

Reading Fluency

Highlights

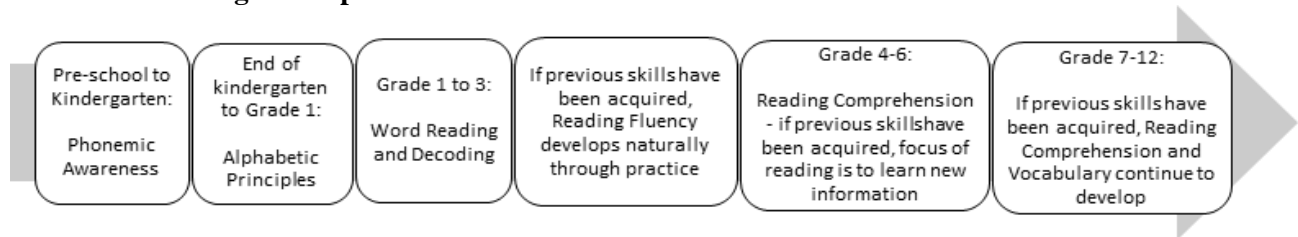
What is this reading skill? Reading Fluency is the ability to read quickly and accurately

When should this skill be developed? Around Grade 4

Why is this skill important for reading? Reading quickly and accurately allows more energy to be spent on understanding the content of what is being read

How can you practice this skill with your child? Modelling or Repeated Reading can be used to build fluency on familiar texts

How Does Reading Develop?



Reading develops in a step-by-step fashion. It begins with Phonemic Awareness, which is the understanding and manipulation of the sounds of the English language (for example, knowing that “dog” has three sounds: ‘d’, ‘o’, ‘g’). The next stage of reading development is Alphabetic Principles (knowing what sound(s) each letter makes). Once a child has a good understanding of sounds and letters, they start to decode unfamiliar words (Decoding refers to the ability to sound out words or non-words) and then recognize familiar words (Word Reading). Reading Fluency is the ability to read passages quickly and accurately, and Reading Comprehension is the ability to understand and remember what has been read. Vocabulary develops naturally as children are exposed to language and reading but can also be explicitly taught if students are falling behind. With the exception of Vocabulary, development of each skill is dependent on the child’s prior skills; for example, a child who does not have a strong understanding of Alphabetic Principles will struggle to decode until earlier skills have fully developed.

Reading Fluency Overview

Reading Fluency is a child’s ability to read quickly (at a conversational rate) and accurately (without making many mistakes). In order to read fluently, a child must have developed prior skills such as word reading and decoding. If reading is fluent, more energy can be focused on understanding the text (comprehension) rather than word reading and decoding. Unlike the earlier reading skills, reading fluency continues to develop over time through practice and exposure to reading rather than explicit instruction. Can your child:

- Read without sounding **choppy**?
- Read without **skipping words**?
- Pronounce words** correctly?

Weaknesses in reading fluency may lead to difficulties in understanding what is being read. Children with difficulties in reading fluency often find reading very effortful, and they take longer to read. They may struggle to finish tests and assignments on time because it takes them longer to read and understand written instructions.

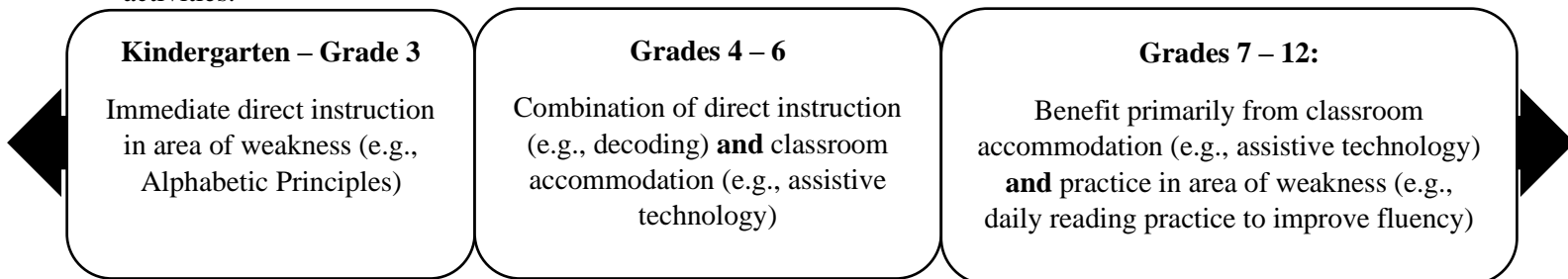
Core Instructional Principles:

Children with weaknesses in Reading Fluency often find that reading is slow and very difficult. Consistent practice with reading will be crucial in their reading development, especially as reading demands increase in school. Continued reading to the child to build vocabulary and content knowledge is valuable, even when the child is working on their own reading fluency. The following activities will help your child develop reading fluency:

1. **Modelled Reading:** Having models (strong students or an adult) read to the student allows them to become familiar with the text before reading it themselves.

- a. Students are paired with a strong student or an adult to read a text together.
 - b. Students should follow along with the text as the model reads aloud.
 - c. The student now reads the text out loud, with the model providing feedback.
2. **Repeated Reading:** Reading a short passage out loud several times until they reach some level of success (speed, few mistakes) allows students to practice reading with texts that become increasingly familiar. Re-reading the same passage allows students to become comfortable and more fluent.
- a. Choose a passage of 50-200 words (start shorter and work up as fluency increases).
 - b. Students should read the passage aloud three times to build fluency.
 - c. Each time they read the passage, they should time themselves and mark their errors (an adult can help with this for younger students) in order to track their progress.

Intervention Timeline: Younger students (K-3) are often able to make significant gains in areas of weakness if direct instruction is provided. As students get older, it becomes more difficult to learn key skills, so a combination of instruction and classroom accommodations is important. As students transition to middle and high school, accommodations become essential. However, accommodations are a **supplement** to remediation, not a replacement. Accommodations are used to bypass word-level reading issues; they will not “fix” the problem or make students better at reading, but additional supports will allow them to be more **independent** in reading activities.



Classroom Accommodations:

- Assistive Technology: text-to-speech software
- Instruction: Peer or adult can read text out loud as a model; materials presented electronically

External Resources for Parents, Teachers, and Schools

- “Fluency” at www.readingrockets.org
- “Fluency: Instructional Guidelines and Student Activities” at www.readingrockets.org
- “Everything You Wanted to Know About Repeated Reading” at www.readingrockets.org