



M4 **FLUENCY SKILLS
AND KNOWLEDGE**
Companion Document



“The critical test of fluency is the ability to decode text and comprehend at the same time” (Farstrup & Samuels, 2002, p. 180).

“Students learn that fluent reading involves reading smoothly, without hesitation and with expression. It is important for students to understand that speed does not equal reading fluency and that the whole purpose of reading is comprehension. Reading comprehension in K-2 is very dependent on fluency” (Trehearne, 2016, p. 242).

This companion document is one in a series of six companion documents complimenting the Building Blocks of Reading Continuum. The companion documents provide an overview of research pertaining to reading instruction and the building blocks of reading:

- Research and Reading Instruction
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension



Reading Fluency and the Building Blocks of Reading



Tim Rasinski (2004) explains that successful reading requires readers to “process the text (the surface level of reading) and comprehend the text (the deeper meaning)” and that fluency refers to a reader’s ability to “develop control over the surface-level text processing so that [they] can focus on the deeper levels of meaning embedded in a text” (para. 3). Often, fluency instruction is overlooked or focused on the speed of word recognition. Reading fluency is not simply about reading fast, it is a bridge to comprehension—the goal of reading. Learners must be able to decode words accurately and automatically to attend to meaning making.

Reading fluency is comprised of two components: automaticity in word recognition and prosodic reading. “Automaticity is the link from word study to fluency and then prosody the link from fluency to comprehension” (Rasinski, 2019).

Automaticity in Word Recognition

Automaticity in word recognition refers to a learner’s ability to read words automatically and effortlessly. It begins with being able to decode words in a text. As learners map (connect) the sounds of words they already know (the phonemes) to the letters in a word (the spelling), their bank of sight words grows. These become instantly recognizable words. Orthographic mapping describes the mental process used to store these words.

Automaticity of word recognition is achieved through decoding and repeated practice. Automaticity doesn’t always mean reading quickly but rather reading with confidence. Learners who read with automaticity have skills to decode words and recall familiar words effortlessly.

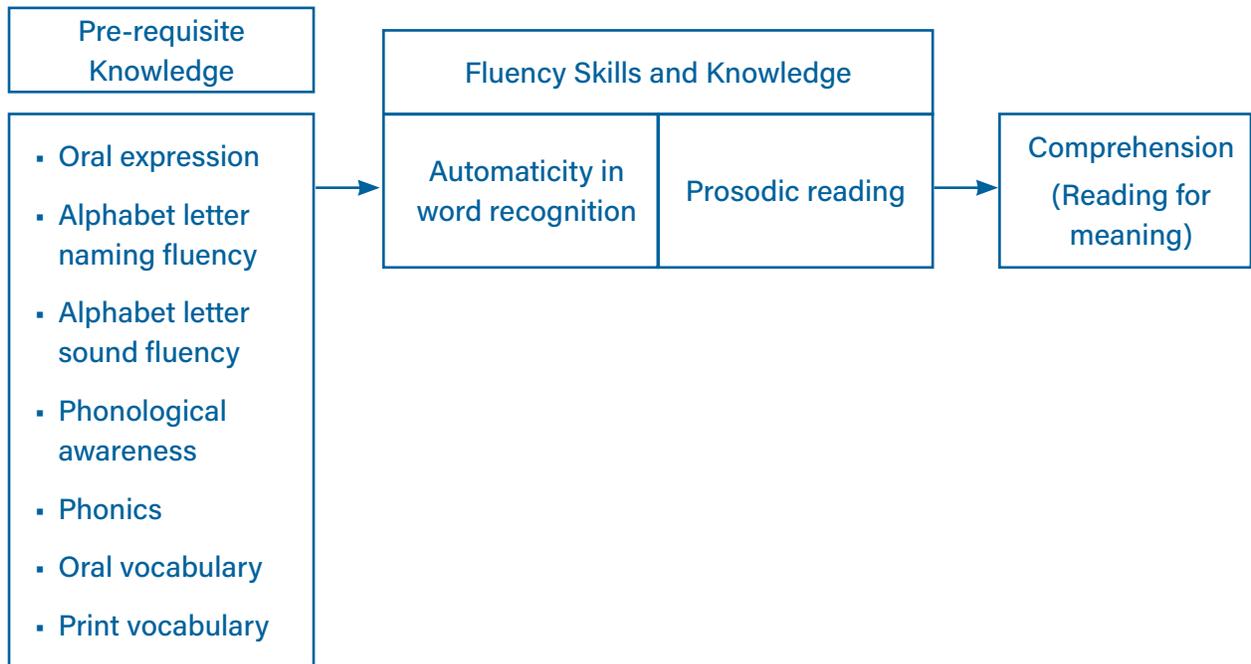
Reading with Prosody

Prosodic reading (reading with expression) takes place when a learner uses their voice to enhance meaning and are comfortable with reading the words on a page independently. If a learner reads quickly and accurately, but with little to no expression and/or attention to punctuation and sense of phrasing, they are not reading with prosody. To read with good expression, learners must have an understanding of the text. Educators can model prosodic reading to learners even before they are proficient readers, through read-alouds and discussions about print.

When learners read with prosody they are able to read more than just the words; they express meaning in the text through appropriate variations in pitch, loudness, tempo, rhythm, intonation, and stress. Prosodic reading is the final skill associated with fluency and is achieved when learners:

- Pause at end and internal punctuation
- Use inflections with voice variations
- Use appropriate phrasing and expression

Reading Fluency



Supporting Fluency Skills and Knowledge Development



As with other building block skill areas, learners must acquire a variety of prerequisite skills to prepare for reading fluency skill development. Prerequisite skills include: oral expression, alphabet letter and sound fluency, phonological awareness, phonics, and vocabulary.

Oral Expression

The very first step in developing fluency is the ability to *listen to stories, chime-in, and role-play* using expression. Learners can begin chiming-in and role-playing by turning the pages of a book, following the words with their finger, and retelling the story in their own words. When learners listen to a reader read with fluency, they can repeat and begin to use expression.

Think of how a learner might retell the story of the “3 Little Pigs” by adding intonation and stress to key words in the phrase:

Little Pig, Little Pig, LET ME COME IN.

NOT by the hair on my chinny, chin, chin.

Then I’ll HUFF and I’ll PUFF and I’ll BLOW your house in.

Alphabet Letter Naming Fluency

Alphabet letter naming fluency (quick recall of naming all the letters in the alphabet, and not necessarily in the correct order) is critical to reading fluency development. Often a learner can recite the alphabet song in order and name all the letters on the alphabet chart, but stumble when they see a letter in a different place.

In an effort to get learners reading as soon as possible, letter naming fluency can be overlooked. Letter names are important; it is necessary for learners to be able to name the alphabet letters with confidence, automaticity, and fluency.

Having automaticity while reading doesn’t necessarily mean reading will be superfast. It means reading the letter names or sounds correctly, with confidence, and effortlessly. A child who lingers on a word or sound does not have fluency. It is a sign we need to slow down and provide more activities and support. Each child moves at a pace appropriate for their development (Adams, 1990).



Alphabet Letter Sound Fluency

It takes time for learners to develop alphabet letter sound fluency. Despite there being just 26 letters in the English language, there are approximately 44 unique sounds, also known as phonemes (see the Phonological Awareness Companion Document). The 44 sounds help distinguish one word or meaning from another. Various letters and letter combinations known as graphemes are used to represent the sounds. Knowing how to identify these sounds with automaticity is an important foundation for segmenting and blending sounds in words to quickly figure out tricky words.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the understanding and awareness of the oral structure of language and includes word awareness, rhyme awareness, syllable awareness, onset and rime awareness, and phonemic awareness. It is an oral skill set that is the foundation for phonics. Fluent readers need a foundation in phonological awareness so they can learn how to manipulate sounds and identify letters to help them read.

“The success of fluency instruction depends not only on the quality of the teaching but also on the degree to which quality teaching is embedded in a full agenda of other sound literacy instruction. A teacher—confident that fluency is the key to success—who drops phonics to clear space for fluency in the daily scheduled teaching is making a bad trade” (Shanahan, 2012, p. 18).



Phonics

Phonics refers to the relationship between letter sounds (phonemes) and letter symbols (graphemes). A learner with a good foundation in phonics can easily tackle words they don't know by decoding the sounds or word parts. Learners with advanced phonemic awareness can identify and discriminate, segment and blend, and manipulate sounds within words. Phonics skills help learners connect their phonemic awareness knowledge to printed text so they can decode what they see. This skill takes a lot of practice, but learners who can decode efficiently spend less time trying to figure out new and unknown words and more time reading for comprehension.

Vocabulary

Research indicates that a learner's vocabulary knowledge in Grade 1 is a predictor of their reading comprehension in high school (Biemiller, 2001). Each learner enters school knowing a variety of receptive and expressive words. Because having a robust receptive and expressive vocabulary supports reading skill development for all learners, it is important to teach vocabulary both directly (using explicit instructional strategies) and indirectly (through rich conversations and discussions activating prior knowledge and interests).

Receptive vocabulary includes the words an individual understands after hearing or reading them.

Expressive vocabulary includes the words an individual retrieves and uses in speaking or writing.

Keep in mind that once learners have fluency of alphabet letter names and sounds, phonological awareness, phonics, and vocabulary, educators need to model fluent reading and learners need ample opportunity for repeated practice.



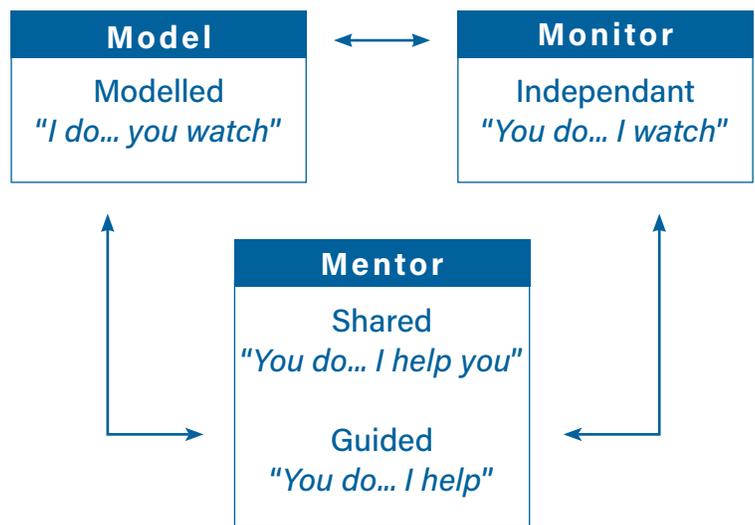
Fluency Skills and Knowledge in the Classroom



Fluency instruction needs to be balanced. Each of the two components of fluency—automatic word recognition and prosodic reading—contribute to comprehension. Placing emphasis on one component over the other compromises this outcome. So too does a focus on fast reading as a method of instruction. Using tools to measure automaticity in word recognition is appropriate and there is a high correlation between this and comprehension (Rasinski, 2012). Yet, the goal of fluency instruction is not just to read faster than the day before—the goal of fluency instruction is to improve reading comprehension.

Educators should apply the following strategies when teaching fluency skills and knowledge:

- Use assessment information to identify fluency learning goals for all learners.
- Take into account the diversity of learners in classes and make appropriate adjustments to planning, teaching, and assessment.
- Group learners (whole and small group) based on fluency assessment information understanding that learner grouping needs to be flexible and will change as learners' needs change.
- Teach and encourage practice of fluency skills using a gradual release of responsibility model (e.g., "I do, we do, you do").
- Include opportunities for learners to practice and apply fluency skills and knowledge within the literacy session and other learning areas.
- Teach fluency in a stimulating and rich literacy environment that includes the use of authentic texts.



As with the other building blocks of reading skill areas, the scope and sequence of fluency outcomes can be found on the Building Blocks of Reading Continuum, organized by developmental phase progression.

Phases of Word Learning

Linea Ehri, an educational researcher, proposed the phases of word learning in 1995. This widely recognized theory helps us to understand the phases learners move through towards proficient reading. Each phase is characterized by a learner's understanding and use of the alphabetic system in their word reading. Phases range from pre-alphabetic, to partial alphabetic, to full alphabetic, to consolidated alphabetic, to skilled reader.

Next we will examine each of the developmental phases of word learning, phase outcomes, and suggested learning activities.



Pre-alphabetic to Partial Alphabetic Phase: Fluency



Teaching Goal:

To develop alphabet fluency to progress learners to the partial alphabetic phase

End Outcomes

- Begins to develop alphabet fluency with letter names
- Begins to match word-to-word with finger pointing when “reading”
- Begins to develop fluency from repeated readings of a simple/predictable text by role-play reading or chiming-in

Checklist of Teaching “Must Haves”

- Books for children to browse
- Books you have read to them
- Poems or songs in a pocket chart or on a poster
- Labels of common items (e.g., “Here is a chair.” “Here is a book.” “We line up here.”)
- Labels at activity centres (e.g., Listening Centre, Art Centre, and Writing Centre)
- Classroom name wall or name book

Activities to Encourage End of Phase Outcomes

Suggested learning activities for the pre-alphabetic to partial alphabetic phase are described below.

Outcome: Begins to develop alphabet fluency with letter names

Activity: Using an Alphabet Chart

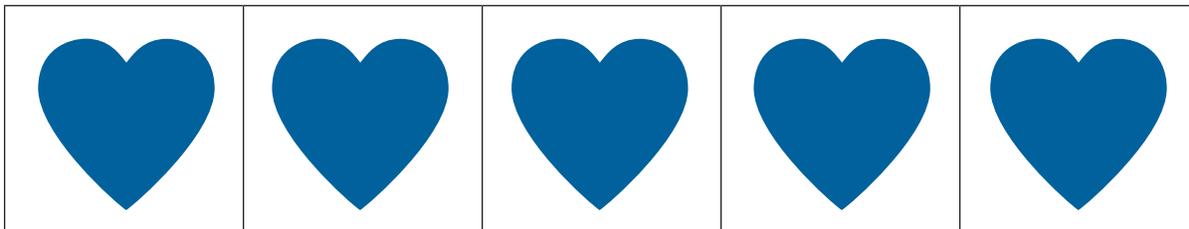
Naming alphabet letters quickly and confidently is called automaticity. It is the fast, effortless identification of alphabet letter names and it is the first step in fluency and reading comprehension. Comprehension is reliant on confident readers who are not “bogged down” by unknown letters or sounds.

Alphabet letter fluency (also known as *letter naming fluency*) refers to how quickly a learner names the alphabet letters. One way to support learners as they develop alphabet fluency is to start by using an alphabet chart where the letters are in sequential order. As they develop confidence, place alphabet cards in a pocket chart but not in sequential order. Encourage learners to name the letters as quickly as they can, but only do this activity when you know they are confident with all the alphabet letters. Learners need to hear lots of alphabet stories, sing alphabet songs, and play alphabet games before being asked to quickly recite the alphabet (see Appendix A for alphabet letter naming resources).

“It is not simply the accuracy with which children can name letters that gives them an advantage in learning to read (and write). It is the ease or fluency (speed) with which they can do so. Recognizing the letters on a stop sign, without hesitation, is an example of fluent letter recognition. A child who can recognize most letters with thorough confidence will have an easier time learning about letters and word spelling than a child who still has to work at remembering what is what” (Adams, 1990).

Outcome: Begins to match word-to-word with finger pointing when reading

One-to-one correspondence is a term used in mathematics and reading skill development. In mathematics a learner has one-to-one correspondence when they can count objects and touch each object as they say the number. If a child is counting five hearts, they will point to each heart as they count: one, two, three, four, five. They do not have one-to-one correspondence if they count: one, two, three, four, five and do not touch each individual heart as they say the numbers.



The same applies to reading skill development. The goal is to match the spoken word with the written word. A child has one-to-one correspondence if they recognize that each block of letters is a word, and they say the word from memory or read the word. For a learner to demonstrate one-to-one correspondence when reading the sentence below, they would need to tap three times; one tap for each of the three words.

I	like	dogs.
---	------	-------

Activity: Follow Along

Learners will often look at books they are familiar with and pretend they are reading. They will tell the story in their own words and sometimes retell parts with repetitive language.

*"Brown Bear, Brown Bear
What do you see?
I see a red bird looking at me."
(Martin & Carle, 1967)*

- As learners tell the story, encourage them to follow along with their fingers. They may not be matching with one-to-one correspondence, but they are beginning to understand print concepts and the fact that the words on a page tell a story.
- Provide opportunities for matching word-to-word with finger pointing by providing a variety of text experiences in the classroom.

Activity: Fancy Finger Pointers

Rather than use fingers for pointing at words, create the following:

- *Magic Reading Wands:* made from paper towel rolls, streamers, markers and glue. These wands work best if the children create their very own.
- *Swat a Word Wands:* made from a fly swatter by cutting out the centre of the fly swatter. Children swat the word by placing the centre of the fly swatter over the word.

Outcome: Begins to develop fluency from repeated readings of a simple, predictable text by role-play reading or chiming-in

Activity: Books with Repetitive Language

There are a variety of picture books, song books, nursery rhymes, and poetry books with repetitive language that are excellent for “chiming-in.” Some educators like to start the school year with song books. Children easily chime in with song books such as Raffi’s Five Little Ducks or Sharon, Lois & Bram’s Skinnamarink. The text is predictable, and children will role-play read along with the delightful pictures.

Books with repetitive language support reading skill development in the following ways:

- Builds on familiarity and enjoyment
- Provides repetition and predictability
- Develops fluency
- Expands vocabulary and knowledge of story structures
- Promotes critical thinking and problem solving
- Fosters creative expression and language play including phonological awareness (Jalongo & Ribblett, 1997).

Big Books

Big books provide important teaching opportunities because their large size makes it easier for learners to view the pictures and words. Educators can more easily model left to right progression by tracking with their finger as they read or by encouraging children to “have a go” and track the words as they are being read. Their larger size also makes it easier for learners to role-play read with classmates.

A first reading should focus on reading for meaning and enjoyment. On successive readings, learners can be invited to chime-in or read together as the teacher or a child points to the print. There are numerous variations in how learners can enjoy reading together (e.g., different groups reading different sections or parts; small groups reading some parts; whole groups reading other parts).

Atlantic Canada Language Arts Curriculum: K-3, 1998, p. 172.

Partial Alphabetic to Full Alphabetic Phase: Fluency



Teaching Goal:

To develop alphabet fluency in letter names and sounds to progress learners to the full alphabetic phase

End Outcomes

- Develops alphabet fluency with letter names
- Begins to develop alphabet fluency with letter sounds

Checklist of Teaching “Must Haves”

- Books for children to browse
- Books you have read to them
- Poems or songs in a pocket chart or on a poster
- Labels of common items (e.g., “Here is a chair.” “Here is a book.” “We line up here.”)
- Labels at activity centres (e.g., Listening Centre, Art Centre, and Writing Centre)
- Classroom name wall or name book
- Alphabet frieze

Activities to Encourage End of Phase Outcomes

Suggested learning activities for the pre-alphabetic to partial alphabetic phase are described below.

Outcome: Develops alphabet fluency with letter names

Outcome: Begins to develop alphabet fluency with letter sounds

For additional activities that support these outcomes, see pre-alphabetic to partial alphabetic phase activities.

Activity: See it, Name it!

While viewing the alphabet, have learners name the letters and sounds in order. Once they have practiced and have built up confidence, make a game of shuffling letter cards and naming letters and sounds as quick as possible.

Activity: As Fast as You Can

When learners learn how to form the alphabet letters, they need to be encouraged to say and print the letters in order, as quickly as they can. Set the timer for one minute. This activity builds “muscle-memory” of letter name and letter order. This activity is only appropriate when learners have learned how to properly print the letters.

Prepare a special book for learners (e.g., duotang cut in half) so they can do this activity over a period of time and will be able to look back and see their progression. Are there any letters they are having trouble with? This is an opportunity for the educator to identify areas that need support.

Can learners quickly recall three things that start with the letter *b*—ball, bat, bicycle, or the letter *t*—turtle, tiger, teapot? Quick recall provides an important foundation for reading and it is only achieved with lots of meaningful, child-centered activities.



Full Alphabetic to Consolidated Alphabetic Phase: Fluency



Teaching Goal:

To develop automatic word recognition and expression when reading words or text to progress learners to the consolidated alphabetic phase

End Outcomes

- Begins to develop automaticity for word recognition
- Reads some high frequency words correctly in simple, predictable texts
- Develops alphabet fluency with letter sounds
- Reads familiar texts fluently with expression, pausing at end punctuation
- Uses frequently occurring inflections with voice variation

Checklist of Teaching “Must Haves”

- Books for children to browse
- Books you have read to them
- Poems or songs in a pocket chart or on a poster
- Labels of common items (e.g., “Here is a chair.” “Here is a book.” “We line up here.”)
- Labels at activity centres (e.g., Listening Centre, Art Centre, and Writing Centre)
- Classroom name wall or name book
- Alphabet frieze
- Reading centres with a recording device
- Nursery rhyme, poem, and reader’s theatre resources

Activities to Encourage End of Phase Outcomes

Suggested learning activities for the full alphabetic to consolidated alphabetic phase are described below.

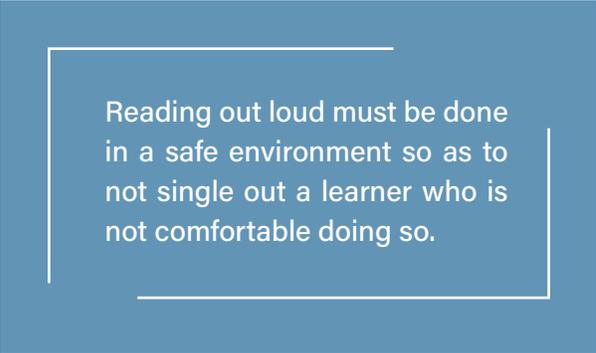
Outcome: Begins to develop automaticity for word recognition

Automaticity in word recognition is more than just reading common high frequency words. It begins with phonemic awareness, phonics, and being able to decode word parts.

Repeated Readings

Developing automaticity in word recognition takes practice. Learners need to read over and over again to feel confident. In the early years, reading out loud is appropriate. They need to vocalize as they read and initially follow along with their finger.

It is not uncommon for educators to send home a book or a poem and ask parents to listen to their child reread the book over a period of days. This is one form of repeated reading, but there are also other engaging ways to keep learners motivated. Learners enjoy reading to one another and sharing what they know.



Reading out loud must be done in a safe environment so as to not single out a learner who is not comfortable doing so.

Encourage learners to do the following:

- Read to one another or read to a reading buddy from another classroom
- Echo read, repeat what an educator, reading buddy, or other child reads (this provides an opportunity to model expression)
- Choral read, read a passage together
- Participate in a reader's theatre

Outcome: Reads some high frequency words correctly in simple, predictable texts

There are several games that can reinforce the automatic recognition of high frequency words. However, it is important to remember that most high frequency words are decodable (or at least partially so) and children should be taught to decode the words first, not just memorize them (see Appendix B for Fry's list of high frequency words). Fry's word lists consist of four sections for each set of one hundred words. Begin with one section at a time. It is important that learners who are learning to read the word lists, work their way down and not across, as words are listed in order of difficulty.

Activity: Board Games for High Frequency Words

Create a large table (e.g., a 4x4 or 5x5 grid). In each square, write one of Fry's high frequency words. Assign individual learners or small groups a number from 1-6, and use a die to determine who will take a turn selecting and reading a word. If they are unable to read the word, help them decode the word. If it's a word with an irregular spelling, discuss this with them. If learner's are not able to decode the word successfully on their first turn, encourage them to try to read the word again during the next round.

Eventually when learners have mastered reading and decoding the first set of high frequency words, move on to the second set.

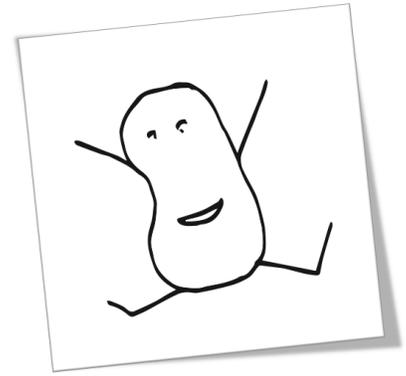
List 1

the
of
and
a
to
in
is
you
that
I
the
was

Note that learning to read and spell a variety of high frequency words takes time and is not an expectation for learners until the consolidated alphabetic to skilled reader phase. Adjust the level of difficulty, number of words, and expected learner interaction according to individual learning needs.

Activity: Jumping Beans

- Write high frequency words or phrases containing high frequency words onto cards and put them into a cloth bag or bucket.
- On some of the cards, draw a small jumping bean shape.
- To keep the game moving quickly, for every 100 cards have about 25 jumping bean cards.
- Learners take turns choosing cards and reading the words. Whenever a learner chooses a card with a jumping bean shape, they stand up and jump five times.



Activity: Morning Message—High Frequency Words with Irregular Spellings

Some high frequency words have irregular spellings that don't follow conventional spelling rules.

Familiarize learners with these words using the morning message, read-alouds, guided reading and writers' workshops. Engage learners in a discussion of how the spelling differs from what might be expected. This makes learning the words more engaging and creates links to phonics knowledge—even for irregular words (see Appendix C for guidance for irregular spelling).

Activity: Decodable and Predictable Texts

Decodable texts are often used in the early phases of reading skill development. They are carefully written to incorporate specific phonics skills and include many high frequency words. Predictable text provide specific text features to support reading skill development as well, but are often repetitive and predictable in their story lines. Having learners read decodable and predictable texts boosts confidence, phonics skills, and increases exposure to print vocabulary (see Appendix D for a list of recommended texts).

Outcome: Develops alphabet fluency with letter sounds

For activities that support this outcome, see pre-alphabetic to partial alphabetic to full alphabetic phase recommendations.

Outcome: Reads familiar texts fluently with expression, pausing at end punctuation

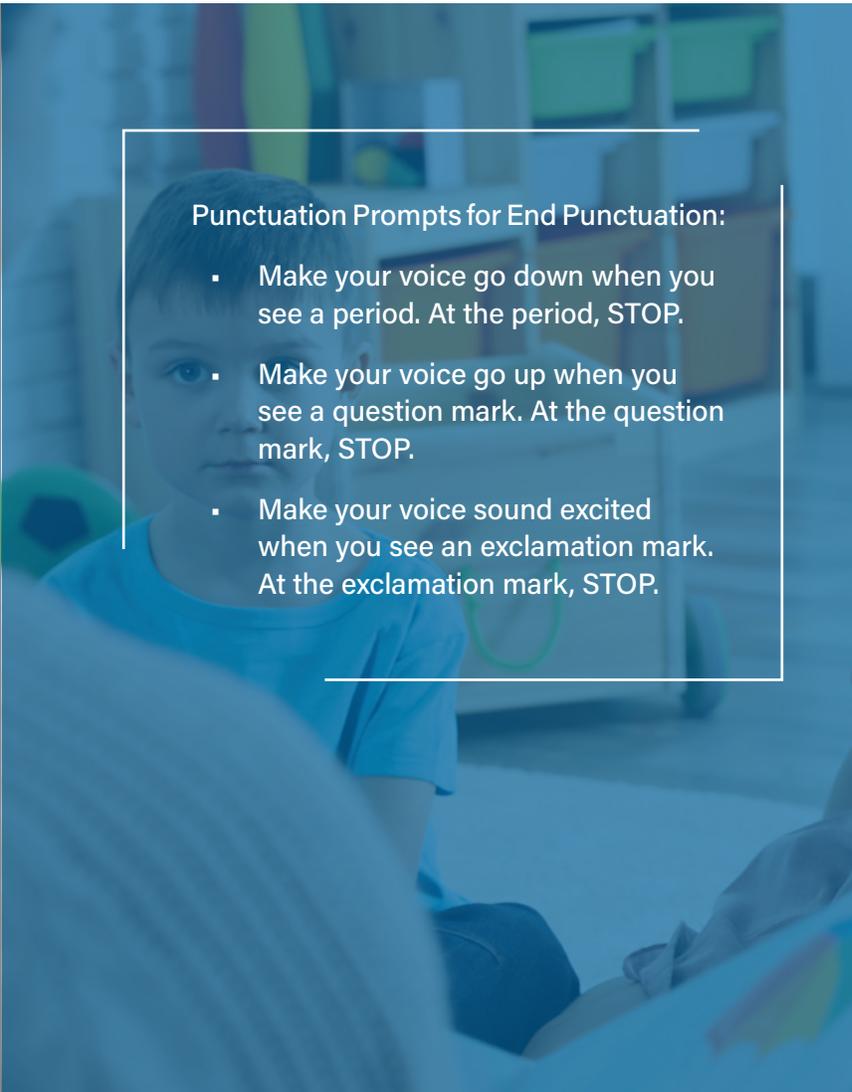
Activity: Reading the Punctuation

It is important to model to young learners how to read the punctuation. Begin with the end punctuation of periods, questions marks, and exclamation marks (see Appendix D for a list of recommended texts).

Note that learners are not expected to respond consistently to internal punctuation (e.g., commas or quotation marks) until the consolidated alphabetic to skilled reader phase.

Equally important is that learners understand that the meaning of a sentence can change if they don't read the punctuation properly:

- "You are playing ball?" (question)
- "You are playing ball." (declarative statement)



Punctuation Prompts for End Punctuation:

- Make your voice go down when you see a period. At the period, STOP.
- Make your voice go up when you see a question mark. At the question mark, STOP.
- Make your voice sound excited when you see an exclamation mark. At the exclamation mark, STOP.



Activity: Punctuation Pasta

Pasta can be used to create punctuation shapes. Learners can place the “pasta punctuation” on printed texts. What pasta works best?



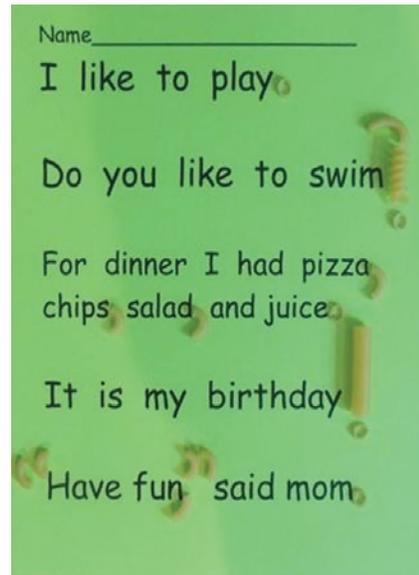
Small tube pasta for periods



Medium tube or twisty pasta for exclamation points



Large elbow pasta for question marks



Activity: Punctuation Poetry

Use poetry to teach pausing at end punctuation.

Poems with Periods

“Mix a Pancake”

Mix a pancake,
Stir a pancake,
Pop it in the pan;
Fry the pancake,
Toss the pancake—
Catch it if you can.

Christina Rossetti
Sourced from: *Read-Aloud
Rhymes for the Very Young*

“The Bird”

Here are the legs
that walk along.
Here is the beak
that sings a song.
Here are the wings that flap
and spread.
And here is the bird
above my head.

Tony Mitton
Sourced from John Foster
and Carol Thompson's *Finger
Rhymes*

Poem with Exclamation Marks

“Popcorn”

Pop, pop, popcorn,
Popping in the pot!
Pop, pop, popcorn,
Eat it while it's hot!
Pop, pop, popcorn,
Butter on the top!
When I eat popcorn,
I can't stop.

Sourced from Helen Moore's
Join In Big Book Format

Poems with Question Marks

"Over There"

Over **there**, **there** is a
park, **where** I go to play.

Over **where**?

Over **there**.

Over where?

Behind **those** trees.

I can't see.

Behind **those** trees,
there's swings and things.

And jungle gyms, and
slides?

Yes, and grass and
playing fields

and seesaws you can
ride.

Sarah Hutt
Sourced from Timothy
Rasinski and Nancy Padek's
Fluency First!

"Popcorn"

Pop, pop, pop, pop

Will it ever stop, stop,
stop, stop?

Little puffs of popcorn

With butter on the top,
top, top, top.

When it is all done,
done, done, done.

Will you give me some,
some, some, some?

Then I'll eat my popcorn

One by one by one by
one.

Karen McGuigan Brothers
Sourced from Timothy
Rasinski and Nancy
Padek's *Fluency First!*

"Finger Play"

One finger

Two fingers

Three fingers, four.

One, two, three, four,

What are fingers for?

Pointing fingers

Crossing fingers

Grabbing fingers, too,

Stretching fingers

Hugging fingers

what else can they do?

Bending fingers

Hiding fingers

Need a thumb who's
missed,

Thumb lays over

Hiding fingers—

Look!

I've made a fist!

Babs Bell Hajdusiewicz
Sourced from John Foster
and Carol Thompson's
Finger Rhymes

Activity: Listening Centre

A listening centre, where learners hear and view books, provides a good opportunity for them to hear an expressive reading of a text. Provide learners with the opportunity to listen to a reading of the same text at least twice. The first time they listen to the text is for pleasure. During the second read, encourage learners to chime-in or practice-read with the narrator.

Outcome: Uses frequently occurring inflections with voice variation

Activity: Use Your Voice!

Inflections refer to a change in tone or voice. The best way to teach this is through read-alouds. Reading the punctuation encourages inflections, where a learner's voice will slow down and add emphasis to a particular word. There are many books to choose from but books with narration are the most useful (see Appendix D for a list of recommended texts).

Consolidated Alphabetic to Skilled Reader Phase: Fluency



Teaching Goal:

To develop more rapid automatic word recognition and fluent reading of texts to progress learners to the skilled reader phase

End Outcomes

- Responds to internal and end punctuation when reading aloud
- Reads a variety of words with automaticity
- Reads familiar passages fluently with appropriate phrasing and expression to convey sense of text to audience

Checklist of Teaching “Must Haves”

- Books for children to browse
- Books you have read to them
- Poems or songs in a pocket chart or on a poster
- Labels of common items (e.g., “Here is a chair.” “Here is a book.” “We line up here.”)
- Labels at activity centres (e.g., Listening Centre, Art Centre, and Writing Centre)
- Classroom name wall or name book
- Alphabet frieze
- Reading centres with a recording device
- Nursery rhyme, poem, and reader’s theatre resources

Activities to Encourage End of Phase Outcomes

Suggested learning activities for the consolidated alphabetic to skilled reader phase are described below.

Outcome: Responds to internal and end punctuation when reading aloud

Outcome: Reads a variety of words automatically

For activities that support these outcomes, see full alphabetic to consolidated alphabetic phase recommendations.

Learners need to be able to read a variety of words with automaticity before educators can fully teach prosody.

Outcome: Reads familiar passages fluently with appropriate phrasing and expression to convey sense of text to audience

Activity: What is Phrasing?

Phrases are often marked by punctuation but not always. Readers must know how to read with expression, but this requires educator modelling and lots and lots of practice.

See below for an example of how phrasing affects the fluency process. Note how a child without phrasing may read word for word, while a reader who reads with appropriate phrasing reads smoothly and with prosody.

Non-fluent reading—reads choppy

Polar/

bear polar/

bear what do/

you see?

Fluent reading—reads smoothly and with prosody

Polar bear/

Polar bear/

What do you see?/

A learner who lacks phrasing probably also has difficulty with comprehension. Phrasing and comprehension are intricately linked.

Activity: Five-Finger-Rule

When teaching learners about reading with expression and appropriate phrasing, it is very important to be sensitive to text complexity. A text used for fluency practice should be developmentally appropriate to ensure word recall is effortless, and the reader can concentrate on expression and comprehension. Use the five-finger rule: if a text has more than five words that a child can't decode with automaticity, then the text is too complex.

Poetry provides an excellent opportunity to practice phrasing, inflection, and stress on particular words and intonation.

Activity: Use Prompts for Reading with Fluency

Provide learners with explicit instructions for reading with fluency. Have them read to a partner or record themselves. Helpful prompts include the following:

- Make your voice sound like the characters are talking
- Make your voice go up when you ask a question
- Make your voice go down when you see a period
- Make your voice show that you understand what you read
- Decide which words you will stress and read with expression

Activity: Oh No! Game

1. Place fluency phrases into a cloth bag (see Appendix E for a list of fluency phrases).
2. Write on the backs of some of the cards, "Oh, No!"
3. Play in groups of four to five. Take turns drawing fluency phrases out of the bag and reading them. If a learner gets a card with Oh, No!, they have to put all their cards back in the bag.

Assessment of Fluency Skills and Knowledge



Assessment is critical to the learning cycle. When educators assess a learner's reading fluency, they are assessing a learner's phonological awareness, phonics, and vocabulary knowledge as well their bank of brain words (words stored in long term memory through orthographic learning) and ability to read orally with expression.

Provide learners the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and to self-assess and set goals. This process of gathering information about learning informs instruction and next steps (see Appendix F for graphic organizers).

Assessment of High Frequency Words

High frequency words are used and encountered frequently in texts. The goal is to promote orthographic learning of words and continuously add to a learners bank of sight words (words recognized automatically in text). Memorization of word lists is not an effective method for sustaining sight word growth, nor is it backed by research (Ouellette, 2019). By decoding or partially decoding high frequency words (with regular and irregular spellings), with time, they will become sight words that can be read accurately and effortlessly.

When assessing learners' knowledge of high frequency words using a prepared list (e.g., Fry, Dolch, or self-created), be sure to do the following:

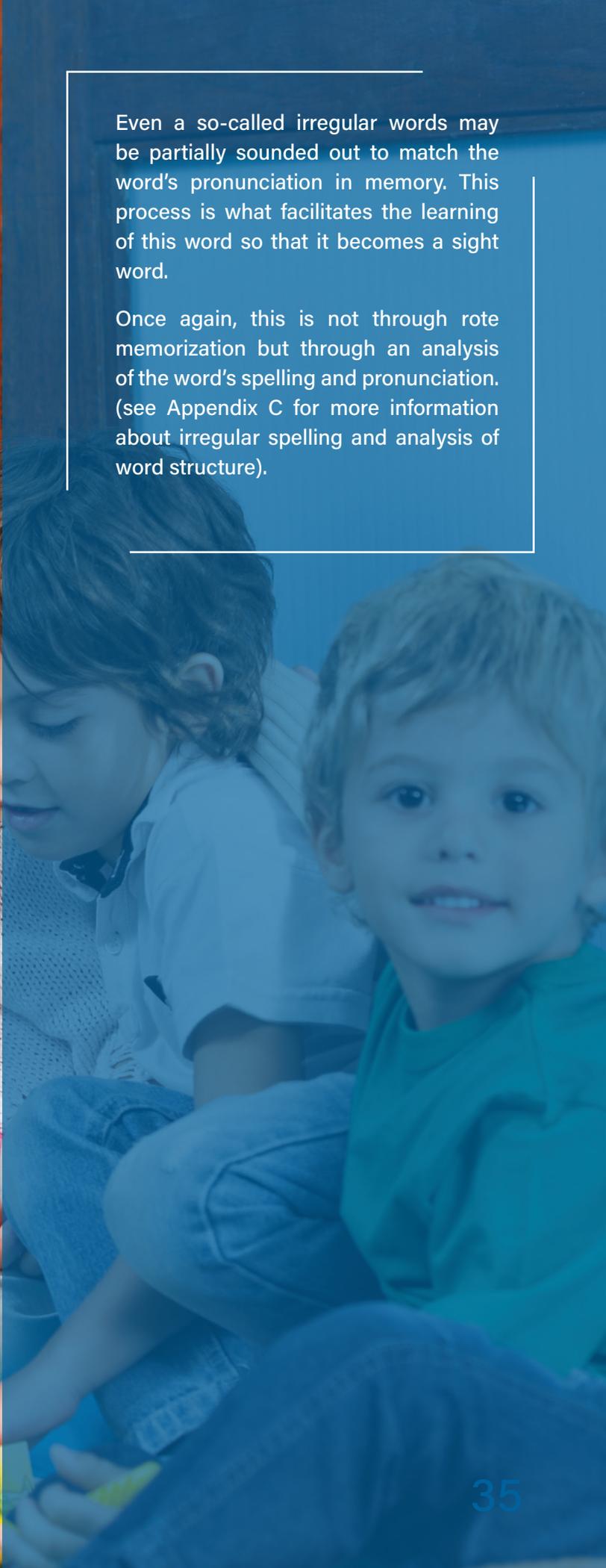
- Read down the columns, not across the page (words are listed in columns based on difficulty).
- Cover columns not being used (too many words on a page can be overwhelming).
- Reveal words learners must read only (consider covering all words/columns until learner is ready to read).
- Use the assessment to inform your instruction.

(See Appendix B for Fry's Word List.)



Even a so-called irregular words may be partially sounded out to match the word's pronunciation in memory. This process is what facilitates the learning of this word so that it becomes a sight word.

Once again, this is not through rote memorization but through an analysis of the word's spelling and pronunciation. (see Appendix C for more information about irregular spelling and analysis of word structure).



Assessment of Reading Fluency

The best way to assess reading fluency is to listen to learners read. This can be done by using a running or reading record. A running record can be taken on any text at any time on a blank piece of paper or a blank “running record sheet.” Educators can complete a running record while listening to a learner read a short passage or while listening in when the learner is reading to another learner. Daily instruction is easily informed by these quick observations. A reading

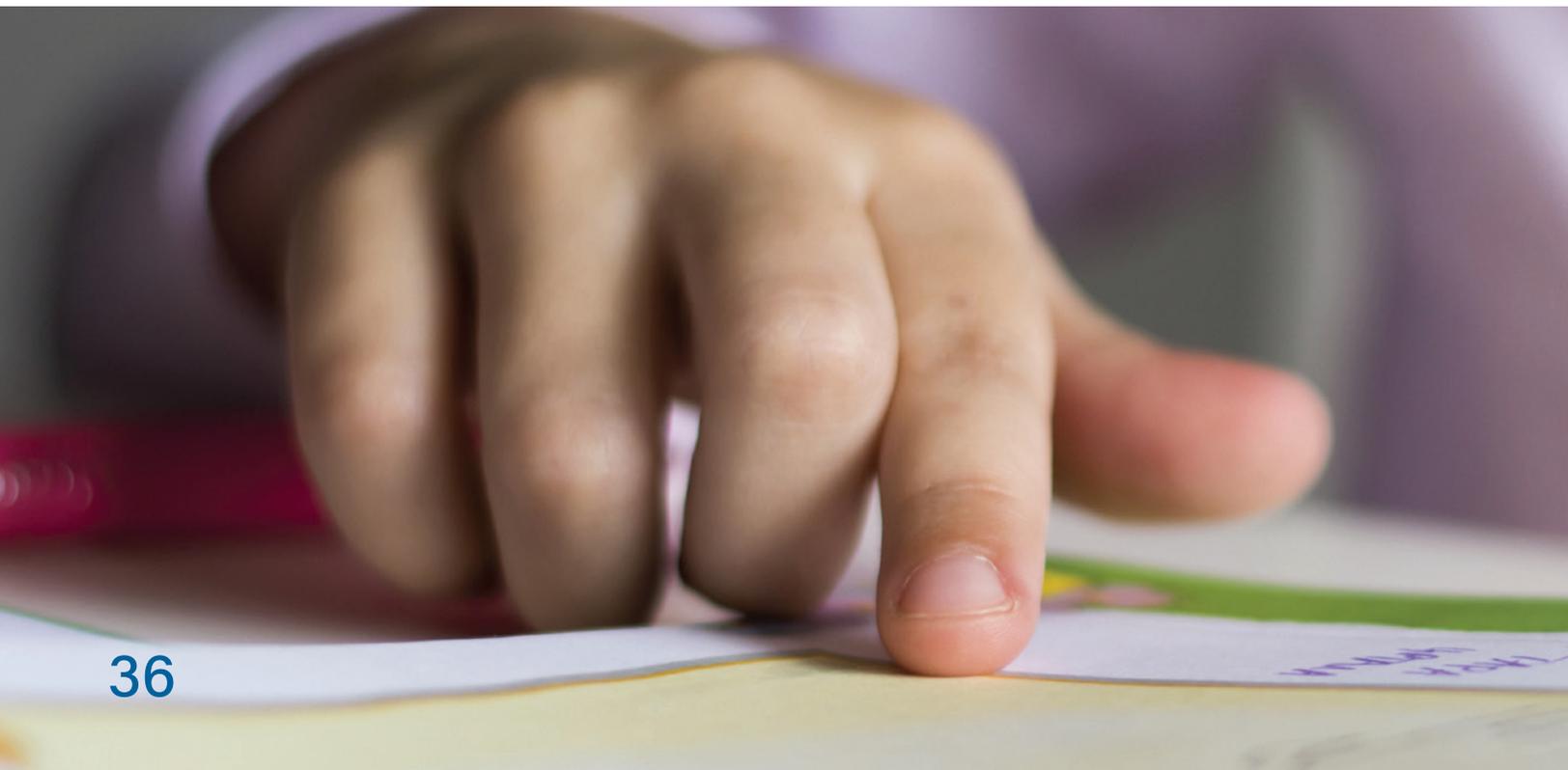
record is taken using prepared forms for selected texts which includes a pre-printed page of text for recording purposes. A standard coding and scoring guide is used. Both running records and reading records provide opportunities for educators to capture reading behaviour as it occurs during the oral reading of a text (see Appendix G for reading and running record forms).

Young readers will sometimes “bark” out the words, one-by-one. As they gain more control over the words and read with automaticity, they will read with more expression.

When listening to a learner read, take note of the following:

- Does the child read smoothly, not word-by-word but in appropriate phrases?
- Does the child read with at least 95% accuracy?
- Does the child read with expression (i.e., appropriate intonation and stress)?
- Does the child “read” the punctuation?
- Can the child retell the story and discuss the text?

While listening to a child read, take note of smoothness and phrasing, accuracy, and decoding strategies used.



Assessing Using Self and Peer Assessment

An assessment capable learner is one who can assess their own learning. They can gauge where they need extra help, and where they are doing well enough that they can move on. Even learners in the early years can become assessment capable learners if given the opportunity to self assess and set goals. *The Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: K-3* states that learners who are involved in reflecting on their learning are “empowered as learners” (p. 255). Reflecting enables learners to gain control “over their learning and language processes” (p. 255).

Learners need to be involved in self-assessing their reading. For example, learners can assess their independent reading and repeated readings of a text. Reader’s theatre, a repeated reading activity, is the reading of a text that already exists in a published form or that has been developed from a story, poem, or some other text (p. 110). It provides an excellent way for learners to develop fluency. Because it is a repeated reading activity that learners may practice over a course of several days, it provides ample opportunity for self-reflection. Learners can also provide meaningful feedback to a classmate (see Appendix F for self-assessment resources).

Learners love to hear what they sound like when they read. Record the children reading a passage and then ask them to evaluate how they did. Did they read with fluency? Are there areas where they’d like to improve. Young children who hear their voices are often very reflective at identifying areas of improvement, after they get over the initial excitement of hearing their voice.

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Appendix A:

Alphabet Letter Naming Resources

Fluency of Letter Identification Scoring Sheet				Upper Case
Name:		Date:		
Teacher:		School:		
Letters	Letter Name	Letter Sound	Word that Begins with Letter	Hesitation
P				
G				
B				
L				
Q				
A				
K				
E				
T				
U				
R				
D				
X				
N				
M				
F				
Y				
W				
S				
C				
I				
Z				
J				
H				
O				
V				

Adapted from Trehearne (2000), p. 85-90.

Fluency of Letter Identification Scoring Sheet

Lower
Case

Name:

Date:

Teacher:

School:

Letters	Letter Name	Letter Sound	Word that Begins with Letter	Hesitation
r				
s				
l				
x				
d				
v				
m				
k				
t				
o				
y				
b				
c				
z				
e				
w				
a				
i				
g				
f				
h				
q				
n				
p				
j				
u				

Student Letter Identification Sheet—Upper Case

P

G

B

L

Q

A

K

E

T

U

R

D

X

N

M

F

Y

W

S

C

I

Z

J

H

O

V

Student Letter Identification Sheet—Lower Case

r

o

g

s

y

f

i

b

h

x

c

q

d

z

n

v

e

p

m

w

j

k

a

u

t

l

Appendix B:

Fry's Word List

Dr. Edward Fry developed this expanded list in the 1950s (and updated it in 1980) based on the most common words to appear in reading materials used in Grades 3–9. Although these are often referred to as “sight words” (i.e., popcorn words) and learners have memorized them in the past, learners must be able to decode them.

Remember that a “sight word” is any word a reader instantly recognizes and identifies without conscious effort *regardless of their spelling pattern*. Listed below are some of the most common words in the English language.

Set One			
List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4
the	or	will	number
of	one	up	no
and	had	other	way
a	by	about	could
to	words	out	people
in	but	many	my
is	not	then	than
you	what	them	first
that	all	these	water
I	were	so	been
the	we	some	called
was	when	her	who
for	your	would	oil
on	can	make	sit
are	said	like	now
as	there	him	find
with	use	into	long
his	an	time	down
they	each	has	day
I	which	look	did

at	she	two	get
be	do	more	come
this	how	write	made
have	their	go	may
from	if	see	part

Set Two			
List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4
new	great	put	kind
sound	where	end	hand
take	help	does	picture
only	through	another	again
little	much	well	change
work	before	large	off
know	line	must	play
place	right	big	spell
year	too	even	air
live	mean	such	away
me	old	because	animal
back	any	turn	house
give	same	here	point
most	tell	why	page
very	boy	ask	letter
after	follow	went	mother
thing	came	men	answer
our	what	road	found
just	show	need	study
name	also	land	learn
good	around	different	should
sentence	form	home	Canada
man	three	us	world
think	small	move	high
say	set	try	

Appendix C:

Let's Talk About Irregular Spelling

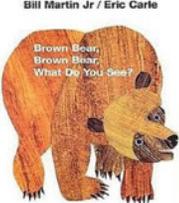
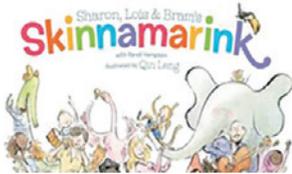
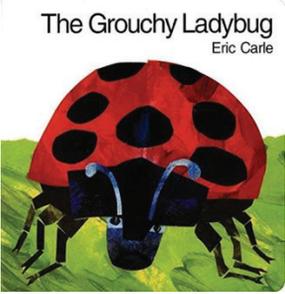
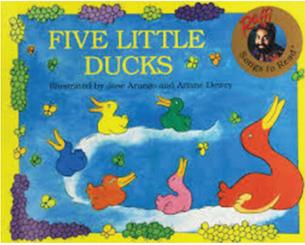
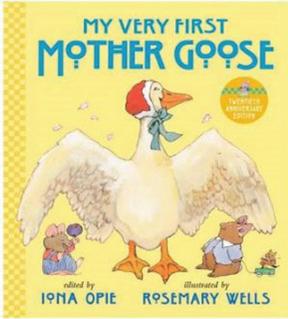
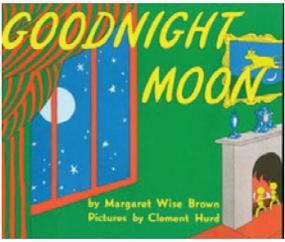
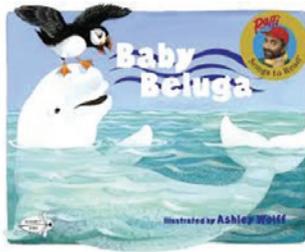
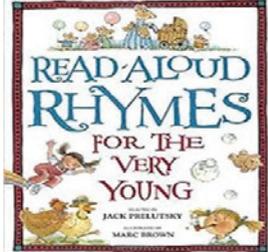
An irregular word refers to a word that deviates from the spelling you would expect from phonics. A great way to learn irregular spellings is to have learners engage in an analysis of the word structure.

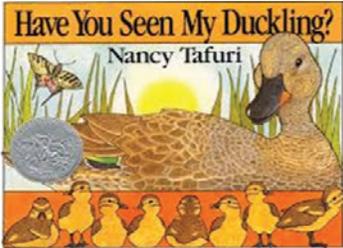
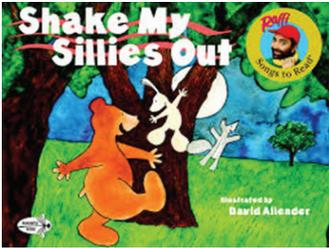
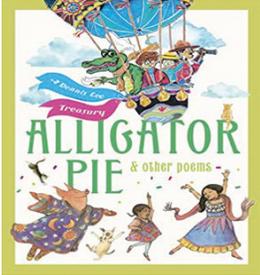
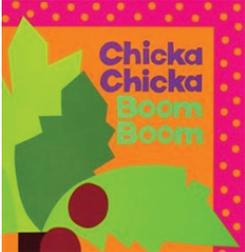
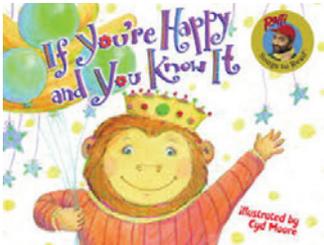
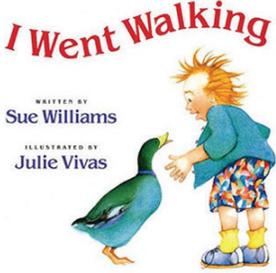
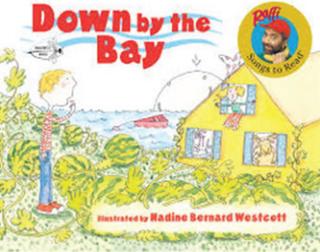
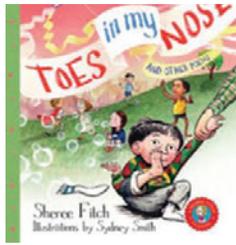
1. Have the learners spell the word to dictation.
2. Guide a comparison of the learner spelling to the conventional one:
 - Discuss the first and final sounds/letters. Are they what you would expect from the pronunciation? Can you think of other words that have this spelling too?
 - Discuss the middle of the word—where most irregular spellings occur. Discuss how the spelling deviates from what may be expected.
 - Have the learners re-copy the correct spelling and read that word. Now the word is good to go on the wall!

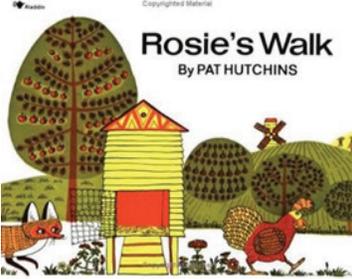
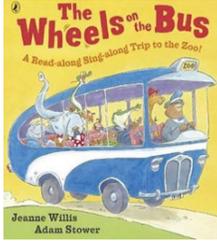
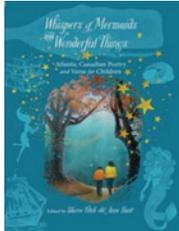
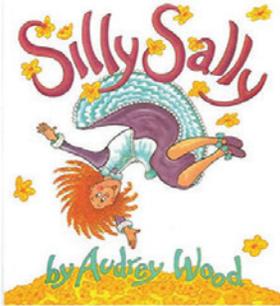
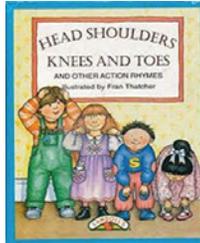
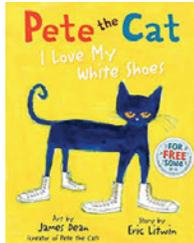
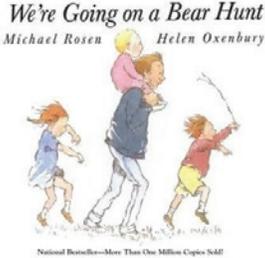
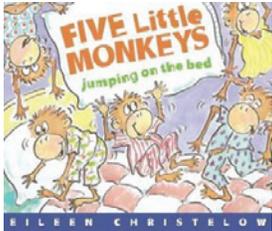
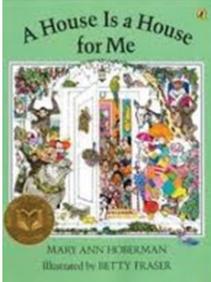
Appendix D:

Text Recommendations

Repetitive Text

Picture Books	Song Books	Nursery Rhymes & Poetry
<p><i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?</i></p> <p>Bill Martin Jr (author) / Eric Carle (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>Sharon, Lois & Bram's Skinnamarink</i></p> <p>Sharon Hampson, Lois Lilienstein & Bram Morrison with Randi Hampson / Qin Leng (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>Sing a Song of Mother Goose</i></p> <p>Barbara Reid</p> 
<p><i>Grouch Lady Bug</i></p> <p>Eric Carle</p> 	<p><i>Five Little Ducks</i></p> <p>Raffi (author) / Jose Arugego, Ariane Dewey (illustrators)</p> 	<p><i>My Very First Mother Goose</i></p> <p>Iona Opie and Rosemary Wells</p> 
<p><i>Goodnight Moon</i></p> <p>Margaret Wise Brown (author) / Clement Hurd (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>Baby Beluga</i></p> <p>Raffi (author / Ashley Wolff (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young</i></p> <p>Selected by Jack Prelutsky / Illustrated by Marc Brown</p> 

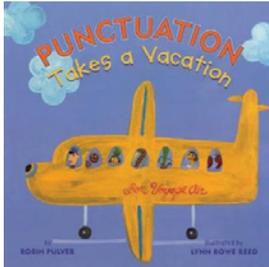
Picture Books	Song Books	Nursery Rhymes & Poetry
<p><i>Have You Seen My Duckling?</i></p> <p>Nancy Tafuri</p> 	<p><i>Shake My Sillies Out</i></p> <p>Jeanne Willis Raffi (author) / Maple Lam (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>Alligator Pie & Other Poems: A Dennis Lee Treasury</i></p> <p>Dennis Lee</p> 
<p><i>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</i></p> <p>Bill Martin Jr., John Archambault (authors) / Lois Ehlert (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>If You are Happy and You Know It</i></p> <p>Raffi (author) / Cyd Moore (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>The Ice Cream Store</i></p> <p>Dennis Lee (author) / David McPhail (illustrator)</p> 
<p><i>I Went Walking</i></p> <p>Sue William (author) / Julie Vivas (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>Down by the Bay</i></p> <p>Raffi (author) / Nadine Bernard Westcott (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>Toes in my Nose</i></p> <p>Sheree Fitch (author) / Sydney Smith (illustrator)</p> 

Picture Books	Song Books	Nursery Rhymes & Poetry
<p><i>Rosie's Walk</i></p> <p>Pat Hutchins</p> 	<p><i>The Wheels on the Bus</i></p> <p>Jeanne Willis</p> 	<p><i>Whispers of Mermaids and Wonderful Things Atlantic Canadian Poetry and Verse for Children</i></p> <p>Edited by Sheree Fitch and Anne Hunt</p> 
<p><i>Silly Sally</i></p> <p>Audrey Wood</p> 	<p><i>Head Shoulders Knees and Toes: And Other Action Rhymes</i></p> <p>Illustrations by Fran Thatcher</p> 	<p><i>Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes</i></p> <p>Kimberly Dean and James Dean (authors) / Eric Litwin (illustrator)</p> 
<p><i>We're Going on a Bear Hunt</i></p> <p>Michael Rosen (author) / Helen Oxenbury (illustrator)</p> 	<p><i>Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed</i></p> <p>Eileen Christelow</p> 	<p><i>A House Is a House for Me</i></p> <p>Mary Ann Hoberman (author) / Betty Fraser (illustrator)</p> 

Texts for Teaching Punctuation

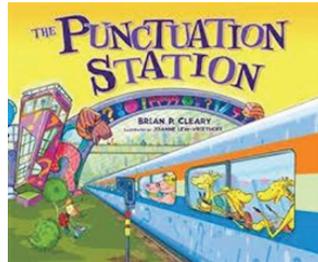
Punctuation Takes a Vacation

Robin Pulver (author) / Lynn Rowe Reed (illustrator)



The Punctuation Station

Brian P. Cleary



Exclamation Point

Amy Krause Rosenthal (author) & Tom Lichtenheld (illustrator)



Decodable Text Sources

Sourced from The Reading League (2021). <https://www.thereadingleague.org/>

- BOB Books
- Dog on a Log Books
- Dr. Maggie's Phonic Readers
- EPS Phonics Plus Readers
- Flyleaf Emergent Readers
- Half Pint Readers
- High Noon Dandelion Launchers
- InitiaLit Readers from MultiLit (AUS)
- Jolly Phonics (USA)
- Junior Learning Decodable Readers
- Little Learners Love Literacy (AUS)
- Miss Rhonda's Readers
- Primary Phonics Storybook Sets
- Pocket Rockets (AUS)
- Sondag System 1 & 2 Readers
- SPELL-Links Reading Library (digital)
- The Superkids Library
- Voyager Sopris Power Readers
- Youkan Reading Decodable Books

Appendix E:

Fry's Fluency Phrases

Fry Instant Phrases

The words in these phrases come from Dr. Edward Fry's Instant Word List (High Frequency Words). According to Fry, the first 300 words in the list represent about 67% of all the words students encounter in their reading.

First 100 Words/Phrases

The people	Out of the water	Give them to me.
Write it down	A long time	Then we will go.
By the water	We were here	Now is the time
Who will make it?	Have you seen it?	An angry cat
You and I	Could you go?	May I go first?
What will they do?	One more time	Write your name.
He called me.	We like to write.	This is my cat.
We had their dog.	All day long	That dog is big.
What did they say?	Into the water	Get on the bus.
When would you go?	It's about time	Two of us
No way	The other people	Did you see it?
A number of people	Up in the air	The first word
One or two	She said to go	See the water
How long are they?	Which way?	As big as the first
More than the other	Each of us	But not for me
Come and get it.	He has it.	When will we go?
How many words?	What are these?	How did they get it?
Part of the time	If we were older	From here to there
This is a good day.	There was an old man	Number two
Can you see?	It's no use	More people
Sit down.	It may fall down.	Look up
Now and then	With his mom	Go down
But not me	At your house	All or some
Go find her	From my room	Did you like it?
Not now	It's been a long time.	A long way to go
Look for some people.	Will you be good?	When did they go?
I like him.		For some of your people
So there you are.		

Second 100

Over the river
My new place
Another great sound
Take a little
Give it back.
Only a little
It's only me.
I know why.
Three years ago
Live and play
A good man
After the game
Most of the animals
Our best things
Just the same
My last name
That's very good
Think before you act
Mother says to now.
Where are you?
I need help.
I work too much.
Any old time
Through the line
Right now
Mother means it.
Same time tomorrow
Tell the truth
A little boy
The following day
We came home.
We want to go.
Show us around.

Form two lines.
A small house also
Another old picture
Write one sentence.
Set it up.
Put it there.
Where does it end?
I don't feel well.
My home is large.
It turned out well.
Read the sentence.
This must be it.
Hand it over.
Such a big house
The men asked for help.
A different land
They went here.
Get to the point.
Because we should.
Even the animals
Try your best.
Move over.
We found it here.
Study and learn
Kind of nice
Spell your name.
The good American
Change your clothes
Play it again.
Back off.
Give it away.
Answer the phone.
Turn the page.
The air is warm.

Read my letters.
It's still here.
Where in the world.
We need more.
I study in school.
I'm an American.
Such a mess
Point it out
Right now
It's a small world.
Big and small
Home sweet home
Around the clock
Show and tell
You must be right.
Tell the truth.
Good and plenty
Help me out
It turned out well.
It's your place.
Good things
I think so.
Read the book.

Appendix F:

Peer Assessment

Name _____

Date _____

Title _____

How Did I Read?

Please circle the picture that describes how you read independently.

When I was reading, I...		
...read like I was talking to someone.		
...made my voice become soft and loud.		
...read the words not too fast or not too slow.		
...read the punctuation.		
...used fix-up strategies.		

...understood what I read.		
...enjoyed reading.		

My Buddy's Name _____

My Name _____

Date _____

Title _____

How Did My Buddy Read?

Please circle the picture that describes how your buddy read independently.

My buddy...		
...read like they were talking to someone.		
...made their voice become soft and loud.		
...read the words not too fast or not too slow.		
...read the punctuation.		
...used fix-up strategies.		
...could tell me about what they had read.		

Name _____ Date _____

Title _____

Reader's Theatre Self-Assessment

Please circle the picture that describes how you felt after viewing the reader's theatre video.

...read like I was talking to someone.		
...made my voice become soft and loud.		
...made my voice become loud.		
...read the words not too fast or too slow.		
...read the punctuation.		

I liked my reading because _____

One thing that I would like to work on is _____

Appendix G:

Running and Reading Records

RUNNING RECORD SHEET

Name: _____ Date: _____ D. of B.: _____ Age: _____ yrs _____ mos.
 School: _____ Recorder: _____

Text titles	Errors Running Words	Error Ratio	Accuracy Rate	Self-correction Ratio
Easy _____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____
Instructional _____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____
Hard _____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____

Directional movement _____

Analysis of Errors and Self-corrections

Information used or neglected — Meaning (M), Structure or Syntax (S), Visual (V)

Easy _____
 Instructional _____

 Hard _____

Cross-checking on information (Note that this behavior changes over time)

Page	Title	Count		Analysis of Errors and Self-Corrections	
		E	SC	Information used	
				E MSV	SC MSV

Coding and Scoring Errors at-a-Glance

Behavior	What the Reader Does	How to Code	Example	How to Score
Accurate Reading	Reads words correctly	Do not mark or place check (✓) above word	No mark or <u>✓</u> environments	No error
Substitution	Gives an incorrect response	Write the substituted word above the word	worry wonder	Substitution, not corrected 1 error
Multiple Substitutions	Makes several attempts at a word	Write each substitution in sequence above the word	speekles spiees specials species adept adopt SC adapted to touch teeth tooth Attic Arctic can not they're can't they are	Multiple substitutions, not corrected 1 error for each incorrect word in text Multiple substitutions, self-corrected (SC) No error; 1 SC Multiple misreadings of the same word, not corrected 1 error for each incorrect word in text Multiple misreadings of names and proper nouns 1 error first time missed; no errors after that Misreading contractions (reads contraction as two words or two words as contraction) 1 error each time
Self-correction	Corrects a previous error	Write the error over the word, followed by SC	use SC usually	No error; 1 SC
Insertion	Adds a word that is not in the text	Write in the inserted word using a caret	very ^	1 error per word inserted
Omission	Gives no response to a word	Place a dash (-) above the word	- only	Skipping a word 1 error per word Skipping a line 1 error per word
Repetition	Reads same word again	Write R after the word	R	No error

Coding system developed by Marie Clay as part of the running record system in An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, Revised Second Edition, 2006, Heinemann.

Coding and Scoring Errors at-a-Glance (continued)

Behavior	What the Reader Does	How to Code	Example	How to Score	
Repeated Repetitions	Reads the same word more than once	Write R for the first repetition, then write a number for the additional repetitions	R ₂ R ₃	No error	
Rereading	Returns to the beginning of sentence or phrase to read again Rereads and self-corrects	Write R with an arrow back to the place where rereading began Write R with an arrow back to the place where rereading began and a SC at point of self-correction	 They can wrap themselves	No error No error; 1 SC	
Appeal	Verbally asks for help	Write A above the word	<u>A</u> environments	Follow up with "You try it" No error	
"You Try It"	The child appeals, the teacher responds with "You try it"	Write Y after the word	<u>A</u> environments Y	"You try it" followed by correct word "You try it" followed by omission, incorrect word, or Told	No error 1 error
Told	Child doesn't attempt a word even after "You try it"	Write T after the word or the Y	<u>A</u> T environments T <u>A</u> T environments T	1 error	
Spelling Aloud	Child spells word by saying the names of letters	Write the letters in all capital letters	<u>E-V-E-R</u> ever	Spelling followed by correct word Spelling followed by incorrect word	No error 1 error
Sounding Out	The child makes the sounds associated with the letters in the word	Write the letters in lower case with hyphens between them	<u>o-n-l-y</u> ✓ only <u>t-em-per</u> <u>temper</u> temperature <u>b</u> <u>SC</u> polar	"Sounding out" followed by correct word "Sounding out" followed by incorrect word or no word Sounding the first letter incorrectly and then saying the word correctly	No error; no SC 1 error No error; 1 SC

Coding system developed by Marie Clay as part of the running record system in An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, Revised Second Edition, 2006, Heinemann.

CONVERSION TABLE

ERROR RATE

Divide the running words by the errors. Round that number to the nearest whole number (e.g., round 9.5 up to 10 and round 9.2 down to 9) Locate the ratio on the chart. Always go down to the next lower number if the exact ratio is not shown on the chart. Locate the corresponding percent of accuracy.

For example:

$$\text{Error Rate} = \frac{\text{\# of running words}}{\text{\# of errors}} = 1 : \frac{51}{5} = 10.2 \quad 1:10 = 90 \% \text{ accuracy}$$

ERROR RATE	% ACCURACY	IMPLICATIONS
1 : 200	99.5	Easy
1 : 100	99.0	
1 : 50	98.0	
1 : 35	97.0	
1 : 25	96.0	
1 : 20	95.0	
1 : 17	94.0	Instructional
1 : 14	93.0	
1 : 12.5	92.0	
1 : 11.75	91.0	
1 : 10	90.0	
1 : 9	89.0	Hard
1 : 8	87.5	
1 : 7	85.5	
1 : 6	83.0	
1 : 5	80.0	
1 : 4	75.0	
1 : 3	66.0	
1 : 2	50.0	

SELF-CORRECTION RATE

Self-correction rate = $\frac{\text{\# of errors} + \text{\# of self-corrections}}{\text{\# of self-corrections}}$ rounded to a whole number, expressed as a ratio

1 : 3 to 1 : 5 Good comprehension of self-correction
 Less than 1 : 5 Poor comprehension of self-correction

For example:

$$\frac{\text{\# of errors} + \text{\# of self-corrections}}{\text{\# of self-corrections}} = \frac{10 + 4}{4} = 3.5 \text{ or } 4 = 1:4 \quad \text{Good}$$

