

Using Repeated Reading to Build Fluency

What Is Repeated Reading?

Repeated reading is an evidence-based fluency strategy in which students read the same short passage multiple times with guidance and feedback. Each reading helps students become more accurate, read with greater expression, and increase their reading rate, allowing them to devote more attention to comprehension. Repeated reading is most effective when paired with teacher modeling, corrective feedback, and discussion of meaning rather than simply asking students to reread independently.

Why Use Repeated Reading?

Repeated reading helps students develop:

- Reading accuracy
- Automatic word recognition
- Appropriate reading rate
- Expression and phrasing (prosody)
- Reading confidence
- Stronger comprehension

When students no longer need to devote as much mental effort to decoding individual words, they can focus on understanding what they are reading.

Choosing Texts

Choose passages that are:

- ✓ 100–250 words (depending on grade)
- ✓ At students' grade level
- ✓ Interesting and meaningful
- ✓ Rich enough to support discussion

Possible text sources:

- Decodable passages
- Connected text from classroom reading
- Poetry
- Short nonfiction passages
- Reader's Theater scripts
- Picture book excerpts

Repeated Reading: An Implementation Guide

Step 1: Prepare the Text

Before reading, select a short, engaging passage that students can read with approximately 90-95% accuracy. The text should be challenging enough to promote growth but not so difficult that decoding prevents fluent reading. Build background knowledge if needed, preview unfamiliar vocabulary, and set a purpose for reading.

Step 2: Model Fluent Reading

Read the passage aloud first, modeling accurate word reading, appropriate rate, phrasing, and expression (prosody). Briefly discuss how these elements help listeners understand the text.

Step 3: Practice with Support

Students read the passage aloud individually, with a partner, in small groups, or chorally. Provide immediate corrective feedback as needed, and ask a few brief questions to ensure students understand what they are reading.

Step 4: Reread for Fluency

Students reread the same passage 3–4 times, with each reading focused on a specific aspect of fluency.

- Read 1: Accurate word reading
- Read 2: Smoothness and appropriate rate
- Read 3: Expression and phrasing
- Optional Read 4: Performance reading or partner feedback

While students often become faster with practice, the goal is accurate, expressive reading that supports comprehension, not speed alone.

Step 5: Reflect & Discuss

Ask students:

- What did you notice about your reading today?
- Which words or phrases became easier?
- How did your expression change?
- How did rereading help you better understand the passage?

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Teacher Tips

- Keep practice sessions brief (5-10 minutes).
 - Celebrate growth rather than perfection.
 - Use engaging, meaningful texts.
 - Pair repeated reading with comprehension conversations.
 - Rotate formats (partner, echo, choral, performance) to maintain engagement.
 - Consider recording students as they read so they can listen back, reflect on their fluency, and notice their progress over time.
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