

# Building Readers<sup>®</sup>

Pollard School Reading Room  
Ms. Tozier and Mrs. Rockwell

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

## Find signs of fluency development

Fluency—the ability to read quickly with meaning—takes lots of practice to develop. In fact, it isn't a one-time task. A child may read some books fluently, but then try more difficult words, and work on fluency again. This is important for reading comprehension.

Some signs of progress are:

- **Your child recognizes** many words immediately.
- **Words flow together** instead of having a pause after each one.
- **Your child reads with expression** that makes sense with the text.
- **It sounds as if** your child understands what he's reading.

**Source:** "Fluency Instruction," Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, National Institute for Literacy, [www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading\\_first1fluency.html](http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1fluency.html).



### Tip

If your child loves comic books, it's nice to know that it might be a phase. Your best bet: Keep other types of easy-to-read adventures around the house.

**Source:** "Tips for Reading to and with Children in Grades 4-6," National Education Association, [www.nea.org/parents/reading46.html](http://www.nea.org/parents/reading46.html).



**Q:** My child needs to learn sight words. Where can I find them?

**A:** Sight words are listed in many places, such as in children's workbooks, on flashcards and online. You can even think of some yourself. What words do people use often? Some examples are *mother*, *and*, *but*, *who*, *what*, *when*, *where* and *why*. You can find many more at [www.literacyconnections.com/Dolch.php](http://www.literacyconnections.com/Dolch.php) or ask your child's teacher for a list.



Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Think aloud while reading aloud

When you read with your child, don't hesitate to think aloud. "I wonder why the boy did that." "The trees in this picture are beautiful! It must be fall." "This book shows how important honesty can be."



By thinking aloud about material, you become a reading role model for your child.

**Source:** Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, "Think-Alouds Boost Reading Comprehension: Help kids develop inferencing skills by using this powerful strategy," *Instructor*, Nov-Dec, 2001, [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0STR/is\\_4\\_111/ai\\_80747649](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0STR/is_4_111/ai_80747649).

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“So please, oh PLEASE,  
we beg, we pray,  
Go throw your TV set away,  
And in its place you can install,  
A lovely bookshelf on the wall.”

—Roald Dahl,  
*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

## Ask about confusing reading terms

If you're talking with a teacher, and she uses reading terms that you don't understand, take the time to ask what they mean! Many reading terms are new to parents and teachers want to help parents understand.



## Make vocabulary words meaningful

Is memorizing vocabulary words boring for your child? Researchers suggest connecting new words to what your child already knows. After all, vocabulary words are meant to be used, and that requires connecting them to real life!

For example, you might say, "A magnet is a metal that attracts things to it. Let's walk around with a refrigerator magnet and see what sticks to it."

You can also build understanding by asking three simple questions. They are:

1. **What is it?**
2. **What is it like?**
3. **What are some examples?**



**Source:** Carl B. Smith, "Vocabulary Instruction and Reading Comprehension," ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication Digest #126, <http://reading.indiana.edu/ieo/digests/d126.html>.

## Show your child that reading is relaxing

Experts say it's important for kids to keep reading over the summer. But how can you convince your child that reading is fun?



Here are some ideas:

- **Match books with activities.** If you're going to a movie, for example, read a book about it afterwards.
- **Visit the library.** There might be exciting reading events and incentives planned.
- **Read yourself.** Pick up books, magazines and newspapers. Show that you enjoy reading.

- **Talk about reading.** Mention something fascinating you read. Ask about your child's books.
- **Make time for reading.** Give your child plenty of down time. Let him stay up late to read.
- **Have books handy.** Keep interesting materials around, including how-to books. Read aloud together enthusiastically!

**Source:** "RIF's Ter-RIF-ic Summer Reading Tips for Families," Reading Is Fundamental, [www.rif.org/parents/tips/tp.msp?View=14](http://www.rif.org/parents/tips/tp.msp?View=14).

### For lower elementary readers:



**My Camp-Out**, by Marcia Leonard (The Millbrook Press, Inc.). A young girl's indoor campout turns into an adventure. Simple words and colorful photos appeal to beginning readers.

**The Wedding**, by Eve Bunting (Whispering Coyote). It's someone's wedding day, but everyone is late! They'll get there in time, thanks to a cow who's happy to help.

### For upper elementary readers:

**Room One: A Mystery or Two**, by Andrew Clements (Simon & Schuster). Ted goes to a small school in Nebraska, and it's at risk for closing down. Meanwhile, he works to solve a challenging mystery.

**Peter and the Starcatchers**, by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson (Disney Editions). What happened to Peter Pan before he met Wendy? This book describes his exciting history on the ship Never Land.

## Reading term of the month

### Comprehension

Reading **comprehension** is understanding what is read.

## Help your child learn to read for other subjects

Your child may be able to sail through books she reads for pleasure, but what about textbooks? Being able to read for math, science and social studies is important.



As your child moves on to different subjects, she'll face new vocabulary words. Here are things your child can do to keep up with her subject-area reading:

- **Identify** what she already knows about the reading.
- **Use** mental pictures to "see" what she's reading.
- **Summarize** what she's read.

**Source:** H. Celeste Turner, "Reading Across Curriculum," Public Schools of North Carolina, [www.ncpublicschools.org/schoolimprovement/effective/briefs/readingacross](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/schoolimprovement/effective/briefs/readingacross).

## Using resources

At Scholastic's Kids: Book Central ([www.scholastic.com/titles/index.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/titles/index.htm)), kids can:

- **Get** ideas for books to read.
- **Review** books.
- **Learn** about authors.
- **Investigate** books in many more ways!

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