


Reading Fluency:

Essential for Comprehension



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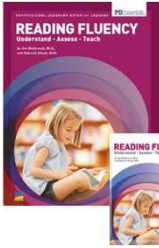
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Reading Fluency

Understand • Assess • Teach

Jan Hasbrouck, Ph.D.
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- Ch. 1 Defining Reading Fluency
- Ch. 2 Assessing Reading Fluency
- Ch. 3 Teaching Reading Fluency
- Ch. 4 Integrating Fluency Skills






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Key Takeaways:




Fluency is a complex *OUTCOME*.

Fluency is *necessary* but not *sufficient* for reading comprehension (& motivation).

FLUENT reading is *NOT* fast reading!

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"We define (passage) fluency as:

- reasonably **accurate** reading
- at an appropriate **rate**
- with suitable **expression**

Hasbrouck & Glaser (2019)


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"Using [a] blend of science and practice, we conclude...that the performance standards for [the] three components of fluency should vary depending upon the demands of the task."

Hasbrouck & Glaser (2019, p.14)

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Hasbrouck & Glaser (2019)

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Hasbrouck & Glaser (2019)

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Reasonably accurate?

Correctly decoding or identifying a word [AND correctly identifying the meaning or function of the word in context].

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Reasonably accurate?



F ____!

F ____!


F ____!

F ____ of

F ____!

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Reasonably accurate?




During INSTRUCTION? 100%

During INDEPENDENT READING? 95-98%

Emerging readers? 97-98%

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Reasonably accurate?



Studies have revealed that if the meaning of as few as 2% of words in a text are unknown, comprehension can be significantly impaired.


Schmitt, N., Jiang, X., & Grabe, W. (2011). The percentage of words known in a text and reading comprehension. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(1), 26-43.

Example...

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"This table may not include all of the drugs that prolong the QT interval or cause torsades. Risk of drug induced prolongation may be increased in women and the elderly."


30 - 2 = 28/30 = 93%



From
Tarascon Pocket Pharmacopoeia
30 words

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Appropriate **rate**?



The speed with which text is read (words per minute).

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Appropriate **rate**?



FAST AS POSSIBLE???

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Appropriate **rate**?




Fluent reading should sound like speech.

Stahl & Kuhn (2002)

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Appropriate rate?




Number of words read correctly per minute:
Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

- Unpracticed passage
- 1:1 for 60-seconds
- Standardized scoring protocol
- Grade level text for screening

Words read correctly:
ACCURACY
Words per minute:
RATE
Accuracy + rate =
AUTOMATICITY

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Assessing **AUTOMATICITY!**



- Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assesses automaticity in TEXT/PASSAGES.
- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)
- Letter Sound Fluency (LSF)
- Nonword/Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)
- Word Reading Fluency (WRF)

These assess automaticity in developing foundational skills of word reading.

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Melissa & Lori
Love Literacy


Podcast
May 30, 2025

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83 wcpm?


114 wcpm?

54 wcpm?




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Common ORF assessments:



Amplify/DIBELS 8 th Ed.	Renaissance; U of Oregon K-8
Acadience/DIBELS Next	Dynamic Measurement Group K-6
AIMSweb	Pearson K-8
easyCBM	Riverside K-8
FastBridge	FastBridge K-8
ISIP	Istation K-3
others...	

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Compiled ORF Norms

Percentiles for oral reading fluency (ORF) WCPM norms on unpracticed, grade level text

Hasbrouck & Tindal
(1992; 2006; 2017)


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COMPILED ORF NORMS
Hasbrouck & Tindal (2017)

Grade	%ile	BOY WCPM	MOY WCPM	EOY WCPM
1	90		97	116
	75		59	91
	50		29	60
	25		16	34
	10		9	18
2	90	111	131	148
	75	84	109	124
	50	50	84	100
	25	36	59	72
	10	23	35	43
3	90	134	161	166
	75	104	137	139
	50	83	97	112
	25	59	79	91
	10	40	62	63

Grade	%ile	BOY WCPM	MOY WCPM	EOY WCPM
4	90	153	168	184
	75	125	143	160
	50	94	120	133
	25	75	95	105
	10	60	71	83
5	90	179	183	195
	75	153	160	169
	50	121	133	146
	25	87	109	119
	10	64	84	102
6	90	185	195	204
	75	159	166	173
	50	132	145	146
	25	112	116	122
	10	89	91	91

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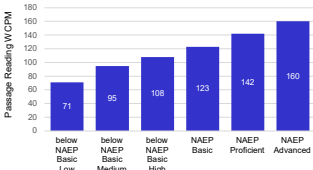


50-75+th %ile range on oral reading fluency (ORF) norms on unpracticed, grade level text

White, S. et al. (2021). *The 2018 NAEP Oral Reading Fluency Study* (NCES 2021-025). USDOE. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences

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Average passage reading WCPM, by NAEP reading achievement level and below NAEP Basic subgroup: 2018



4th grade students

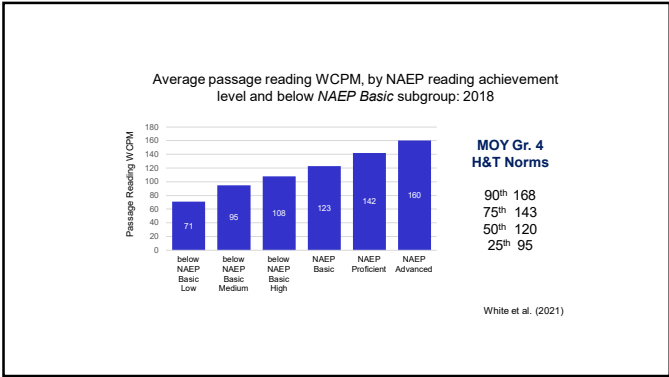
- Advanced: 160 wcpm
- Proficient: 142 wcpm
- Basic: 123 wcpm

Below Basic


- High: 108 wcpm
- Medium: 95 wcpm
- Low: 71 wcpm

White et al. (2021)

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O'Connor, R. E. (2018). Reading fluency and students with reading disabilities: How fast is fast enough to promote reading comprehension? *Jrnl Learning Disabilities*, 51(2), 124-136.


35- 75 wcpm Grade 2 EOY 10-25th %iles
40- 90 wcpm Grade 4 EOY 10th+ %ile

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1 Research suggests a benefit to reading in the 50-75th%ile range of WCPM. BUT– *it's NOT about reading fast!*


2 **SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE** that it is crucial to help students read with fluency solidly at or very near the 50th%ile to support **comprehension** (and motivation).

Research suggests 50-75th+ %ile supports comprehension; the 50th %ile **necessary** for comprehension. Issues may be different with students with dyslexia.



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Suitable **expression**?



Pitch, tone, volume, emphasis, rhythm, phrasing...

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Suitable expression?




Fluent reading should sound like speech.

Stahl & Kuhn (2002)

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Suitable expression?



Typically mirrors spoken language and conveys meaning.

Expression primarily an **OUTCOME** of comprehension rather than **CONTRIBUTING** to comprehension.

Groen et al. (2018)

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“Robert borrowed my new bicycle.”

- **ROBERT** borrowed my new bicycle.
(Robert, not Raymond, borrowed my bike.)
- Robert **BORROWED** my new bicycle.
(Robert did not steal my bike.)
- Robert borrowed **MY** new bicycle.
(Robert didn't borrow your bike, he borrowed mine.)
- Robert borrowed my **NEW** bicycle.
(Robert didn't borrow my old bike, he borrowed the new one.)
- Robert borrowed my new **BICYCLE**.
(Robert didn't borrow my new book, he borrowed my bike.)

Rasinski (2012)

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Suitable expression?



Fluent reading **CONTRIBUTES** to comprehension
AND
comprehension **CONTRIBUTES** to fluency.

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The **ROLE** of Reading Fluency?



ACCURACY: Comprehension is limited by inaccurate reading (below 95%).

RATE: Comprehension is limited by inefficient, slow, laborious reading or reading too fast.

Lack of fluency = lack of motivation = fewer words read = smaller vocabulary = limited comprehension (self-perpetuating)

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Fluency **instruction**?



Must address both fluency **AND** comprehension!

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Fluency **instruction**?

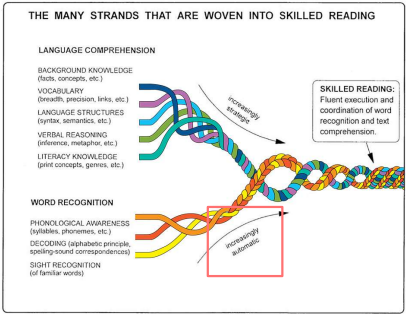


“The growth of reading fluency, in all its multifaceted glory, is an outcome of many different kinds of instruction...

...coupled with large amounts of carefully orchestrated reading practice.”

Hudson, Lane, & Pullen (2005)


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Scarborough (2001)

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Fluency instruction?




TRIPLE A!

- ACCURACY!
- AUTOMATICITY!
- ACCESS meaning!

Based on:
Instructional Hierarchy
Haring & Eaton (1978)

Hasbrouck & Glaser (2019)


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Let’s wrap up...

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