

WORKBOOK

Building Fluent Readers (Part 1)



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Fluency is the bridge between students' decoding of connected text and determining meaning. Designed for K-8 teachers, reading specialists, instructional coaches, and principals, this six-hour offering provides time to understand how fluency fits into the day, learn instructional practices aligned to reading science, and learn how to increase student fluency with content knowledge to build reading comprehension. These practices will help improve your students' fluency in word reading, passage reading, and reading comprehension, and advance your pedagogical content knowledge to help all students learn.

Key questions

- What is reading fluency?
- How can students build fluency in word reading?
- How can students build fluency in text reading?

Growth path

- I can teach students the importance of fluent reading.
- I can teach students how to build fluency in word reading.
- I can teach students how to build fluency in text reading.

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[NWEA® Literacy PL Glossary](#)

Access our comprehensive literacy glossary to find definitions of key terms and concepts used in our professional learning offerings.

Activation

Defining reading fluency

Directions: Based on your prior knowledge, list one idea or word about reading fluency in the following spaces.

Directions: Arrange your ideas or words about reading fluency into groups in the following spaces.

Directions: Using your groups of ideas, write a sentence that defines reading fluency.

Reading fluency essentials







What is reading fluency?

Why fluency matters

Directions: How have you seen inaccurate decoding impact your students in the classroom?

The instructional hierarchy

Directions: What opportunities to learn might students need as they develop reading fluency?

I N S T R U C T I O N A L H I E R A R C H Y			
S T U D E N T	 Acquisition - Accurate - Fluent	 Fluency + Accurate - Fluent	 Generalization + Accurate + Fluent
T E A C H E R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling, think alouds, worked examples • Blocked practice • Detailed feedback • Opportunities for support and reinforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent reinforcement • Spaced practice • Delayed feedback • Opportunities for engagement and interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaling back of scaffolds • Interleaved practice • Corrective feedback for problem solving • Opportunities for independence 

Defining our key terms

Directions: Using the drop-down boxes, define our key terms: fluency, text reading fluency, and oral reading fluency.

The ability to perform a behavior correctly, quickly, and with minimal effort

The ability to read with automaticity (including rate and accuracy) and prosody

An assessment that consists of a grade-level passage in which students are given one minute to read as many words as possible, while the teacher measures accuracy and rate

Reading comprehension

Word recognition

Language comprehension

Alphabetic coding skill

Background knowledge and inferencing skills

Linguistic knowledge

Concepts about print

Knowledge of the alphabetic principle

Letter knowledge

Phonemic awareness

Phonological knowledge

Semantic knowledge

Syntactic knowledge

The simple view of reading

Directions: Recall what you know about the simple view of reading and the cognitive foundations framework and respond to the following prompt.

How do these models from reading research help you think about early literacy instruction?

Fluency is a bridge

“It may be helpful to think of reading fluency as a bridge between the two major components of reading—word decoding and comprehension. At one end of this bridge [reading] fluency connects to accuracy and automaticity in decoding. At the other end, [reading] fluency connects to comprehension through prosody, or expressive interpretation.” —Timothy V. Rasinski¹

Directions: Create three analogies about the components of reading fluency.

Accuracy

Rate

Prosody

The roadmap to proficient reading

Directions: [Click here](#) to visit Dr. Spear-Swerling’s graphic showing the roadmap to proficient reading. Using the drop-down boxes below, match each description to the corresponding phase of reading: visual-cue word recognition, phonetic-cue word recognition, controlled word recognition, automatic word recognition, strategic reading, and highly proficient reading.

Readers have some knowledge of letter sounds. However, because they only have a rudimentary understanding of letter-sound relationships, they may over rely on context or pictures to decode words.

Students in this phase often integrate multiple informational texts to understand complex topics, draw from a large bank of background knowledge to understand new information, and routinely use high-order comprehension strategies, such as reading critically to understand deeper meanings and literary themes.

In this phase, readers recognize most common words effortlessly and automatically, and use larger chunks, like syllabic or morphemic units, to decode unknown words. Most mental effort now is expended toward comprehension rather than word recognition.

Students do not yet grasp the alphabetic principle—the principle that letters represent sounds in spoken words—and do not have knowledge of letter-sound correspondences.

Children in this phase know many letter-sound relationships; however, they must expend great energy to decode longer words. They have well-developed phonemic awareness; however, they do not yet have knowledge of most syllable patterns or morphemic units.

In this phase, children use most mental effort toward understanding what they are reading rather than on word recognition. They use many reading comprehension strategies, such as monitoring their comprehension and looking for familiar clues for unfamiliar vocabulary and using context and morpheme units to better understand an unknown word or phrase in the text.

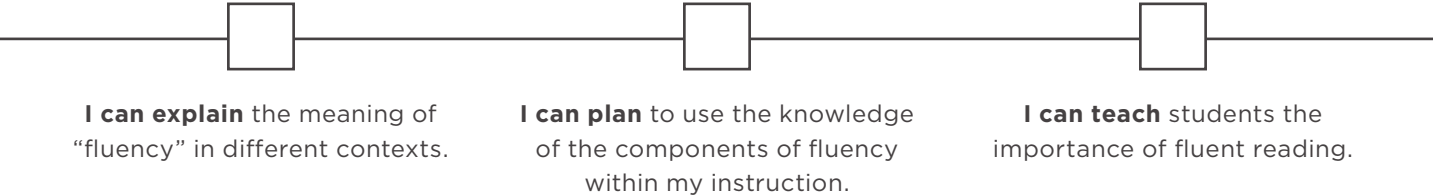
Revisiting fluency as a bridge

Directions: How do accuracy and rate help bridge word recognition and comprehension? Use the terms “knowledge,” “prosody,” and “working memory” in your response.

Reflecting on the learning and your growth

What is reading fluency?

What might be some next steps in my growth path?



Word reading fluency instruction

How can students build fluency in word reading?

Word reading fluency

“Slow word reading is . . . debilitating because it consumes working memory and, therefore, prevents the individual from thinking about the text while reading. Slow word reading clogs working memory with the processing of word-level reading so as to prevent understanding at the content level. Thus, both rapid reading of high-frequency words and rapid decoding as a means to enhance text understanding appear critical for typical reading development.”

—David J. Chard, Sharon Vaughn, and Brenda-Jean Tyler²

Directions: After reading the quote, reflect on the following questions.

How does word reading fluency impact reading comprehension? What implications might this have for your students?

A road map to proficient reading

Directions: [Click here](#) to visit Dr. Spear-Swerling’s graphic showing the roadmap to proficient reading. After reviewing the first two phases, work to describe a student in each of the first two phases: visual-cue word recognition and phonetic-cue word recognition. What can they do? What are their needs? What would it look like if their needs are met successfully?

PHASE	STRENGTHS	NEEDS	DESIRED OUTCOME
Visual-cue word recognition			
Phonetic-cue word recognition			

More distributed practice opportunities

Directions: Take a moment to reflect on the three activities listed and share how you might include them in your literacy block.

ACTIVITY	FLASHCARDS	LETTER OR WORD RINGS	DOOR PASSEYS
Preparation	<p>Create flashcards of previously learned graphemes or irregular words.</p> <p>Shuffle the cards each day.</p>	<p>Index cards and binder rings are available for use.</p>	<p>On the index cards, write a grapheme or irregular word.</p>
Protocol	<p>During visual drill, teacher shows card, students read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If students give an incorrect answer, say the sound or word and ask students to repeat it. <p>During auditory drill, teacher says sound or word, students spell on dry erase board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If students spell an answer incorrectly, show the card and ask students to correct it on their board. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pair students at similar instructional levels 2. Teacher or student writes new grapheme or irregular word on card to add to their personal ring after lesson introduction 3. Partners quiz each other 2-3 times per day 4. Teacher assesses/removes mastered cards every 2 weeks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add 1-3 index cards of target graphemes or irregular words to inside and/or outside of classroom door frames 2. Teach students to “whisper the password” as they enter or exit the room 3. Change out cards every 2-3 days
Reflection			

Explore student center activities

Directions: Review the sample student center activities linked here and select one activity to analyze in the organizer. After identifying the activity and source, summarize the purpose, student actions, and teacher actions. Prepare to share with a small group and discuss how you might use the activity in your setting.

[FCRR \(SCAs link/videos\)](#)

[UFLI \(roll and read\)](#)

Activity title

Link

Purpose

Instructional need

Student actions

Teacher actions

How might you use some of these student center activities in your classroom?

Building fluency with rapid recognition charts

Directions: Use the rapid recognition chart to participate in the demonstration.

ch	sh	wh	tch	ph
sh	ch	tch	ph	wh
tch	sh	ph	wh	ch
wh	ph	ch	sh	tch
tch	wh	ph	ch	sh

Directions: Use the following chart to review and build fluency with the following target irregular words: said, one, there, where, and here. You can also use [this chart generator resource](#) [note: clicking link downloads Excel® spreadsheet] to generate a rapid recognition chart. Once complete, practice these steps with a partner.

Rapid recognition chart student protocol:

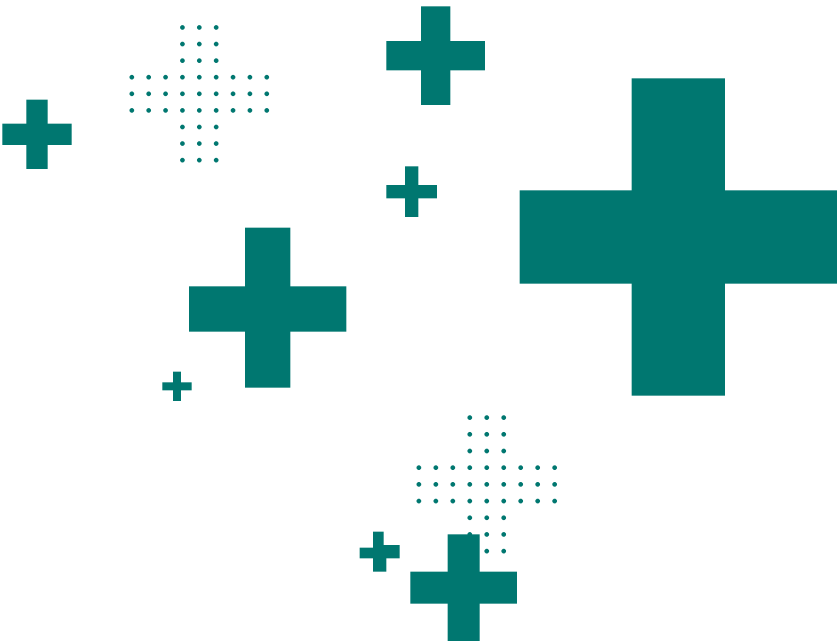
1. Place your finger on the first box and start the timer.
2. Say the sound or word in each space in the first row, then move to the following rows.
3. Stop the timer and record the time.
4. Repeat steps 1–3 and compare times.
5. Discuss growth and future goals.

How might you use this activity with students to build fluency in your classroom?

Reflecting on the learning and your growth

How can students build fluency in word reading?

What might be some next steps in my growth path?



Text reading fluency instruction

How can students build fluency in text reading?

The road map to proficient reading

Directions: [Click here](#) to visit Dr. Spear-Swerling's graphic showing the roadmap to proficient reading. After reviewing the first two phases, work to describe a student in each of the first two phases: consolidated word recognition and automatic word recognition. What can they do? What are their needs? What would it look like if their needs are met successfully?

PHASE	STRENGTHS	NEEDS	DESIRED OUTCOME
Consolidated word recognition			
Automatic word recognition			

Practice paired with instruction

Directions: Reflect on your current practices. Do you explicitly teach text reading fluency? How do you teach text reading fluency across the school year? Do students have opportunities for intentional fluency practice aligned with instruction?

Supported cloze protocol

Directions: In a group of three, you will practice the supported cloze protocol with the following paragraph.

1. The teacher models reading the paragraph fluently (with accuracy, rate, and expression).
2. Partners re-read the paragraph, taking turns reading every other word.
3. Partners take turns re-reading the entire paragraph on their own.

“If only Mom and Dad would forget about school pictures this year. Fat chance. Maybe Judy could pretend the dog ate them! Too bad the Moodys didn’t have a dog. Only Mouse the cat. She could say that an evil school-picture bandit erased them from the master computer. Hardly.”³

How does this activity support both word reading and text reading?

Reader's Theater

Directions: Using the sample text [“The Lion & the Mouse,”](#) identify opportunities to extend Reader's Theater.

DOMAINS	WHAT POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS TO CLASSROOM OBJECTIVES MIGHT BE POSSIBLE?
Word recognition	
Vocabulary	
Fluency	
Grammar	
Comprehension strategies	
Writing	

Partner reading with paragraph shrinking

Directions: With a partner, apply the partner reading with paragraph-shrinking protocol to the sample text, “A Cool Eyeful.”

1. Partner 1 (the more proficient reader) will read while partner 2 error corrects.
2. Partner 2 re-reads the same text while partner 1 error corrects.
3. Partner 2 will retell what was read in their own words.
4. Partner 1 will continue where Partner 2 left off. Partner 1 will continue reading but after each paragraph, Partner 1 will summarize the main point into a gist statement of about 10 words.
5. Partner 2 will continue reading and paragraph shrinking where Partner 1 left off. After each paragraph, Partner 2 will summarize the main point into a gist statement of about 10 words.

A Cool Eyeful⁴

Your senses provide your brain with information. A sensation against the skin of your fingers activates your sense of touch. An aroma enters your nose and activates your sense of smell. Food in your mouth activates your sense of taste, and sound waves in your ears activate your hearing. And light waves entering your eyes activate your sense of sight.

You have one lens in each eye. That transparent lens takes the light entering through the pupil and focuses it onto the retina, at the back of the eye. Can you imagine what you would see if you had thousands of lenses in each eye?

Some animals, such as flies and crabs, have what are called “compound eyes.” A compound eye has hundreds

or thousands of lenses in it. (An eye with just one lens in it is called a “simple eye.”) Dragonflies have compound eyes containing tens of thousands of lenses.

Animals with compound eyes are good at sensing movement and seeing in nearly all directions at once. This is a useful advantage for spotting predators. Even those that approach from behind are visible. That’s why, as you might know, it’s so hard to catch a fly!

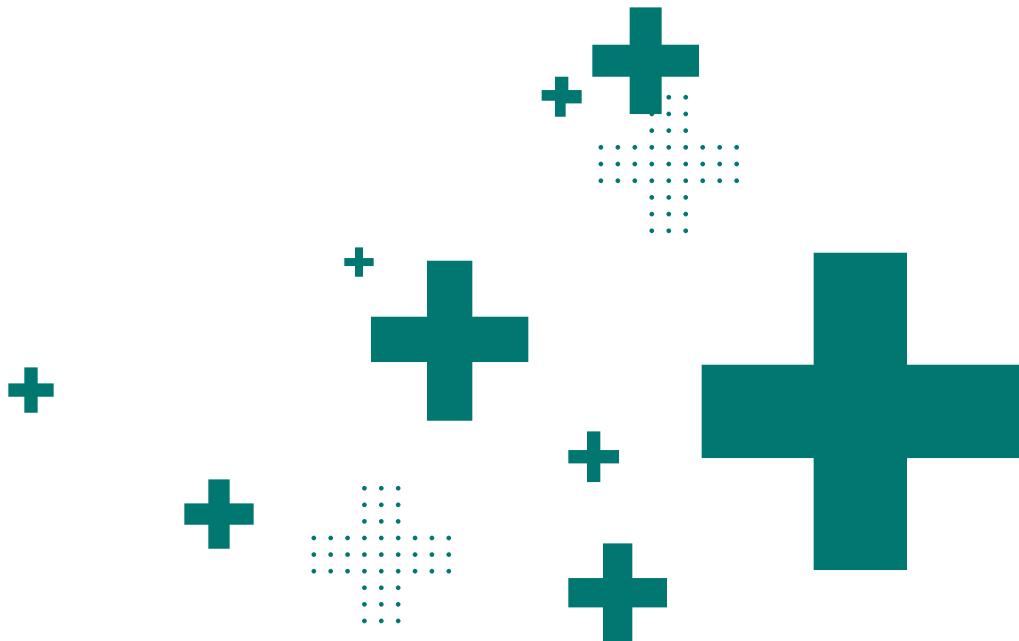
A group of engineers has invented a camera that mimics a compound eye. They put only 180 lenses in it, and it can’t “see” in all directions. But this tool gives us some clue about what the world looks like to animals that have compound eyes. That’s a pretty cool eyeful!

How does this activity support both fluency and comprehension?

Reflecting on the learning and your growth

How can students build fluency in passage reading?

What might be some next steps in my growth path?



Additional resources

- [4 Simple Ways to Apply the Science of Reading to Your Classroom](#)
- [Blank board game template](#)
- [IRIS Center: Paragraph Shrinking](#)
- [Partner Reading: An Evidence-Based Practice—Teacher’s Guide](#)
- [Rapid Recognition Chart Generator](#) (Excel document)
- [Reader’s Theater resources from the Library of Congress](#)
- [Reader’s Theater resources from the University of Iowa Reading Research Center](#)
- [Valuing Funds of Knowledge and Translanguaging in Emergent Bilingual Students](#)

Endnotes

1. Timothy V. Rasinski, *Assessing Reading Fluency* (Honolulu, HI: Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, 2004), 3, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED483166.pdf>.
2. David J. Chard, Sharon Vaughn, and Brenda-Jean Tyler, “A Synthesis of Research on Effective Interventions for Building Reading Fluency with Elementary Students with Learning Disabilities,” *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, Vol. 35, Iss. 5, (2002): 386, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ653721>.
3. Megan McDonald, *Judy Moody, Mood Martian* (Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2014), 3.
4. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, “A Cool Eyeful.”

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