

READING FLUENCY

Reading fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy and expression. In order to become a confident reader, who reads for meaning and enjoyment, children and teenagers need to be able to read fluently, both silently and out loud.

By reading fluently, written words and sentences make more sense and this in turn increases comprehension or 'understanding'. If sentences make more sense, the child will understand more and therefore, they will become more confident in their reading.

• **WHY IS READING FLUENTLY SO IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CHILD?**

1. It expands their vocabulary.

Your child might come across words they have never heard – prompting them to find out what they mean. As a result, they add it to their vocabulary.

2. It helps build independence and self-confidence.

As they learn that they no longer have to rely on their parents to read things to them, children develop a sense of independence and begin to understand the world on their own.

3. It helps them make sense of the world around them.

Reading helps children understand signs, forms, stickers and labels etc. Being able to read helps them understand what is what, and the purpose it serves.

4. It leads to their future success.

A child must be able to read in order to even progress through school. Reading is essential to following the instructions on a test and being able to even understand or answer questions.

5. It enhances their imagination.

As a child reads, they can begin to imagine what the characters and setting looks like. Firing-up their imagination will help them understand more subjects and also help with writing skills, grammar and comprehension.

6. It entertains them.

Reading can be a completely free hobby and once a child gets used to reading regularly, they become even more confident and happy to tackle more complicated stories as they mature.

Reading is essential to just about everything in life – from cooking to driving to just getting through school. It is important to start at a young age and teach your child the value of reading so they will grow to practice it often and value their ability to do so.

• HOW TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S READING FLUENCY

Sometimes, children say they hate reading. This could be because the words and sentences don't make sense, they can't remember what they have just read or they don't understand what it means. A lack of fluency can make stories disjointed and lead to a great deal of frustration, which often discourages the reader from reading altogether.

Parents may also notice that their children read with no expression in their voice, take a long time to read a paragraph or that they may stumble over words and lose their place. These signs show that help is needed with reading fluency.

Here are a few tips to help you work with your child to help improve their reading fluency.

- KNOW THE SIGNS

Be aware of signs that your child is having problems with fluency. Common signs include reading without expression, stumbling while reading aloud, reading aloud very slowly or at a mixed rate, ignoring punctuation, and moving the mouth while reading silently.

- USE BUDDY READING

The easiest and most effective way to help your child improve their fluency is by sitting down together and reading. Read together every day, even if it's only for a short time (at least 15mins is recommended) so that your child can hear how you read and start to copy that fluency. Take it in turns for a few pages and their confidence will grow much quicker than if they are tackling it on their own.

- SHOW YOUR OWN FLUENT READING

The more often your child hears fluent reading, the more likely they are to pick it up. Read a paragraph or a full page from a book, and then ask your child to read it back to you. If you provide a model to follow, then the child becomes familiar with the story, better understands the pacing, and can mimic you.

When reading aloud to your child, read with expression using different voices, or placing emphasis on words and phrases, and pause at the appropriate times (at commas, full stops, etc.) to demonstrate the cadence of our language.

- USE AUDIO BOOKS

Listening to what a fluent and expressive reader sounds like is important for building fluency. Audio books are a great tool for exposing your child to fluent reading as they allow your child to listen to how others read using expression, emphasis, pause, speed and rhythm.

Audio books are particularly helpful for reluctant readers, and they encourage independent reading as they can listen to the audio while following the text on the

page. Audio books work particularly well in the car or as ‘chill-out’ time in the evenings before bed.

- ECHO READING

While reading together, ask your child to play ‘copycat’. Read one passage at a time and have your child read it back to you, matching your voice and intonation. This provides them with a vocal model of fluent reading that they can emulate.

- TEACH YOUR CHILD TO TRACK WORDS

If you’ve ever learned a new language, you know how difficult it can be to decipher where one word ends and the next begins when listening to a conversation. Your child might feel the same way when they try to follow along during reading time. That’s where tracking — or running your finger under words as you read them — comes in handy. You can track while you’re reading to your child or ask them to track when they’re reading aloud.

When your child touches each word, it helps them see the correlation between spoken and written language. With practice they should be able to tackle larger phrases without reading word by word.

- RE-READ FAVOURITE BOOKS

Re-reading books that are familiar helps build confidence. It doesn't matter how often your child wants to read a certain book; re-reading the books they love is valuable practice for becoming a fluent reader. With each reading, your child will become faster, more confident, and more expressive.

It's also good to incorporate texts that are easy for your child to read. Parents are often concerned with getting their children ahead in reading, but when they're struggling, going back to easier texts can be really helpful as it builds confidence and consolidates their skills so they can expand upon them.

- LEARN TEXTS BY HEART

Learning and reciting short and fun texts, such as song lyrics, nursery rhymes and poems are great for building your child’s confidence and helps them to become familiar with the rhythm of fluent reading.

- FOCUS ON SIGHT WORDS/ HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

You may notice that your child struggles with certain words like “walk” or “house,” also known as sight words. This is because they are words that are not decodable by sounding them out phonetically. They often overlap with high-frequency words, (words that appear very often in texts i.e. the, there, is, when etc.). When your child memorizes what these words look like and can instantly recognize them, they won’t have to spend valuable reading time (and brainpower!) trying to sound them out.

- TRY CHORAL READING TOGETHER

Choral reading simply means you read a story out loud, and ask your child to read along with you at the same pace. This helps them understand what fluent reading feels like and gives them the chance to practice it themselves at your pace. It's OK if you're a tiny bit ahead of them — just be sure to pick a book that they can already read themselves. That way, they're working on pacing and accuracy rather than decoding new words.

- HIT RECORD

Use a tape recorder or voice recording app to create audio books at home. Your child can read a book they love or read aloud an original story they've come up with. You can even take turns reading aloud certain passages. This is a great motivator for your child to perfect their pace, expression, volume, and accuracy.

- TAKE BREAKS

If after a while your child is stumbling a lot, let them rest. Forcing them to continue reading will only increase their frustration. Instead, close the book and acknowledge how hard they are trying. You can also turn back to a page they feel more confident about and invite them to read it again.

- PRACTICE FLUENCY LEVELS (* WPM = words per minute)

Typically, the quicker a child can read, the more accurate and fluent they are. This helps improve comprehension, the ability to infer meaning, and it determines how quickly information is accessed.

You can help your child improve their reading speed by practicing reading within a set time frame, and then work to improve the WPM spoken aloud by the child.

EXAMPLE:

Using the excerpt – ***A Trip to the Zoo*** – you will be able to calculate your child's fluency score. Use a timer to let your child read the text for exactly 60 seconds, then count how many words have been read.

Practice this every day until they reach their age appropriate target (or above), with understanding, per minute. Track their progress so that you can monitor improvements.

YEAR GROUP	WPM TARGET
Transition from P7 – Yr8	90 WPM
End of Key Stage 3 (Yr10)	90 – 120 WPM
End of Key Stage 4 (Yr12)	120-190 WPM
Average adult reading speed	250 WPM

Trip to the Zoo

During the weekend, my Dad offered to take me to the zoo so that I could observe	17
some of my favourite animals. I really do admire and adore elephants so I immediately	32
said, "yes!" and ran off to locate my camera. Camera safely packed, I then returned to	48
my room for some pocket money. If I saw a suitable book about elephants, then I would	65
purchase it to read later. My sister decided to stay at home, maybe I would buy her an	83
appropriate book too. I would probably have just enough money left to grab an ice-cream	99
or a bar of chocolate. I was so excited that I nearly tripped over.	113
"Come on!" shouted Dad. "Let's get a move on!" he grumbled as I tried to get my shoes	131
on. "It will be closing time if we don't get going soon!"	143
Eventually, we jumped into the car and made the journey to the zoo. When we arrived,	159
noticed a big sign ahead of us... "Zoo closed due to escaped elephant." Dad turned	174
around and sighed.	177

WPM Progress Tracker

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
MON								
TUES								
WED								
THUR								
FRI								
WEEKLY AVERAGE								