

# 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 read aloud. Repeat reading and listening until you can read every word on your own.

<u>hatch</u> from an egg	have <u>paws</u> or <u>claws</u>	in the <u>palm</u> of your hand
in my <u>cheeks</u>	<u>wherever</u> people are	eat <u>raw</u> meat
not a <u>male</u>	carry <u>germs</u>	make them <u>ill</u>
live in <u>dirt</u>	neither <u>male</u> nor <u>female</u>	have <u>excellent</u> sight

## Descriptions

Read the descriptions to yourself as you listen to them read aloud. Repeat reading and listening until you know every word. (Note: You will need this list of animals to choose from: mosquito, owl, salmon, squirrel, goose, toad, wolf, worms, mouse, colt, tiger, eagle.)

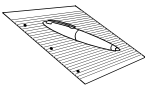
1. I do not **hatch from an egg**. I do not **have paws or claws**. I do not have two legs. I cannot fit **in the palm of your hand**. Look at the things I cannot be. What is left? That must be me.
2. I cannot swim or fly. I have a tail, but it is not bushy. I do not store food **in my cheeks**. I do not howl. I do not live **wherever people are** nearby. Look at the things I cannot be. What is left? That must be me.
3. We do not **eat raw meat**. We do not make noise. We do not swarm. People usually do not want to see us around. Look at the things we cannot be. What is left? That is what we must be.
4. I am **not a male**. I do not live in high places. I swim, but I do not have scales. I have wings, but I do not use them much. Look at the things I cannot be. What is left? That must be me.
5. We do not live in very dry places. We do not have ears. We do not have teeth, but we “bite.” We do not eat, just drink. People don’t like us because we **carry germs** and can **make them ill**. Look at the things we cannot be. What is left? That is what we must be.
6. We can jump, but we do not have arms or legs. We do not **live in dirt**. We lay eggs, but do not sit on them. We do not breathe air. Look at the things we cannot be. What is left? That is what we must be.
7. We are **neither male nor female**, but both. We do not **have excellent sight**. We do not walk, run, or fly. We do not make any noise. We do not have feathers, scales, or fur. Look at the things we cannot be. What is left? That is what we must be.

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

## Description Questions

Think about the descriptions you listened to and practiced. How well do you understand them? Answer these questions. You may go back and read them again.

- Which is the best title for this list of descriptions?  
A. Who Am I?                      B. Animal Riddles                      C. Match the Animals
  - If a clue says “I am not a male,” what fact do you know?  
A. It lays eggs.                      B. It must be a female.                      C. It is not a tiger.
  - Which of the animal names is the same in singular and plural?  
A. salmon                      B. goose                      C. mice                      D. worms
  - Of the seven descriptions, which numbers do you know need a plural answer?  
A. 1, 3, and 5                      B. 1, 2, and 4                      C. 3, 5, 6, 7
  - In Description 1, which clue tells you that it cannot be a wolf, owl, mice, squirrel, tiger, or eagle?  
A. I do not have paws or claws.  
B. I do not hatch from an egg.  
C. I do not have two legs.
  - If a clue says that the animal does not make any noise, which animals can you eliminate from the list?
- 



## On Your Own

Complete this activity in your notebook or on a separate sheet of paper.

The riddles you have been reading are reversed, or backwards. The usual way a riddle is written is to give clues that tell about what the answer could be. Choose four of the animals listed. Think about their traits. Then, write a riddle about each one. Make them typical riddles, that is, ones that give clues about what the answer could be. When you are finished, trade with a partner to solve one another’s riddles.

**Example:** I have paws and claws. I stuff and store food in my cheeks. I am a good climber. I sometimes make chirping sounds. What am I? (a squirrel)

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

## Reading with Expression: Logical Deduction

Have you ever been reading along and suddenly realized that you don't understand what you're reading? Sometimes writers make us work to understand what we are reading. Instead of telling something directly, they give us clues and leave us to figure things out. The description riddles you have read are examples of this. Instead of telling us what the animal is, they tell us what it isn't. It is up to us to figure out the answers. We must be reading detectives. We look at the clues and use logical deduction to come up with the solutions. How do we do that? One method is called the process of elimination. In other words, to figure out what it is, we first figure out what it isn't.

Let's solve the first riddle. How? One method is to write all the possible answers. Then, as you read each clue, cross out any animal that is eliminated by the clue. (If you are not sure, leave it on the list. Another clue may eliminate it.)

### Here's How: Description 1

mosquito

owl

salmon

squirrel

goose

toad

wolf

worm

mouse

colt

tiger

eagle

#### **Clue: I do not hatch from an egg.**

You can eliminate (or cross out) owl, salmon, goose, toad, and eagle because they all hatch from eggs. What's left? Mosquito, squirrel, wolf, worm, mouse, colt, and tiger are left.

#### **Clue: I do not have paws or claws.**

You can eliminate wolf, mouse, squirrel, and tiger because they have paws or claws. (You've already eliminated owl and eagle.) What's left? Mosquito, worm, and colt are left.

#### **Clue: I do not have two legs.**

Of the ones left—mosquito, worm, and colt—this clue does not eliminate any more.

#### **Clue: I cannot fit in the palm of your hand.**

You can eliminate mosquito and worm because they can fit in the palm of your hand. What's left? Just one is left: colt.

By logical deduction, you can conclude that the animal being described is a colt.

## Try It!

Now, use what you learned about logical deduction to solve the rest of the riddles. Write your answers on the lines below.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_\_\_

List the animals that were not described in any of the riddles:

\_\_\_\_\_

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



## Fluency Checkpoint

You have already listened to, practiced, and read the riddles below. Now, it's time to check your reading fluency. You will be reading with the whole class, and you may be one of seven readers chosen to read the parts marked R1–R7. These students will read their riddle alone. Then, the whole group will refrain, or answer aloud, by reading the sections marked ALL.

R1: I do not hatch from an egg. I do not have paws or claws. I do not have two legs. I cannot fit in the palm of your hand.

ALL: Look at the things I cannot be. What is left? That must be me. I am a colt.

R2: I cannot swim or fly. I have a tail, but it is not bushy. I do not store food in my cheeks. I do not howl. I do not live wherever people are nearby.

ALL: Look at the things I cannot be. What is left? That must be me. I am a tiger.

R3: We do not eat raw meat. We do not make noise. We do not swarm. People usually do not want to see us around.

ALL: Look at the things we cannot be. What is left? That is what we must be. We are mice.

R4: I am not a male. I do not live in high places. I swim, but I do not have scales. I have wings, but I do not use them much.

ALL: Look at the things I cannot be. What is left? That must be me. I am a goose.

R5: We do not live in very dry places. We do not have ears. We do not have teeth, but we “bite.” We do not eat, just drink. People don't like us because we carry germs and can make them ill.

ALL: Look at the things we cannot be. What is left? That is what we must be. We are mosquitoes.

R6: We can jump, but we do not have arms or legs. We do not live in dirt. We lay eggs, but do not sit on them. We do not breathe air.

ALL: Look at the things we cannot be. What is left? That is what we must be. We are salmon.

R7: We are neither male nor female, but both. We do not have excellent sight. We do not walk, run, or fly. We do not make any noise. We do not have feathers, scales, or fur.

ALL: Look at the things we cannot be. What is left? That is what we must be. We are worms.

## Evaluation

Take your show on the road. Perform for another class—especially a younger one. Make a list of the possible answers on a chart. Then, read each riddle as you practiced it; however, at each refrain, stop just before the answer and give the students a chance to guess. At the end, have someone from your group explain how to use logical deduction to find the answer.