

Repeated reading is a process in which a child reads a particular passage daily over several days to enhance their reading fluency. Repeated reading has been used for many years to help the non-fluent reader become more fluent. Readers of all ability levels show improvement over time from repeated reading. As Rasinski (2003) observed, “Practicing short passages three to five times can help students develop greater automaticity and expression in their reading, especially if that practice is given with formative feedback” (p. 17). Below we look further into two ways to do repeated reading, with poetry and timed repeated reading.

Repeated Reading of Poetry

Repeated reading and performance of poetry are effective ways to improve reading fluency. Stanley (2004) stated, “Reading and performing poetry provides numerous opportunities for children to practice—with pleasure—the essential skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension” (p. 56).

Steps for repeated poetry reading (some or all of these steps can be integrated into your practice):

1. Begin the week by introducing the weekly poem. Read it to the children, and then discuss the poem, any difficult or unfamiliar words, any rhyming words, the rhythm, the punctuation, and the voice of the piece.
2. Echo read the poem. Teacher reads aloud a line of the poem and then the children echo her expression and tone. Do this for each line until the end of the poem.
3. Children and teacher read the poem together as a choral reading, and teacher gradually stops reading, allowing the children to take over.
4. The children then practice for 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the length of the poem, with their poetry fluency partner. When selecting the partners, pair a less fluent reader with a more fluent reader, enabling the less fluent reader to have another opportunity to hear the poem read fluently.
5. In small groups, the partners read the poem together, and then each child reads the poem aloud to his or her partner. As the readers are working on their fluency, teacher circulates the room to listen and offer assistance, encouragement, or praise to each of the groups. Each night during the week, the children are asked to take their poem home and practice the repeated reading, with an adult acting as cheerleader.
6. Each morning for the next four days, practice the weekly poem with the children as a whole group, and then have them work in small groups with their poetry fluency partner. The partners continue to read the poem aloud, both together and individually to their partners. When gathering again as a whole group, each child has the opportunity to perform for the class once they feel prepared to do so. To ensure that all readers have the chance to perform, have popsicle sticks with each child's name on one of them in a cup; when a child performs, remove the name stick from the cup. By Friday, all children have had the occasion to perform for the class.

Timed Repeated Readings *(adapted from readingrockets.org)*

Timed repeated readings are an instructional practice for monitoring fluency development. Repeated readings, under timed conditions, of familiar instructional-level text can increase reading speed which can improve comprehension. Timed repeated readings can improve reading rate, one aspect of fluency, and reading accuracy, a second aspect of fluency, and leads to improved comprehension.

Timed repeated readings should be done using books or passages the child has read before that are at an independent reading level (i.e. books the child can read with 95% accuracy or above). Most timed repeated reading sessions should include 3–4 re-readings of the same text.

Steps for Timed Repeated Reading

1. Gather two copies of the assessment passage—one for the reader and one for the teacher, a stopwatch or clock, and a pencil. Carefully select the passage to be used and determine the type of assessment information you want to gather.
2. The child reads a portion of the text and their reading is timed for one minute of that reading. The teacher or partner counts the number of words read correctly in one minute (WCPM). This score is as valid as calculating perfect, correct, or accuracy on longer readings. Provide some practice time with non-assessment reading material before beginning the one minute timed reading.
3. The child reads the same passage for one minute multiple times (3–5 times). The teacher or partner counts how many words the child reads in one minute. The number of words read results can be graphed using a bar graph to show how rate improves with repeated reading.

Considerations for Using Timed Repeated Reading

- Ensure that you are stressing that reading fast is not the goal of reading - the goal of reading is to understand. However, the ability to read faster leads to higher confidence with reading, and a stronger desire to read more, and for longer.
- Help children see the connection between improving their reading rate and reading easy books. Children often do not want to read “easy” books over and over – seeing how their rate improves with multiple readings will help them see the importance of this.
- Accommodate children who have speech impediments. Have them talk to you or read an extremely easy passage. Record their fastest rate of speech. Do not expect them to be able to read faster than this rate.
- Consider differentiating this activity for ELL's first by having the adult or a more proficient child read the passage. Then have the child read the passage.
- Teach readers to be proud of their own progress and not compare it to others. Keep scores private. This is meant to be a motivational tool, not a competition.