

TEXT WRESTLING:
HOW TO HELP STUDENTS IMPROVE THEIR READING

READY-TO-USE TEACHING MATERIALS

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HOW TO HELP A STUDENT DECODE

Simply telling a child what a word is when he is stuck reading will not help him become a better reader. Here's how to really help.

Who Can Do This?

Any child who reads fluently can help classmates who are struggling. Older students who are fluent readers can easily be trained to help younger ones. Parents, tutors, relatives, siblings, and friends can easily be trained to help.

Who Needs This?

Any student who is struggling to read a given text, either because it is above his current independent reading level or because he is struggling with mastering elementary decoding skills.

Ingredients:

A sharpened pencil

What Not to Do:

When someone needs help reading, don't tell him what the word is. That won't help him read the word correctly next time. Don't give him clues either; this just encourages him to guess. Don't use letter names when you talk. The *sounds* the letters represent are what a student needs to know to decode a word. Letter names can confuse a student.

What to Do:

Look for the first sound in the word the student doesn't know. Point to that sound with your pencil tip or underline it and tell them what SOUND to say there in the word.

Example: Your sister is trying to read the word *feast*.

She reads the first sound and gets stuck on the second.

You underline *ea*. You point to it and tell her, "Say 'ee' here."

Now your sister will be able to sound out the word herself.

She can say each sound—"f", "ee", "s", "t"—then blend them together.

- If she has trouble blending them all together, have her blend as she goes.

She can blend "f" and "ee" out loud together, then add one sound at a time.

- If she says short 'e' (as in "bread") for *ea* in *feast*, underline and point to *ea* and say: "This *can* show 'e' [as in "bread"], but here it shows 'ee'."

In longer words have the student blend as he goes, syllable by syllable.

1. Say the sounds of the first syllable, then blend the sounds together out loud.
2. Say the sounds of the 2nd syllable, then blend those sounds together out loud.
3. Say the two syllables together, etc.

Example: Your brother is trying to read *indirect*

He sounds out *i, n*, and blends them together to say *in*.

He sounds out *d, i* and blends them together to say *di*

He blends the first and second syllables together and says *indi*.

He sounds out *r, e, c, t* and blends them together to say *rect*.

He blends the first three syllables together to say *indirect*. *Bravo!*

2006 Hasbrouck & Tindal Oral Reading Fluency Data

Jan Hasbrouck and Gerald Tindal have completed an extensive study of oral reading fluency. The results of their study were published in a technical report entitled, "Oral Reading Fluency: 90 Years of Measurement," which is available on the University of Oregon's website, brt.uoregon.edu/tech_reports.htm, and in *The Reading Teacher* in 2006 (Hasbrouck, J. & Tindal, G. A. (2006). Oral reading fluency norms: A valuable assessment tool for reading teachers. *The Reading Teacher*. 59(7), 636-644.).

The table below shows the mean oral reading fluency of students in grades 1 through 8 as determined by Hasbrouck and Tindal's data.

You can use the information in this table to draw conclusions and make decisions about the oral reading fluency of your students. **Students scoring 10 or more words below the 50th percentile using the average score of two unpracticed readings from grade-level materials need a fluency-building program.** In addition, teachers can use the table to set the long-term fluency goals for their struggling readers.

Average weekly improvement is the average words per week growth you can expect from a student. It was calculated by subtracting the fall score from the spring score and dividing the difference by 32, the typical number of weeks between the fall and spring assessments. For grade 1, since there is no fall assessment, the average weekly improvement was calculated by subtracting the winter score from the spring score and dividing the difference by 16, the typical number of weeks between the winter and spring assessments.

Grade	Percentile	Fall WCPM*	Winter WCPM*	Spring WCPM*	Avg. Weekly Improvement**
1	90		81	111	1.9
	75		47	82	2.2
	50		23	53	1.9
	25		12	28	1.0
	10		6	15	0.6
2	90	106	125	142	1.1
	75	79	100	117	1.2
	50	51	72	89	1.2
	25	25	42	61	1.1
	10	11	18	31	0.6

*WCPM = Words Correct Per Minute

Grade	Percentile	Fall WCPM*	Winter WCPM*	Spring WCPM*	Avg. Weekly Improvement**
3	90	128	146	162	1.1
	75	99	120	137	1.2
	50	71	92	107	1.1
	25	44	62	78	1.1
	10	21	36	48	0.8
4	90	145	166	180	1.1
	75	119	139	152	1.0
	50	94	112	123	0.9
	25	68	87	98	0.9
	10	45	61	72	0.8
5	90	166	182	194	0.9
	75	139	156	168	0.9
	50	110	127	139	0.9
	25	85	99	109	0.8
	10	61	74	83	0.7
6	90	177	195	204	0.8
	75	153	167	177	0.8
	50	127	140	150	0.7
	25	98	111	122	0.8
	10	68	82	93	0.8
7	90	180	192	202	0.7
	75	156	165	177	0.7
	50	128	136	150	0.7
	25	102	109	123	0.7
	10	79	88	98	0.6
8	90	185	199	199	0.4
	75	161	173	177	0.5
	50	133	146	151	0.6
	25	106	115	124	0.6
	10	77	84	97	0.6

**Average words per week growth

HOW TO HELP A STUDENT INCREASE READING FLUENCY

Any student reading 10 or more words below 50th percentile fluency for his/her grade level on two unpracticed trials needs fluency training. Here's how to help.

Components of Effective Fluency Training

Oral reading is the focus: struggling children do not improve fluency reading silently.
Practice: the child reads and rereads (at least 4 times) words aloud in connected text.
Feedback: corrective feedback is given as the child is reading.
Monitor progress: weekly graphing of results ideal; minimum three times/year.

Time

15 minutes per session, at least 3 or 4 times a week, is optimal. Consistency is far more important than how long each practice session is (Shaywitz 234). Practice for as little as 5 or 6 minutes per session, daily over several months, has shown significant effect (Shaywitz 272). Daily fluency practice at school is part of a comprehensive reading program through at least elementary school.

Ingredients

1. Materials to read together:

Choose materials at the student's independent reading level, defined as material in which the student can read 19 out of 20 words correctly. A student must read a word accurately before he/she can read it fluently. Decoding precedes fluency.

Use the student's textbooks, reading assignments, poems, plays, letters, recipes, articles, etc. Ask the teacher what the student's independent reading level is and what books he/she recommends. If the school participates in either the DRP or Lexile reading programs, the teacher can give you a list of books matched to the student's reading level and interest. If you can, get a duplicate set of books so you can each follow along as the other reads.

If possible, scan the text, save it in a word document, so you can have word count how many words the student has read. (Under "Tools", click on "Word Count" after you highlight words student has read.)

Read a paragraph, a page, or a short chapter at a time.

2. Timer, to time one or two minute reading periods.

3. A translucent ruler or level marker may help some students keep their place on the page.

What to Do

1. Gauge the student's fluency by listening to him read material at his own reading level. Students should begin reading fluently by the middle of second grade (Shaywitz 233). A fluent reader reads smoothly and with expression. You can use sample *One Minute Reader* stories to assess fluency for grades K-5 at <http://www.oneminutereader.com/how/samples.html>. You can access a comprehensive manual on how to assess fluency for Read Naturally materials, including sample stories for grades K-8, at <http://www.readnaturally.com/pdf/PlacementPkt.pdf>

The general guidelines for placement are:

<u>Grade level</u> of story	<u>Scores in this range</u> indicate a potential fit
1.0 to 3.0	30–60 WCPM
3.5 to 5.0	60–80 WCPM
5.6 to 7.0	80–100 WCPM
8.0 100–	140 WCPM

WCPM = words correct per minute (from <http://www.readnaturally.com/pdf/PlacementPkt.pdf>)

2. Listen to the student read the same material aloud at least four times in a variety of ways (not necessarily in the same session). Provide gentle, corrective feedback as the student reads (see “How to Help a Student Decode”).

3. The Read Naturally program utilizes *choral reading*, where the teacher (recorded/live) reads out loud *with* the student each time, increasing his/her speed slightly each time to nudge the student’s speed up as well.

Variations at home:

- If the student is struggling, it is often helpful to read a passage and then have the student read aloud the same passage you have just modeled for him.
- Take turns reading aloud to each other.
- Read the passage together aloud.
- Have the student read into a tape recorder, then follow along as he listens.

Variations at school:

- Echo reading: The teacher first models by reading a passage aloud. Then the student reads the same passage with the teacher's guidance. That evening the student reads the same passage aloud to his parents, who provide corrective guidance. Next day students pair up and take turns reading the passage to each other.

- Poetry party: Students select poems, practice repeatedly reading them aloud over several days, then read them aloud for each other at a poetry party, with lights turned low and/or other atmospheric touches.
- Reader's Theatre: Students practice, then perform dramatic readings from a play script. In one recent study, students participating in Reader's Theatre for 10 weeks made a year's gain in fluency rates. Reader's Theatre is successful grades 2-12.
- Reading song lyrics. Teacher reads first, then she and students read as a chorus four or more times.

How to Measure Passage Fluency

1. Select 2 or 3 paragraphs. Have two copies, so you can mark his mistakes as he reads.
2. Have student read passage aloud to ensure he can read it comfortably (19 out of 20 words correctly).
3. Next, tell him/her to read the same passage as quickly and as accurately as he can. Time the student as he reads aloud for one minute.
4. Count the total number of words the student reads. To have a more accurate measure, you can have the student read 2 or 3 passages and take an average.
5. Count as mistakes:
 - misread words, even if the misread word does not change the meaning of the text (e.g., “an” instead of “the”). We are after meticulous accuracy.
 - omitted words
 - any word the student hesitates over more than 3 seconds. If the student makes an error and self-corrects within 3 seconds, the word is considered correct.
6. Graph the student’s fluency on a simple graph so he/she can see progress.

Additional Ways to Help Dyslexic Students Increase Reading Fluency

A dyslexic reader must *overlearn* words to gain fluency, often requiring more practice than other students. Fluency training is athletic training for the brain.

Effective Commercial Programs for Struggling Readers

For struggling readers, effective commercial programs available for both school and home use include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Read Naturally www.readnaturally.com grades 1-8, uses CD-Rom or audiotapes with graduated reading books. *One-Minute Readers* <http://www.oneminutereader.com> are designed for parents/tutors to use effectively to help their children, with instructional CD and affordable materials (\$12/book). A tutor (with parental involvement if possible) can very effectively and easily use *One-Minute Readers* to increase student’s fluency. Over the summer, when student has more time to work on fundamental skills, is an ideal time.

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- The Reader's Edge (software to increase fluency and comprehension for age 5 to adult). Download / CD for PCs, On-line product for Macs/PCs. About \$80. <http://www.readfaster.com/>
- Great Leaps Reading www.greatleaps.com K-12.
- ReadIt www.reading-assistant.com grades 2-5, uses speech recognition software to improve fluency.
- Practices for Developing Accuracy and Fluency www.neuhaus.org grades 1-4.5, simple printed stories, sorted by grade level and marked at the 100th word.

Speeded word training

Ingredients:

1. For older students, pre-read their textbook assignments and select words that will be difficult for the student. Help the student decode the word, print each word on an index card or on the computer, and, if time permits, look up its meaning, and on the other side of the index card: write the definition(s), write the word in a sentence, and make a drawing to remind him of the meaning.

Print each word on an index card or on the computer, or print a row of five or six cards across a large card.

Single words: Ask the student's teacher what words or letter combinations the student is working on. She may provide you with appropriate words to practice. Graduated word lists for speed drills are available from Oxton House Publishers www.OxtonHouse.com.

2. Timer (with second hand).
3. Graph of progress

What to Do:

Impose a time limit for reading each word. Shorten the time limit as the student gains proficiency. The goal is to name each word in less than one second, so that the student names at least sixty words per minute. Graph the student's progress, marking how many words are read in one minute.

Practicing speeded word training even five or six words a day, at least four days a week, will yield significant benefit. Practice must be consistent, over at least weeks and preferably months (Shaywitz 269-270).

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VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: LOOKING BEYOND THE SAT'S TO LIFE

How do we naturally develop vocabulary?

1. By hearing others speak. By age ten, however, most of us no longer gain vocabulary from hearing our peers speak. Many people only use about 250 different words a day.
2. By reading books that contain at least some words we do not know. If we read widely and voraciously, we will gain a large vocabulary by seeing unfamiliar words in several contexts. Gradually we get a sense of their meaning, even if we do not look them up in a dictionary.

A rich vocabulary enables us to:

1. Understand what we hear and read.
2. Speak and write with power, precision, and beauty.
3. Think better: we can only name our ideas and feelings if we have words to do so!

Three levels of vocabulary:

1. VAGUE: A vague idea of the word's meaning (usually from context).
2. PASSIVE: A precise understanding of the word when read.
3. ACTIVE: Effective use of the word in speech and writing.

Emergency SAT Vocabulary Prep:

I do not see much point in cramming vocabulary during the few days/weeks before the exam. Cramming is marginally effective in the short run and pointless in the long run. At our height of language development, when we were two or so, we gained *one or two words* per day.

This is a reasonable goal for a committed, long-term effort to build a powerful, life-long vocabulary: **gain the passive and active use of one or two new words per day.**

Tutors' and Parents' Critical Role in Permanent Vocabulary Growth:

Students will not usually hear new words from their peers. Most students consciously or unconsciously stop using high-level vocabulary in their speech during middle and high school nonacademic interactions. Some stop using the college words they know out of a desire NOT to look arrogant.

You can consciously provide the exposure to new words a student needs to gain an accurate sense of a word's nuances in different contexts. Here's how:

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: LOOKING BEYOND THE SAT'S TO LIFE

1. The tutor will email the parents the list of words the tutor has been introduced whenever the tutor works on vocabulary with the student.
2. The parents can post these word lists on or near the dining room table, as well as in their car. Each parent needs to use each of these words in conversation with the student at least once or twice during the week—ideally about four times/ parent. Please eat meals with your child whenever possible and use this time to consciously talk in complete sentences using the words.
3. The student will need to use each word in conversation with the parents at least once or twice a week. If he/she uses it incorrectly, GENTLY provide a correction. Have a good dictionary nearby.
4. Please use these parent-child BRAIN TIMES to discuss issues that the child does not usually discuss, such as political topics, religious topics, cultural topics, books, movies. Read an editorial out loud and discuss it together. Rent a movie and discuss it together, as if you were movie reviewers with sophisticated vocabularies.
5. The most effective way to teach new vocabulary incorporates:
 - a. explicit instruction in meaning of roots, prefixes, and suffixes
 - b. word families
 - c. multiple senses (especially including visual)
 - d. keyword memorization technique (used in *Vocabulary Cartoons*)
 - e. discussion of *why* word is spelled the way it is

If the student uses new words repeatedly and hears them in conversation at home, he/she will have the comfort and confidence to use them in speech and writing outside the home. The SATs will go better, but more importantly, the student's life will go better.

A few years ago reporters investigated what the group of high school students had in common who won the prestigious Intel Science Talent Search awards. The only thing they found: the students ate dinner with their parents on a regular basis and conversed with them. *Tutors and parents have more power for good than we realize!*

Resources

Vocabulary for the High-School Student, by Harold Levine et al., Amsco School Publications, Inc., New York, 1994. I recommend these books because they include instruction in roots, prefixes, and suffixes See also *Vocabulary for the College-Bound Student*, by Harold Levine, et. al. Amsco School Publications, Inc., New York, 1994.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: LOOKING BEYOND THE SAT'S TO LIFE

Vocabulary Cartoons, Sam Burchers, New Monic Books, Punta Gorda, Florida, 1998 (elementary to junior high) and *Vocabulary Cartoons: SAT Word Power* by same author. Appeals to and helps visual learners.

IPhone applications include dictionaries with audio support, such as the *New Oxford American Dictionary*. Go to the Apps store on iTunes. Try out audio before buying by going to publishers websites. Prices around \$25.

Quicktionary (about \$200). Scanning pen that pronounces and reads meaning of words a student encounters in text.

Franklin electronic spellers and dictionaries, such as Speaking Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary, 11th Edition SCD-1890 , at Franklin Electronic Publishers <http://www.franklin.com/estore/dictionary/scd-1890/> This particular dictionary costs \$120. Unlike the Quicktionary, a student needs to type in the word.

ROOTING FOR ROOTS!

Prefix	Meaning	Example
ab-	away from	absent, abnormal
ad-	to, toward	advance, addition
after-	later, behind	aftermath, afterward
anti-	against, opposed	antibiotic, antigravity
auto-	self	automobile, autobiography
be-	make	believe, belittle
bi-	two	bicycle, biceps
circum-	around	circumference
com, con, co-	with, together	commune, concrete
contra-, contro	against	contrary, controversy
de-	downward, undo	deflate, defect
deci-	ten	decimal
dis-	not	dislike, distrust
e, ex-	out of, prior to	explain, expense
extra-	outside	extravagant, extraterrestrial
hyper-	over, overly	hyperactive, hyperbole
im-	not	impose, imply
in-	into, not	include, incurable
inter-	between, among	interstate, interact
macro-	large	macroeconomics
magna, magni-	great	magnify, magnanimous
mega-	huge	megaphone, megabucks
micro-	small	microscope, microbe
mis-	wrongly	mistake, mislead
multi-	many	multiply, multimedia
post-	after	postwar, postpone
pre-	before	prewar, precede
re-	again	recede, rearrange
sub-	under, below, less than	subconscious, submarine
super-	above, over, more than	superhuman, supervise
tele-	far	telescope, telegraph
trans-	across	transport, translate
un-	not	unequal, unforgettable

Root	Meaning	Example
aqua	water	aquarium, aquatic
aster, astro	star	astronaut, astronomy
audi	to hear	audible, audience
dict	to say	dictate, verdict
geo	earth	geography, geology
graph	to write	graphic, calligraphy
man, manu	hand	manipulate, manuscript
metr, meter	to measure	meter, speedometer
ped	foot	pedestrian, biped

From *Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom*, by Pinnell, G.S., and I.C. Fountas, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 1998

ROOTING FOR ROOTS!

phon, phone	sound	telephone, megaphone
scope	to look	telescope, periscope
scrib, scrip	to write	inscribe, prescription
spec	to look at, to see	introspection, spectator
ter, terra	earth, ground	terrestrial, territory
vis	to see, to look	invisible, vista,

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-ant	one who	assistant, contestant
-ar	one who	liar, scholar
-arium	place for	aquarium, solarium
-ble	inclined to	gullible,
-ent	one who	resident, president
-er	one who	teacher, writer
-er	more	brighter, taller
-ery, ry	products	pottery, cutlery
-ess	one who (female)	actress, seamstress
-est	most	fullest, tallest
-ful	full of	mouthful, grateful
-ing	material	roofing,
-ing	(present tense)	smiling
-less	without	motherless
-ling	small	fledgling
-ly	every	weekly
-ly	(adverb)	happily
-ness	state of being	happiness
-ology	study of	biology
-or	one who	doctor
-ous	full of	wondrous
-s, es	more than one	boxes
-y	state of	sunny

Root _____

Meaning: _____

Prefix _____ Meaning _____ Suffix _____ Meaning _____

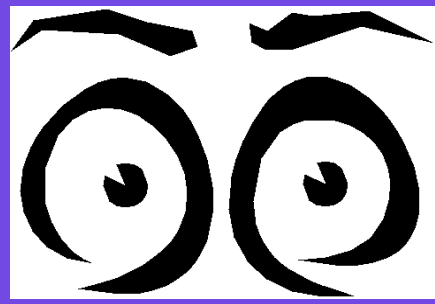
Definition

Picture

Word:

Personal Connection

Meaningful Sentence



Where's the Main Idea?

- Headings and subheadings.
- First and last sentences of the paragraph.
John was having a bad day. First he forgot his Math homework at home. Then he dropped his backpack in a mud puddle. Finally, he was late for school. John wished this horrible day would end
- **Boldface** and *italic* words
- SIGNAL WORDS (153-4, *Learning to Learn*.)
- Repeated words (or synonyms)
- Paraphrase: “This paragraph mainly tells about. . . .” (This slide adapted from Carole Ann Davies’ presentation on reading comprehension, 2009.)

RAP Strategy

- Read a paragraph / section
- Ask yourself, “What is the main idea?”
- Put it in your own words, out loud.



SQ3R

- Survey
 - Question
 - Read
 - Recite
 - Review
- SQ3R was introduced by Francis Pleasant Robinson in his 1946 book *Effective Study*.





SQ3R: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review

How to Survey

Directions: Look through the chapter to find out the important points. This should take about 5-10 minutes.

1. **Read the title:** Read and focus on the title. Think about what it means and what should be in a chapter with that title. Think about what you may already know about that topic.
2. **Read the introduction:** Sometimes the first paragraph gives you an overview (review) of the whole chapter. It may give you clues to how the chapter is organized, and tell you what you will be learning about.
3. **Read the bold faced subtitles:** Subtitles are labels. By reading them you will read a list of all the important parts of the chapter. Think about each one, what it means and what you will learn.
4. **Look at the pictures, charts and graphs:** Glance at these to pick out anything you feel is important and/or interesting.
5. **Read the summary at the end:** The summary gives you the key points in the chapter. It will help you understand the chapter because you will gain a better idea about what the chapter is about.
6. **Look at the questions at the end of the chapter:** Read through the questions, these will give you a better idea of what you will be learning from the chapter. DO NOT read the chapter to simply answer the questions though.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Surveying a Textbook Chapter

*Directions: Open one of your textbooks to the chapter you are reading. Answer the following questions in **your words**. Do not copy anything from the textbook.*

1. What is the chapter title and what does it mean?

2. What does the introduction tell you?

3. List each bold faced subtitle. What do these tell you about what you will learn from the chapter?

4. What kinds of pictures, charts and/or graphs are in the chapter?

5. What does the summary at the end tell you about what the chapter will be about?

6. Read the questions at the end. What do they tell you about what the chapter will be about?

7. How long will it take you read the chapter?

8. When and where will you read it?



The SQ3R System for Studying Textbooks

Step 1:

____ SURVEY

Get a quick overview of the chapter. Read and think about the title, introduction and subtitles. Study any maps, charts and graphs. Read the questions at the end. Think about what you already know of the topic. Try to predict some ideas you will learn and study while reading the chapter.

Step 2:

____ QUESTION

Turn each subtitle into a question. To take notes, write questions in your notebook, **skip five lines** between each question.

____ READ

Read each subsection (the text under each subtitle) to find the answer to your question.

____ RECITE

Recite the answer to your question. Pretend you are explaining the ideas to a study partner. Now write the answer to the question in your notebook or worksheet. Write in **your words**, not those of the author.

Step 3:

____ REVIEW

Stand back and look at the chapter as a whole. How do the ideas and facts you learned from each subsection fit together. Review your notes to be sure they make sense to you.



Name: _____

Date: _____

SQ3R Worksheet

Directions: Open your textbook to the chapter you are reading. Complete the steps below.

Chapter # _____ Pgs. _____ Chapter Title: _____

Survey: After surveying the chapter, what do you think it will be about?

Turn the 1st subtitle into a question:

Answer the question in your words:

Turn the 2nd subtitle into a question:

Answer the question in your words:

Turn the 3rd subtitle into a question:

Answer the question in your words:

Turn the 4th subtitle into a question:

Answer the question in your words:

Turn the 5th subtitle into a question:

Answer the question in your words:

Turn the 6th subtitle into a question:

Answer the question in your words:

Turn the 7th subtitle into a question:

Answer the question in your words:

REVIEW: After reading the chapter, what new things did you learn?
