

Reading Fluency Handout

What is fluency?

Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression. In order to understand what they read, children must be able to read fluently whether they are reading aloud or silently. When reading aloud, fluent readers read in phrases and add intonation appropriately. Their reading is smooth and has expression (Reading Rockets.org)

Fluent readers:

- Recognise words automatically
- Are able to group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read

Readers who lack fluency:

- Spend much of their time sounding out individual words, making their reading sound more disjointed

Components of fluent reading include:

Speed

This refers to the rate of reading usually determined in words per minute (wpm) or words correct per minute (wcpm). Please see the following table as a guide to the **'expected' level of words correct per minute by the Summer Term** of each year group. Please note that some children may be 'working towards' this level while others may be working at 'greater depth.'

YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
12	60	90	110	133	146	150
WCPM	WCPM	WCPM	WCPM	WCPM	WCPM	WCPM

Accuracy

In word recognition, this focuses on a reader's ability to correctly identify words on the first attempt.

Expression

This is when the reader uses phrasing, tone and pitch so oral reading sounds conversational.

Comprehension

This is when a child understands what is being read and understands that the goal of reading is to instruct meaning.

When all the elements of fluent reading work together, a child has the greatest chance of being able to understand what they read, to learn from reading and to learn about how to read.

One of the best ways to improve fluency is to read a text repeatedly as repeated oral reading enhances word recognition, speed and accuracy. The text should contain words that the children know or can decode easily so they can focus on fluency without spending time on word recognition.

Why is fluency important?

The importance of reading with fluency is widely acknowledged across the literature that informs teaching and learning in schools. The National Curriculum for England makes several mentions of the need for pupils to read fluently; The education inspection framework from Ofsted (2019) asserts that one of the impact measures of the quality of education provided by the school is that learners 'read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension', and the teacher assessment framework at the end of KS1 states that children reading at the expected level at the end of KS1 will be reading approximately 90 words correctly per minute (Collins, 2020).

What will we do at school do to help improve fluency?

- Use a consistent whole school approach to assessing reading fluency that both informs children's next steps as readers and indicates the accuracy of their reading. At Follifoot and Spofforth Federation, we use 'Assess Fluency in Reading' by Collins.
- In early years and KS1, ensure that books are closely matched to the phonics stage that the child is working at so they can apply their phonic knowledge and read more fluently.
- Ensure the children take home books that can be read with 90-94% accuracy as this is classed as 'instructional' and the ideal level of text.
- Encourage children to read their reading books several times to improve their fluency.

What can the children do to help themselves read fluently?

- Track the words with their finger as a parent or teacher reads a passage aloud, then read it themselves.
- Read their favourite books over and over again. Practise getting smoother and reading with expression.
- When a parent reads aloud to them, match their voice to theirs.

What parents can do to help at home?

- Support and encourage your child and listen to them read regularly.
- If your child can decode words well, help them to build their speed and accuracy by reading aloud and having your child match their voice to yours, getting your child to practice the same list of words, phrases or short passages several times and reminding them to pause between sentences and phrases.
- Encourage your child to read their school reading book several times before it is changed. This will not hinder them, it will help them increase their fluency.
- Read aloud to your child to provide an example of how fluent reading sounds.
- When reading for pleasure, encourage your child to read books with predictable vocabulary and clear rhythmic patterns so that children can 'hear' the sound of fluent reading when they read aloud.

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