You might ask your child how his second or third reading was better. Suggest ways that he can work on phrases or expression and praise him when his expression is good. "These words go together as a phrase...*on the moon* or *during the war...*" or "You used your voice to let me know how excited the boy in the story was."

You may find ways to help your child enjoy repeated reading without timing him. You might suggest that he read something again like a robot would read it or like a baby would read it. He may be willing to read something a second or third time to another family member or friend. Repeated reading is a powerful way to help your child build fluency and overall reading achievement.



This information was produced by the National Center for Family Literacy for use on www.thinkfinity.org, a powerful educational platform supported by the Verizon Foundation. This information may be reproduced for noncommercial purposes without permission.

Copyright © 2007 by the National Center for Family Literacy. Produced by the National Center for Family Literacy, 325 West Main Street, Suite 300, Louisville, KY, 40202-4237.

