

# Techniques for Engaging Students in Oral Reading

Oral reading fosters fluency. Students need to hear model language in order to acquire it. Listening to good oral reading and participating in repeated reading strengthens accuracy, reading rate, and expression—the fundamentals of fluency. Here are a few ways to engage students in oral reading.

## Oral Preview

Oral preview involves having students hear how the text should sound when it is read fluently, before they attempt to read it themselves. This strategy is especially helpful for students who are English Language Learners or who need more support. It is used in conjunction with other strategies and is the basis of every lesson in this book.

## Repeated Reading

Repeated reading gives students a chance to “get to know” the text before being asked to read it aloud. The opportunity to practice increases both willingness and proficiency with regard to oral reading. This technique is highly recommended for students as they do the lessons in this book.

## Paired Reading

This strategy involves two readers sharing the presentation of the text. Paired reading can include two students, a student and an adult, a student and an older student, or a student and a teacher. In its best form, paired reading involves a more proficient reader paired with a less proficient one, so that the stronger one can support the other.

## Call and Response/Refrain

Call and response is a type of choral reading. One student reads a portion of a text and then the class or a small group responds by reading the next portion in unison. When the response portion is a repetition of the same text, it is called a refrain.

## Divided Reading

In this version of choral reading, assigned sections of the text are read by groups of students.

## Reader’s Theater

In reader’s theater, the text is read like a script. It is like a play, but with some important differences. Although the students practice for the “performance,” they read, rather than memorize, their lines. Students may use simple props, but there are no costumes, sets, or “action.” The script may have a few parts, many parts, and even parts that are read by all participants.

# A Three-Component Rubric for Assessing Fluency

## Assessing Fluency

At first, one might think that assessing fluency might only produce vague, subjective descriptions, such as “he reads well,” “she reads with no expression,” and so on. The goal is for students to become fluent, but fluency is not measurable by objective standards. Although fluency can’t be measured with a right or wrong score, it can be assessed more accurately by using the rubric below.

Score	Accuracy	Rate (Pace)	Expression	
			Structural paraphrasing, pausing. smoothness, pitch, volume	Interpretive mood, purpose, emotion, subtleties of meaning
4	Recognizes most words and reads them correctly without hesitation.	Consistently reads at natural, conversational pace, or as appropriate for the text.	Reads smoothly. Consistently uses meaningful phrasing and appropriate pausing. Adjusts pitch and volume to the circumstances (type of text or audience).	Recognizes different purposes for reading. Consistently conveys the appropriate mood and emotion. Distinguishes word meanings in context.
3	Recognizes pre-taught and familiar words and reads them correctly. May hesitate, but can use context and apply word attack skills.	Sometimes reads at a conversational pace, but is inconsistent. May speed up and slow down or generally read at a slightly slower pace.	Reads smoothly in general, but with some breaks or misuse of pausing. Is aware of pitch and volume.	Reads most text with emphasis appropriate for the purpose and mood of the text. May at times slip into concentrating on pronunciation, but will usually recover and resume once past the problematic area.
2	Recognizes and reads some words correctly, but hesitates. Has some difficulty using context clues and applying word attack skills.	Reads somewhat slower than appropriate for text. May have stops and starts or have to go back and reread.	Reads unevenly. May miss punctuation clues resulting in chopiness or run-on reading. Does not generally attend to pitch and volume.	May use natural-sounding language at times, but, in general, frequently resorts to focusing on word-by-word pronunciation without regard for the mood, purpose, or intended meaning.
1	Misreads words frequently. May not recognize words in different contexts. Is not adept at applying word attack skills.	Reading is slow and laborious. Frequently hesitates, stops, or goes back to “start over.”	Does not usually read in meaningful units, such as phrases or clauses. May read word-for-word with little attention to context or punctuation signals.	Reading is generally monotone and lacks a sense of awareness of mood, purpose, or emotion. May not recognize word meanings in context.

Throughout this book, fluency is described as the ability to read with accuracy, with expression, and at a good pace. Note in the chart above that expression has been subdivided. For the purposes of evaluation and scoring, it may be useful to rate expression based on structural factors and interpretation separately. To record a single expression score, combine the two subcategory scores.

Possible scores range from **4** (lowest) to **16** (highest). Generally, a total score of **8** or above suggests that a student is progressing in fluency. A score below **8** may indicate that fluency is a concern.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Phrases

Read these phrases to yourself as you listen to them being read aloud.

toward a <u>balanced</u> future	to go to <u>college</u>	<u>bending</u> my ear
don't <u>forget</u>	the <u>telephone</u> rang	<u>satellites</u> into <u>orbit</u>
down the <u>highway</u>	<u>rhyme</u> or reason	someone with <u>principles</u>
get out and <u>vote</u>	to <u>vote</u>	education and <u>health</u> care

Could you read every word? If not, repeat reading and listening until you can. Then, try reading the phrases on your own without listening.

## Story

Read the story to yourself as you listen to it being read aloud. Repeat reading and listening until you know every word.

Just before dinner, **the telephone rang**.

"Will you get that, Randi? I'm up to my neck in dishes," said Mom.

I picked up the phone and said hello politely. The voice on the other end, though, just ignored me and started talking. I didn't want to be rude, so I just listened.

"Who isn't concerned about the future?" he said. Then without stopping, he continued. "What about spending? Is putting **satellites into orbit** more important than **education and health care**? You don't think so, do you?"

I tried to get a word in edgewise, but he just kept going.

"Shouldn't every young person have the chance **to go to college**? And **don't forget** about our older folks."

I couldn't make **rhyme or reason** of what this guy was going on about. Didn't he realize that I was just a kid?

"Wait! I'm just a..." I tried to say, but he wouldn't stop even long enough to let me finish a sentence.

"You need **someone with principles**," he declared. "Someone who will lead this country **down the highway toward a balanced future**. You need Mark Jackson."

"Huh?" I thought. "What is this guy **bending my ear** about?"

"You need Mark Jackson," he repeated. "So, on November 5, **get out and vote!** But, be sure **to vote** for Mark Jackson." Then without even a good-bye, the line went silent.

Mom called from the kitchen. "Who was it, Randi?"

By this time I had realized why the guy on the line didn't let me talk back. It was a recording! I felt kind of silly, so I responded to Mom by saying, "It was just Mark Jackson. He wants you **to vote** for him."

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## On Your Own

Sometimes phrases don't really mean what the actual words say. For example, if you read "the time flew by," you know that it doesn't mean a clock with wings flies past! It means the time passed quickly. Look at these phrases. Write what you think they really mean.

1. When I dance, I *have two left feet*. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I was right and my brother had to *eat his words*. \_\_\_\_\_
3. When I heard the news, I *hit the ceiling*. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I can read music, but I also can *play by ear*. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Let me *give you a hand* with that. \_\_\_\_\_

## Story Questions

 Main Idea, Cause & Effect, Vocabulary, Critical Thinking

Think about the story you listened to and practiced on page 33. Now, find out how well you understood it! Answer the questions below. You may need to go back and read the story again.

1. Which of these would be the best title for this story?  
A. One-Way Conversation                      C. Wait! I'm Just a . . .  
B. Mark Jackson                                D. Vote for Me!
2. Randi stayed on the phone to the end. Which reason best tells why Randi didn't hang up?  
A. It is not polite to hang up on someone.  
B. Randi thought the man was talking to him.  
C. Randi wanted to answer the man's questions.  
D. Randi was waiting to see if the man would ask to speak to someone else.
3. What is the meaning of the word *principle* as it is used in the story?  
A. the head of a school  
B. the main or most important  
C. the source of something  
D. moral value
4. At the end of the story, Randi figures out that the phone call was a recording. Which word best describes how Randi felt then: *puzzled*, *concerned*, *panicked*, *embarrassed*, or *angry*? Write your choice and then explain what in the story made you choose it.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Reading with Expression—Figures of Speech

It's hard enough to have to learn and understand the meanings of many words and phrases. But, on top of that, we use many expressions that don't even mean what the words say! For example, if you read in a story that someone is *pulling your leg*, it has nothing to do with a leg or pulling. It really means that someone is kidding or fooling you. If someone *cracks up*, it really means that someone is laughing. These expressions are called **figures of speech**.

Sometimes these figures of speech are funny if you take them to mean exactly what they say. Can you picture someone actually bending your ear or a country being led down the highway? So, in the story when Mom says, "*Will you get that, Randi? I'm up to my neck in dishes*," she doesn't mean that she is standing in a pile of dishes as high as her neck! What she means, of course, is that she is busy doing the dishes.

Figures of speech are used to make our stories—told or written—more interesting and dramatic. In the story, having Mom say, "I'm up to my neck in dishes," is more interesting than "I'm busy."

When you are reading, it is important to recognize the real meaning of the message—not just the actual words. Then, instead of reading like a robot, you can use your voice to make the story come alive. Of course, a story can't really come alive. That is just a figure of speech!

### Try It!

Now, try recognizing and reading figures of speech with expression. First, look at each sentence. The **bold** part is a figure of speech. Write what it really means. Then, practice reading it out loud in a way that shows its meaning.

1. I tried to **get a word in edgewise**, but he just kept going.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. I couldn't **make rhyme or reason** of what this guy was going on about.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. You need someone who will **lead this country down the highway** toward a balanced future.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is this guy **bending my ear** about?  
\_\_\_\_\_



The next time you read this or another story, look for phrases that don't mean what the words actually say. Think about what the phrase really means and then read it with expression that shows its real meaning. Don't read like a robot—make whatever you read come alive!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Fluency Checkpoint

You have already listened to, practiced, and read the story below. Now it's time to check your reading fluency. Remember, fluency means not just getting the words right, but also reading at a good rate and with expression, or feeling. Reread the story again, as if you were rehearsing it for a performance. Repeat this as many times as necessary so that you can read it fluently.

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## Evaluation

Try something a little different! Read the story again. Pick three different "voices" to use—Mom, Randi, and Mark Jackson. Read the story aloud to someone at home using a different voice for each part.

How did you do? \_\_\_\_\_

Wasn't it more fun to read this way? \_\_\_\_\_

Which "part" did you enjoy most? \_\_\_\_\_