



3rd Grade

Foundational Skills

- Establish a purpose for reading (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions or to be entertained)
 - Monitor own comprehension by adjusting speed to fit the purpose, or by skimming, scanning, reading on or looking back
- Decoding
 - Use letter-sound knowledge and structural analysis to decode words
 - Use knowledge of common word families (e.g., -ite or -ate) and complex word families (e.g., -ould, -ight) to sound out unfamiliar words
- Identify rhyming words with the same or different spelling patterns
- Fluency
 - Read accurately high-frequency sight words; demonstrate a growing stock of sight words
 - Read text using fluid and automatic decoding skills
 - Read passages fluently with changes in tone, voice, timing and expression to demonstrate meaning and comprehension
- Independent reading
 - Use criteria to choose independent reading materials (e.g., personal interest, knowledge of authors and genres or recommendations from others)
 - Independently read books for various purposes (e.g., for enjoyment, for literary experience, to gain information or to perform a task)
- Analyze a set of directions for proper sequencing, clarity and completeness

What Students Need to Know:

- Purposes for reading
 - to be informed (gain information)
 - to follow directions (perform a task)
 - to be entertained (enjoyment)
 - literary experience
- Comprehension monitoring strategies
 - adjusting speed to fit purpose
 - skimming
 - scanning
 - reading on
 - looking back
- Decoding strategies
 - Letter-sound knowledge
 - structural analysis
 - word families
- Rhyming words—same and different spelling patterns
- High-frequency sight words
- Fluency strategies
 - tone
 - voice
 - timing
 - expression
- Independent reading
 - text choice criteria
 - personal interest
 - knowledge of authors and genres
 - recommendations from others
- Directions
 - proper sequencing
 - clarity
 - completeness

What Students Need to be Able to Do:

- Establish (purpose for reading)
- Read (books for various purposes)
- Monitor (comprehension)
- Decoding
 - Use (letter-sound knowledge and structural analysis)
 - Use (knowledge of common word families)
- Identify (rhyming words—same or different spelling patterns)
- Fluency
 - Read (high-frequency sight words)
 - Demonstrate (growing stock of sight words)
 - Read (text using fluid and automatic decoding skills)
 - Read (passages fluently)
- Independent reading
 - Use (criteria to choose reading materials)
- Analyze (directions)

Important Vocabulary

fluency—the act of reading easily, smoothly and automatically with a rate appropriate for the text, indicating that students understand meaning

high-frequency word—a word that appears many more times than most other words in spoken or written language

skim and scan—to examine or read something quickly, but selectively, for a particular purpose

word families—Groups of words with clear relationships (e.g., specify, specifies, and specification)

MINI-LESSONS FOR TEACHING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Reading for different reasons – author’s purpose (more than one lesson)

- non-fiction – inform us
- how-to manuals – instruct us
- literature – pleasure, move us, amuse us, make us think
- poetry – pleasure, move us, amuse us, make us think
- newspapers and magazines – persuade us

Reading with expression

Look for

- periods, commas, question marks, exclamation points, large print, bold print, italicized print, quotation marks
- do the punctuation with visual acts:
 - period – hold hand up to stop
 - exclamation point – bring fist down on other hand
 - question mark – curve finger and hold by ear
 - dialogue – take two fingers and hold by mouth

How rereading helps

Do this to help illustrate how rereading helps:

- use a web
- have students read for 2 minutes, close books
- write down everything they remember
- read again for 2 minutes
- add to what was written the first time
- repeat

When Comprehension Breaks Down

- Boys and Girls, what do you do when you don’t understand what you are reading? Good readers know when they are understanding and when they are not understanding.
- How do you know when you are not understanding?
 - When things don’t sound right.
 - I feel lost about the story.
 - I stop to think about the story, and can’t recall any of it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY—FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Poetry Books for Repeated and Phrased Readings

- *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*, selected by Jack Prelutsky (Random House, 2000).
- *Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child's Book of Poems*, selected by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers, Eva Moore, Mary M. White, and Jan Carr (Scholastic, 1988).
- *Treasure Chest of Poetry*, by Bill Martin, Jr., with John Archambault and Peggy Brogan (DLM Teaching Resources, 1986).

The 20th Century Children's Poetry Treasury, selected by Jack Prelutsky (Knopf, 1999).

Books for Reader's Theater

- *A Reader's Theatre Treasury of Stories*, by Win Braun (Braun & Braun, 2000).
 - *Presenting Reader's Theatre*, by Caroline Feller Bauer (H.W. Wilson, 1991).
 - *Reader's Theatre for Beginning Readers*, by Suzanne I. Barchers (Teachers Ideas Press, 1993).
- The Best of Reader's Theatre*, Vols. I and II, by Lisa Blau (One From the Heart Publications, 2000).



Suggested
Strategies for
Foundational
Skills

MODEL FLUENT READING

In order to read fluently, students must first hear and understand what fluent reading sounds like. From there, they will be more likely to transfer those experiences into their own reading. The most powerful way for you to help your students is to read aloud to them, often and with great expression. Choose selections carefully. Expose them to a wide variety of genres including poetry, excerpts from speeches, and folk and fairy tales with rich, lyrical language — texts that will spark your students' interests and draw them into the reading experience.

Following a read-aloud session, ask your students: "After listening to how I read, can you tell me what I did that is like what good readers do?" Encourage students to share their thoughts. Also, ask your students to think about how a fluent reader keeps the listener engaged.

REPEATED READINGS

In their landmark book, *Classrooms That Work* (Addison-Wesley, 1998), Patricia Cunningham and Richard Allington stress the importance (and I agree) of repeated readings as a way to help students recognize high-frequency words more easily, thereby strengthening their ease of reading. Having students practice reading by rereading short passages aloud is one of the best ways I know of to promote fluency.

For example, choose a short poem to begin with, preferably one that fits into your current unit of study, and transpose it onto an overhead transparency. Make a copy of the poem for each student. Read the poem aloud several times while your students listen and follow along. Take a moment to discuss your reading behaviors such as phrasing (i.e. the ability to read several words together in one breath), rate (the speed at which we read), and intonation (the emphasis we give to particular words or phrases).

Next, ask your students to engage in an "echo reading," in which you read a line and all the students repeat the line back to you. Following the echo reading, have students read the entire poem together as a "choral read." You will find that doing group readings like these can be effective strategies for promoting fluency because all students are actively engaged. As such, they may be less apprehensive about making a mistake because they are part of a community of readers, rather than standing alone.

PROMOTE FLUENT READING

Fluency involves reading phrases seamlessly, as opposed to word by word. To help students read phrases better, begin with a terrific poem. Two of my students' favorites are "Something Told the Wild Geese" by Rachel Field, and "Noodles" by Janet Wong. (See resource box below.)

After selecting a poem, write its lines onto sentence strips, which serve as cue cards, to show students how good readers cluster portions of text rather than saying each word separately. Hold up strips one at a time and have students read the phrases together. Reinforce phrased reading by using the same poem in guided reading and pointing to passages you read as a class.

ENLIST THE HELP OF TUTORS

Provide support for your nonfluent readers by asking tutors – instructional aides, parent volunteers, or older students – to help. The tutor and the student can read a preselected text aloud simultaneously. By offering positive feedback when the reader reads well, and by rereading passages when he or she struggles, the tutor provides a helpful kind of one-on-one support. The sessions can be short – 15 minutes at most. Plus, if you provide tutors with the text that you plan to use in an upcoming group lesson, you can give your nonfluent readers a jump start prior to the next lesson.

READERS' THEATRE

Because reader's theater is an oral performance of a script, it is one of the best ways to promote fluency. In the exercise, meaning is conveyed through expression and intonation. The focus thus becomes interpreting the script rather than memorizing it.

Getting started is easy. Simply give each student a copy of the script, and read it aloud as you would any other piece of literature. (See the resource box, below, for script sources.) After your read-aloud, do an echo read and a choral read of the script to involve the entire class. Once the class has had enough practice, choose students to read the various parts. Put together a few simple props and costumes, and invite other classes to attend the performance.

For the presentation, have readers stand, or sit on stools, in front of the room and face the audience. Position them in order of each character's importance. Encourage students to make eye contact with the audience and one another before they read. Once they start, they should hold their scripts at chest level to avoid hiding their faces, and look out at the audience periodically.

After the performance, have students state their names and the part that they read. You might also want to videotape the performance so that you can review it with students later. In doing so, you will show them that they are, indeed, fluent readers.