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# Introduction

Learning to read is a systematic, learned process. Once students can read individual words, they need to learn to put those words together to form sentences. Then, students must learn to read those sentences fluently to comprehend not only the meaning of each word but also the meaning of an entire sentence. Students' reading fluency develops as they learn to break sentences into phrases and to "chunk" words together into phrases as they read. As students read sentences in phrases, they develop better comprehension of each sentence's meaning.

Use the lessons in *Developing Reading Fluency* to meet district, state, and national reading standards as you teach students how to develop reading fluency. The first four sections are arranged sequentially to help you implement fluency modeling, fluency practice by students, and then students' application of fluency strategies. Use the activities to help students build upon the skills they learned in the previous section. The final two sections of the book contain additional instruction to provide intervention for students having difficulties. The book features the following strategies to improve students' reading fluency:

- **Interactive Read-Alouds:** Use modeled and choral reading with the whole class or small groups to increase students' listening comprehension and to give them experience with rereading short rhymed phrases.
- **Read-Arounds:** Help students learn high-frequency and content words and practice reading text in phrases as they work in small groups.
- **Plays for Two:** Use these simple scripts to have students practice with a partner repeated oral reading strategies as they develop phrasing and fluency.
- **Reader's Theater:** Have students work in groups of four to practice rereading a script until they can fluently read their part in front of an audience. Use the performances as a culminating activity to have students apply all the reading strategies they have learned.
- **Phrasing Memory Challenges:** Invite students who are still not reading with phrasing and fluency to use their auditory memory to repeat phrases as you or a peer tutor models correct reading.
- **Intervention Instruction:** Use these activities with individuals or small groups to intervene with students who still struggle with reading fluency. These activities enable students to identify and practice expression, intonation, and the natural flow of fluency.

The activities in this book provide students with a variety of reading experiences. The themes and genres included in each section will motivate students to not only read the text but to read with expression, intonation, and a natural flow. Students will build enthusiasm and confidence as they begin to increase their comprehension and as they successfully apply reading strategies to their everyday reading!

# Fluency

Reading fluency is the ability to read with expression, intonation, and a natural flow that sounds like talking. Fluency is not the speed at which one reads. That is the reading rate. A fluent reader does read quickly; however, he or she also focuses on phrased units of meaning. A student may read quickly but may not necessarily be fluent. Students who read too quickly often skip over punctuation. This inhibits comprehension because punctuation helps convey meaning. Fluent readers have developed automaticity. This means that they have a solid bank of sight words on which they can rely and that are automatic. Fluent readers can then focus their reading on understanding the message rather than decoding the text. Reading is decoding with comprehension. Fluent readers do both. They read without thinking about how they are reading, and they understand what they are reading.

## **What does a child who lacks fluency sound like?**

A student who lacks fluency may sound choppy, robotic, or speedy.

## **How does repeated oral reading increase fluency?**

Research shows that students increase their fluency when they read and reread the same passage aloud several times. The support that teachers give students during oral reading by modeling the text and providing guidance and feedback enhances their fluency development. Using this strategy, students gradually become better readers and their word recognition, speed, accuracy, and fluency all increase as a result. Their comprehension also improves because they are bridging the gap between reading for word recognition and reading for meaning.

## **Should I worry about fluency with students who are emergent readers?**

Bad habits can be hard to break. Research has found that poor reading habits stand in the way of students becoming fluent readers. Research has also found that students can and do become fluent even as emergent readers. Those emergent, fluent readers carry that fluency onto more difficult text and therefore have a higher level of comprehension. Fluency activities should be incorporated into every classroom, beginning in kindergarten with modeled reading, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading.

## **How do fluency and phrasing work together?**

Phrasing is the link between decoding the meaning of the text and reading the text fluently. Phrasing is the way that a reader groups the words. A lack of phrasing results in staccato reading, “word calling,” and decoding. A fluent reader reads quickly in phrased chunks that are meaningful. Read the information on page 5 to learn more about phrasing.

# Phrasing

A student who reads in phrases reads words in meaningful groups. Phrasing helps a student understand that the text carries meaning. A phrase is a group of words that the reader says together and reads together. The way the words are grouped affects the meaning. This is why phrasing affects reading comprehension.

## **What does phrasing sound like?**

Consider how the same sentence can have different meanings depending on the way the words are grouped, or phrased. It clearly affects the comprehension of what is read. For example:

Patti Lee is my best friend.

Patti, Lee is my best friend.

Who is the best friend? It depends on how the sentence is read. In this example, punctuation also affects phrasing.

## **What causes incorrect phrasing?**

A student may read with incorrect phrasing for a number of reasons. First of all, many students rely too much on phonics. This leads to a dependency on decoding. When students focus on decoding, they neglect the message. They turn into expert “word callers.” Incorrect phrasing can also result from a lack of attention to punctuation. Some students ignore punctuation altogether, which will result in incorrect phrasing, will affect their fluency, and will hurt their comprehension.

## **What can I do to teach and improve phrasing?**

1. Use the activities in this book. They are all researched, teacher-tested, and student-approved, and they will help students experience reading fluency success.
2. Stop pointing to each word during shared reading because that reinforces word-by-word reading. Once students can point and read with one-to-one correspondence, begin shared reading with a finger sweep under phrases. (Finger sweeps look like a stretched out “u.”) This strategy models and reinforces phrasing.
3. Read and reread.
4. Model. Model. Model.
5. Echo read.
6. Make flash cards of common phrases to help students train their eyes to see words in groups rather than as individual words.
7. Tape-record students as they read. Let them listen to improvements they make in phrasing and intonation.

# How to Use This Book

The activities in this book provide fun and easy strategies that will help students develop reading fluency. Getting started is simple.

- Use the Stages of Fluency Development chart on page 7 to assess the students' ability. Take notes as students read aloud, and then refer to the chart to see at what stage of fluency development they are. Use this information to create a plan of action and to decide on which skills the whole class, groups of students, and individuals need to focus.
- Use the Fantastic Five Format on page 8 with the whole class, small groups, or individuals. This format provides a guideline for developing reading fluency that will work with any genre. Copy the reproducible, and use it as a “cheat sheet” when you give guided instruction. You will find the format effective in helping you with modeling, teaching, guiding, and transferring phrased and fluent reading to independent reading.
- Refer to the Teacher Tips on page 9 before you begin using the activities in this book. These tips include helpful information that will assist you as you teach all the students in your classroom to read fluently and, as a result, improve their comprehension of text.

## **Fluency Activities and Strategies**

The first four sections of this book have been sequentially arranged for you to first model fluency, then have students practice fluency, and finally have them independently apply their newly learned skills. Each section has an introductory page to help you get started.

It includes

- an explanation of how the activities in that section relate to fluency development
- the strategies students will use to complete the activities
- a materials list
- step-by-step directions for preparing and presenting the activities
- an idea for how to extend the activities

Each section opener is followed by a set of fun reproducible reading materials that are designed to excite and motivate students about developing reading fluency. Within each section, the readability of the reproducibles increases in difficulty to provide appropriate reading material for third graders who read at different levels.

## **Intervention Activities and Strategies**

The last two sections of the book provide additional instruction and practice to help students who have difficulty with reading fluency. The Phrasing Memory Challenges section contains several readings designed to be used one-on-one between a teacher or peer and a struggling student. The Intervention Instruction section contains several activities designed for use with individuals or small groups. Each activity has its own page of directions that lists strategies, an objective, materials, and step-by-step directions. Reassess students often to determine their reading fluency level and their need for intervention.

# Stages of Fluency Development

Stage	What You Observe	What to Teach for Fluency
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• many miscues</li> <li>• too much emphasis on meaning</li> <li>• storytelling based on pictures</li> <li>• sounds fluent but not reading what is written down</li> <li>• playing “teacher” while reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• print carries the meaning</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tries to match what he or she says with what is written on the page</li> <li>• one-to-one correspondence</li> <li>• finger pointing and “voice pointing”</li> <li>• staccato reading, robotic reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• phrasing and fluency</li> <li>• focus on meaning</li> <li>• read like talking</li> <li>• high-frequency words</li> <li>• purpose of punctuation</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focuses on the meaning of print</li> <li>• may use bookmarks</li> <li>• focuses more on print than picture</li> <li>• no longer voice points</li> <li>• laughs, giggles, or comments while reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• phrasing and fluency</li> <li>• focus on what makes sense and looks right</li> <li>• purpose of punctuation</li> <li>• proper expression and intonation</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reads books with more print than pictures</li> <li>• wants to talk about what he or she read</li> <li>• reads like talking with phrasing</li> <li>• reads punctuation with expression</li> <li>• laughs, giggles, or comments while reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shades of meaning</li> <li>• making connections</li> </ul>

# Fantastic Five Format



**Step 1**

## **Modeled Fluency**

Model reading with fluency so that students understand the text and what they are supposed to learn.



**Step 2**

## **Echo Reading**

Read one part. Have students repeat the same part.



**Step 3**

## **Choral Reading**

Read together. This prepares students to take over the task of reading.



**Step 4**

## **Independent Fluency**

Have students read to you.



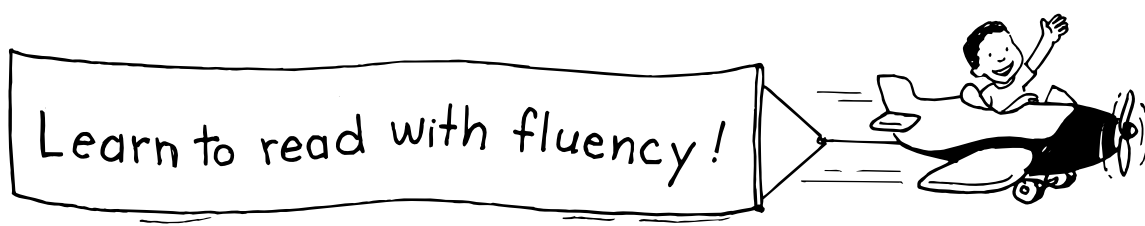
**Step 5**

## **Reverse Echo Reading**

Have students read to you, and then repeat their phrasing, expression, and fluency. Students have now taken over the task of reading.

## Teacher Tips

1. Be aware of how you arrange rhymes, stories, and poems in a pocket chart. Often, teachers put each line in a separate pocket. When teachers do this, students do not recognize phrases and they begin to think that sentences always end on the right. (That is one reason why students often put a period at the end of every line in their writing journals.) Instead, cut the sentences or rhymes into meaningful phrased chunks so that students see and read what you model and teach.
2. If you use guided reading in your classroom, incorporate time for children to reread familiar books. Keep guided reading books that were once used for instructional purposes in bins that are color-coded to represent different ability levels. Have each student choose a book to reread as a warm-up every time you meet. This helps students put phrasing and fluency instruction into practice. Remember, use books that are appropriate to students' independent-reading level (books that can be read with 85 percent accuracy).
3. Write a daily Morning Message that follows a predictable format. Follow the Fantastic Five Format on page 8 to develop phrasing and fluency and improve reading comprehension.
4. Have a Student of the Day tell you three things about himself or herself. Model for the class how to write the student's information in phrases on a piece of white construction paper. Read it in phrases and choral read it for fluency. Reread all of the information about previous Students of the Day prior to writing about the new Student. Bind the pages together into a class book, and have students read it independently or take it home to share with their family.
5. Once a student matches speech to print, do not allow him or her to point when reading. It is important to train students' eyes to look at words in groups rather than at one word at a time. While reading aloud, fluent readers look at many words ahead of what they read.
6. If students must use bookmarks to track words as they read, have them hold the bookmark just above the line of print they are reading rather than just under the line. When students use a bookmark under a line of print, the bookmark blocks the next line. This keeps students from reading fluently because they cannot see the ending punctuation. Try it—you will find that you cannot read fluently with a bookmark under the line you read. You will be amazed how this small change affects students' reading.



# Interactive Read-Alouds

Comprehension begins at the listening stage. Students understand what they hear before they understand what they read. That is why research supports reading aloud to students books and stories that are above their reading level. Reading aloud builds vocabulary, models thinking aloud, and models phrasing and fluency. This activity takes reading aloud a step further by including rhymed phrases that students will then use to apply the repeated oral reading strategy. The structure of this activity will keep students actively listening.

**Strategies:** repeated oral reading, modeled fluency, choral reading, active listening

## Materials

- overhead projector/transparencies or chart paper (optional)

## Directions

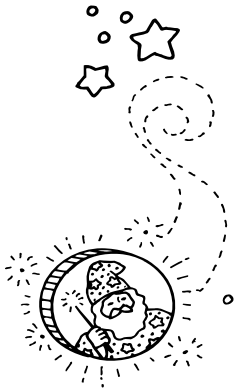
1. Choose one story, and make one copy of the reproducible. (The stories “The Magic Coin” and “Kindness Counts!” have two pages.) Copy a class set of the corresponding rhymed phrases. Or, as an option, make an overhead transparency of the reproducible or write the rhymed phrases on the board or chart paper.
2. NOTE: Do not photocopy the story for students. This activity is designed to build students’ listening comprehension. They need to hear phrasing and fluency modeled by you in order to replicate it in their own reading.
3. Give each student a copy of the rhymed phrases, or display the phrases so all the students can see them. Read aloud the phrases, and have students practice reading them. Tell students that you will read aloud a story and that they will read aloud the rhymed phrases each time you point to them. (Point to the class each time you see an asterisk in the story.)
4. Read aloud the story. Model good phrasing, intonation, and fluency.
5. Throughout the story, stop at each asterisk, point to the students, and have them read the rhymed phrases, with increased fluency each time.

## Extension

Many of the rhymed phrases lend themselves to movements. Make up silly movements that students can do as they read their part. This will maximize active listening. Try movements such as clicking tongues, clapping, stomping feet, moving hands like waves in the ocean, moving hands up together and then parting them in opposite ways, nodding heads, hopping, turning around, and cross-lateral movements.

# The Magic Coin

Theme: fantasy

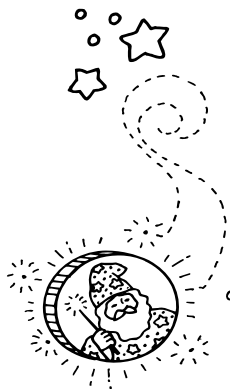


I know you will have a hard time believing what I'm about to tell you, but I promise it's the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It all started the night after my birthday party. I was helping my mom clean up and putting my toys away like any other ordinary day. Suddenly, I discovered that there was something rattling in the bottom of one of my gift boxes. I was sure that I had taken all of the gifts out of the boxes as I opened them. How could I have left a gift behind? Nobody forgets or loses birthday presents! I shook the box again. Sure enough, there was definitely something still in that box. I lifted up the tissue paper and found a large, shiny gold coin. It looked very old. I had never seen such a coin before. I bit into it thinking it might be chocolate. No such luck! It was just a strange, shiny gold coin that was probably not worth anything at all. I put it in my pocket as I continued cleaning. As I was throwing away the last of the wrapping paper, I came up with a little rhyme for my coin. It went like this: \*

Suddenly, the coin started to move around in my pocket! I jumped so high that I dropped all of the wrapping paper. It kept moving around. What in the world was happening? I took it out of my pocket and looked at it. It looked the same, but it felt a bit warm in my hand. I didn't know what to do. It reminded me of a story I once read. The boy in the story got to make a wish. I thought to myself, *What harm could it be? Nobody will know I made a silly wish.* Then, I said my rhyme again: \*

The coin started jumping around in my hand! It was a bit scary I must admit. I made one tiny wish and flipped the coin. \* All of a sudden, the coin was perfectly still in my hand. It didn't move one bit. Did my wish make it stop? No way! Impossible! That was just something writers made up in books. My imagination was really getting out of control. Maybe it was all that birthday cake and ice cream.

# The Magic Coin



I finished cleaning up and joined my dad in the kitchen. He was busy making my favorite meal of spaghetti with peanut butter sauce. It was my annual birthday meal. After dinner, I went up to my room to get ready for bed. All of a sudden, something popped into my head. You guessed it. \* The coin started moving around in my pocket again. Oh, no! Now what? I made another wish and it stopped right away. Was this really a magic coin? Did my wish come true? Impossible! I had better try it again. I must be dreaming. Once again, the coin started moving around! I made a wish, flipped the coin again, and then it suddenly stopped moving. This coin was beginning to scare me. I decided to put the coin in a safe place for the night. I told myself not to say, \*

I figured that the safest place for the coin would be inside of a sock in my drawer. Then, if it moved, it wouldn't wake me up. I closed the drawer tightly. Safe! Nobody would ever know it existed. I figured I could just forget about it, so that's just what I did. Every time I thought of the rhyme, \* I told myself to forget about it.

The next morning, I woke up like usual and crawled out of bed. I love school, but sometimes it's hard to get up so early in the morning. Suddenly, I tripped and fell. What made me fall? I turned on the light above my bed and looked around.

OH, NO! All around me there were toys! There were games, puzzles, cars, construction sets, books, stuffed animals, electronic games, every toy you could imagine. It looked like a toy store. OH, NO! What happened? Was this my room? It looked like my room—same wallpaper, same bed, same lights. Was it the same floor? I couldn't tell, since the floor was covered in toys. THE COIN! It was magic! My first wish had come true. I wished that I could have a whole room of toys for my birthday. It came true. What would my parents do? I had to get rid of the toys before my family saw how greedy I was. Why did I ever touch that coin? Why did I ever make up that rhyme? \* Why was I so greedy? I had to get that coin and make a new wish that everything would go away.

I hopped over and around all of the toys until I reached my sock drawer. Thank goodness, the coin was still there. I had to make new wishes to make sure the others didn't come true. They were silly wishes as well. I didn't really want cake for every meal. I didn't really wish that I had a red sports car—well, maybe—but I couldn't drive it. I had to hurry up and say the rhyme: \* Will it work?

# The Magic Coin

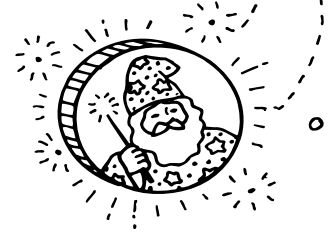
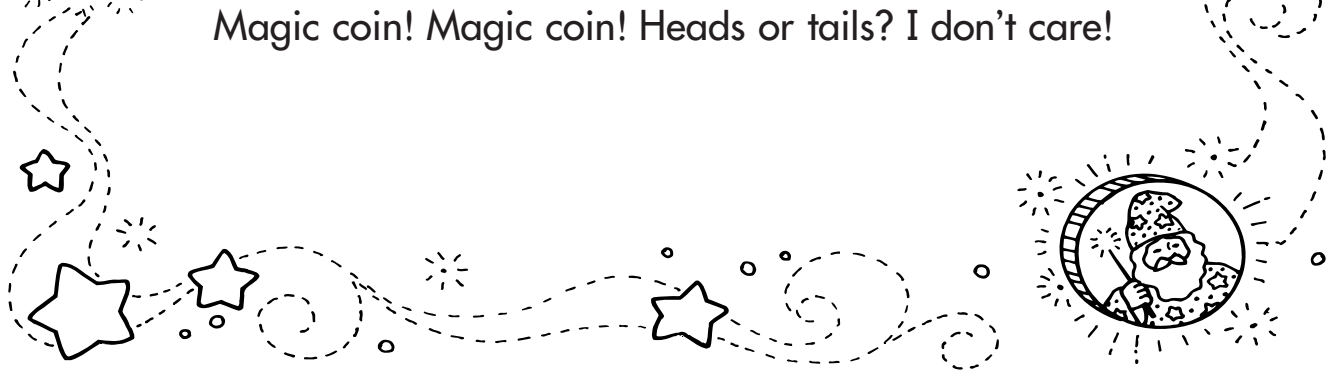
## Rhymed Phrases

Magic coin! Magic coin! I'll rub you in my hand.

Magic coin! Magic coin! I'll toss you in the air.

Magic coin! Magic coin! I don't know how you'll land.

Magic coin! Magic coin! Heads or tails? I don't care!



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# The Magic Coin

## Rhymed Phrases

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