



Striving Readers and Fluency Development

WHAT

The Fluency Development Lesson (FDL) is a 20-minute intensive and intentional instructional protocol. The goal is for students to be able to read a new, relatively brief text with fluency and comprehension by engaging in the key components of fluency development: hearing fluent texts, reading with partners, doing repeated reading, performing for an audience, and participating in follow-up word study. Several studies suggest that the FDL is highly effective in improving fluency, comprehension, and overall achievement of striving readers.

WHY

Research has indicated that reading fluency, the ability to read texts with appropriate expression and confidence, is critical and necessary for proficient reading.

HOW

Begin the FDL by selecting a short text and making two copies for each student. Poems and other rhythmical texts are good choices because they often contain rhyme, which enhances their readability, and are meant to be performed orally for an audience.

- Read the text to students several times as they follow along silently.
- Discuss with students the content of the text and your reading.
- Engage students in choral reading of the text several times.
- Have students work in pairs or small groups to continue their rehearsal of the text. Circulate and provide formative feedback to them.
- If students are able to read the text with fluency, invite them to perform it for an audience—even an audience of one, such as a parent volunteer who is willing to listen to individuals or groups.



- Engage students in a brief word study activity, using words from the text.
- Invite students to take one copy of the text home and perform it for family members and others. The other copy should remain at school for further practice and performance (e.g., Poetry Slam every Friday).
- Repeat this protocol on following days, using new texts.

With each FDL, students should approach the fluency of proficient readers. You'll likely notice that the fluency students achieve eventually transfers to other texts, such as those they're reading independently.

By Timothy Rasinski, Professor of Education in the Reading and Writing Center at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.



To learn more:

- Rasinski, T. (2010). *The Fluent Reader: Oral and Silent Reading Strategies for Building Fluency, Word Recognition, and Comprehension, Second Edition*. New York: Scholastic.