

Fluency Instruction for STAR/EBRI Volunteers

By Marn Frank, ATLAS Literacy & STAR Coordinator and Rob Podlasek, MLC Senior Training Manager

This handout describes what STAR/EBRI volunteers “need to know” about evidence-based and explicit fluency instruction. It also clarifies how they can improve - but not necessarily perfect - students’ oral reading and understanding of text.

What is reading fluency? Reading fluency includes three interrelated skills: (1) **accuracy** - reading most of the words correctly and quickly, (2) **rate** - reading at a rate or speed that supports understanding (not too fast or too slow), and (3) **prosody** - reading smoothly, in meaningful phrases, and with some expression. Fluent oral reading should sound like speech or conversation.

Who are your fluency students? Your fluency students are native or non-native English speakers who need to improve their reading fluency skills. The STAR/EBRI teacher will place them into small groups at similar fluency instructional levels (1-2, 3-4, 5-6 or even 1-3, 4-6 or 6-8) and select paragraphs, passages, articles, or books of *slight* challenge. The selected text is read aloud with a proficient reader (you!) who provides explanation, modeling, guided practice, application, and monitoring.

What is your volunteer role for explanation? When you meet new fluency students, briefly explain the value and process of instruction. Example: “Good readers need to read words correctly, in meaningful phrases, and with some expression. Together, we will read stories aloud together. I will model fluent oral reading, support your oral reading, and correct some of your mistakes. You might reread the same story with a partner. I might check your understanding by asking a few questions. This will improve your oral and silent reading, and over time, your comprehension and understanding.

What is your volunteer role for modeling? Your frequent modeling of accuracy, rate, and prosody is crucial and appreciated by students! You may think only they should read aloud; however, hearing you read ‘right and often’ provides a cognitive imprint of what fluency sounds like. **ALWAYS** start the fluency group with your modeling, continue by having students read aloud (taking turns around the table, calling on each other, or echoing together), and then take another modeling turn. Repeat this cycle for multiple oral readings of paragraphs, passages, and articles OR a single oral reading of book pages.

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What is your volunteer role for guided practice? Your attentive guiding of students' oral readings is also crucial and appreciated. As students read aloud, listen carefully to their accuracy, rate, and prosody. If an important word is misread or causes difficulty, quickly provide the correct pronunciation. If an important phrase is read awkwardly or unevenly, quickly provide smoother phrasing. Do not stop to explain the meaning; keep the oral readings moving along! You will check on their understanding later.

What is your volunteer role for application? Application is the place and time to check on students' comprehension or assign independent re-reading. Here are four possible activities:

1. After more than one oral reading of a paragraph, passage, or article, ask a few 6W questions beginning with *Who, What, Where, When, Why, hoW*.
2. After reading aloud several book pages or a chapter, stop and ask a few 6W questions beginning with *Who, What, Where, When, Why, hoW*.
3. Have students orally reread the same paragraph, passage, or article with a partner and answer multiple-choice questions (if available).
4. Have students silently reread the same paragraph, passage, article, or book pages later in class or at home.

What is your volunteer role in monitoring? Provide complimentary and regular feedback on students' oral reading efforts or progress. Here are some examples of positive comments:

- "Your reading is improving."
- "You seem to understand more."
- "You seem more comfortable reading aloud."
- "I like how you corrected your mistake(s)."
- "I like how smoothly you read."

Need or want to learn more?

- ✓ If you have questions about fluency instruction, the #1 person to ask is the STAR/EBRI teacher!
- ✓ You can also check out volunteer trainings and resources from the Minnesota Literacy Council at <http://mnliteracy.org>.
- ✓ If you want more information on fluency instruction, check out ATLAS's website at <http://atlasabe.org/resources/ebri/ebri-fluency>.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME AND CONTRIBUTION!