

Speed trap ahead

Different texts should cause your child to adjust *how* she attacks the reading. If it's a favorite novel she's read multiple times, it makes sense that she would read it quickly. Her purpose is enjoyment and entertainment.

However, reading about the circulatory system in a science textbook should cause her to read more slowly.

She needs to realize her purpose is different and in turn adjust her reading speed accordingly. Good readers slow down when the information is unfamiliar, difficult to understand, or full of important facts and information. It's completely normal for even the best reader to slow down and reread when the information is abundant and confusing.

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Bright Elementary

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Reader's Advantage

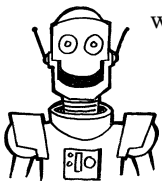
INTERMEDIATE EDITION

A parent's guide to success in reading

READING PUNCTUATION

Retiring the robot

If your child sounds like a robot when she reads, chances are she struggles with fluency. To help her understand the goal of fluency ask her to



describe the movement of a surfer riding a wave to shore (smooth, fluid, never-ending). Then have her describe the movements of a robot (jerky, rigid, choppy). Use the comparison to explain that readers work to achieve a smooth rhythm when they read.

Go for round two

Reading fluency improves when a passage is read more than once. Encourage your child to take a second stab at a segment of his reading. Then evaluate how he did. Describe his improvement in the areas of word recognition, speed, smoothness, and expression.



Punctuation marks enhance meaning

Although your child may think punctuation marks are only taught to make reading and writing more tricky, those small marks and symbols are meant to make reading easier. Each mark indicates to the reader how to interpret the text.

Adjusting voice

In order to *read* punctuation marks, your child first has to understand the mark's effect on his voice. An easy example is the period; when he confronts a period, his voice stops. When he reads a question mark, his voice goes up. An exclamation point causes his voice to get louder, and a comma indicates he should pause.

Looking ahead

The second hurdle is to get your youngster to look "down the sentence" in order to see the approaching end mark. Often kids read word by word and don't adjust their voice until it's too late. Encourage your child to see 1-3 words ahead of where he is reading or looking.

Looking ahead in his reading is the same notion as peripheral vision in basketball. If the athlete can see the whole court, he can pass the ball to a teammate on his far right without actually turning his head. He is *seeing* across the court while *looking*

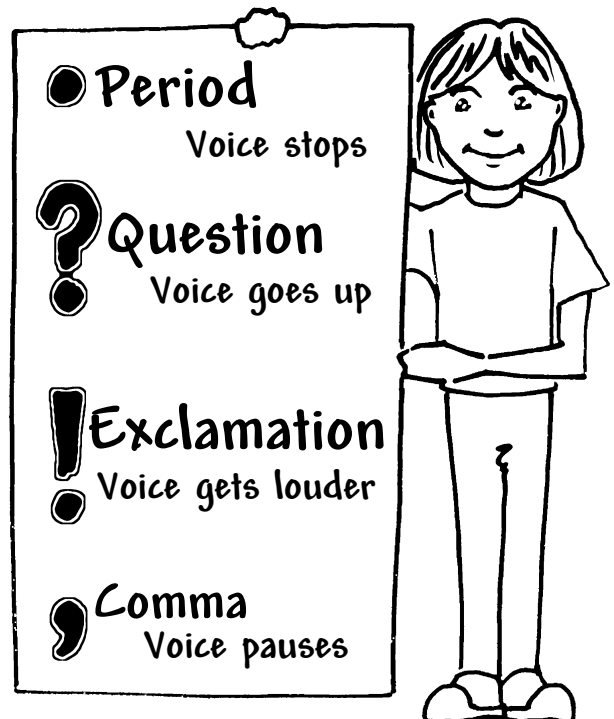
straight ahead.

A little practice

Reading punctuation marks as intended can be easily practiced by adding punctuation to the alphabet.

ABC. DE? F, G, H, and I. JK! LMN. OPQ? R. S and T? UVW. X! YZ.

Writing the alphabet using different marks creates an unlimited set of combinations. To make it more challenging, add in semicolons ; ellipses ... parentheses () and other common punctuation marks.



Find it, flag it

Readers rely on tools to aid them in their thinking and understanding. Sticky notes can be one of those tools. When assigned to read a portion of the text, your child can use the sticky notes to “flag” important ideas as he reads.



Four-square review

You can help your child think about a reading assignment with the “four-square” approach. Draw a large square on a sheet of paper and then divide it into four smaller squares. In one corner have her write one “a-ha!” realization she made during the reading. In another square have her name one point that wasn’t new, but important nonetheless. In the third square describe a portion of the reading that seemed less relevant. In the fourth square, write about a part that was confusing.

Tough Questions:

My child frequently has to read for homework, but there isn’t always a written assignment to accompany it. What can I do at home to check that she understood what she read?

Real Answers:

You can help her reflect on what she’s read by prompting her with a few key statements. Ask, “What was the main idea?” Or have her “name two key terms from the reading.” Or challenge her to “identify three relevant facts, details or examples from the reading.”

PROGRESS REPORT

Improving reading fluency

Word-by-word

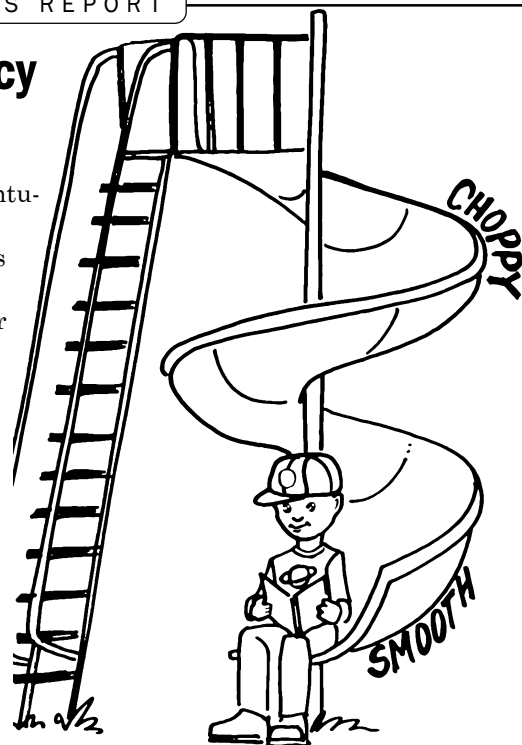
When your child first started reading he sounded out each letter of every word. Eventually he moved to word-by-word reading. Because he rarely put more than 1-2 words together before pausing, it took a long time to get through a sentence or paragraph. For this reason, he likely had trouble remembering what he read.

Word groupings

Important progress is made when your child can group 3–4 words at a time, and read fast enough to hold meaning. His greatest fluency challenge at this stage is developing reading expression.

Meaningful phrasing

This reader can see “down the sentence.” He will be able to utilize expression, emphasis and pausing to interpret the text.



Overcoming tricky words

One clear sign of a maturing reader is the ability to use strategies for solving unknown or tricky words. The most immature readers tend to skip the word entirely.



Ideally, youngsters should work to solve the word and its meaning independently. There are multiple strategies to accomplish this. Here are a handful of common ones:

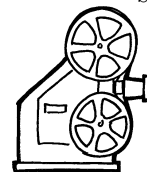
- ❶ Does it look like another word you know? (letter patterns, rhyming)
- ❷ Do you recognize any “parts” of the word? (bases, roots, prefixes, suffixes)
- ❸ Reread the sentence. What word would make sense? What would sound right?
- ❹ Sound it out several different ways. Cluster and blend letters in

different ways to make different pronunciations. Do you recognize any of those pronunciations? Have you heard this word before?

Growing readers develop a range of problem-solving strategies to take words apart and figure out their meanings *while* reading.

Mental movies

Good readers are able to visualize scenes while they read. It helps them make sense of what the words are saying. When your child doesn’t understand something he just read, have him reread and “watch it happen” in his mind. Compare it to “watching” a scene from a favorite movie. He can still “see” it in his mind, if he thinks about it.



With a mental video, he is more likely to understand and remember what the reading is about.

Reader's Lingo

Some book sets come in “levels.”

Among the levels there are some uniform components. However, it is normal that as your child moves up in levels, the text gets more challenging. These **leveled books** provide reading material suitable for your child’s current needs and abilities.