



# ***Research Supporting High Five Reading***

- ***Intervention for Striving Readers***
- ***Explicit, Systemic Instruction***
- ***Highly Engaging Nonfiction***

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This document has been created to give an overview of how **High Five Reading** aligns with the research and findings of the National Reading Panel's Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction. Knowing that the acquisition of literacy is a very complex process, **High Five Reading** provides up-to-date instructional materials that support a variety of strategies and fit with current standards.

# What Do Struggling Readers Need Most?

Struggling readers need practice in real reading books that will make them want to read more. But how do they get that practice if they struggle to get through even the simplest text? First, they need books that interest them and are accessible. Secondly, they need teachers and the texts themselves to provide a medley of supports to help them engage with and successfully read the text with interest, pleasure, comprehension, and purpose.

# What Supports Do Struggling Readers Need?

Struggling readers need books about subjects they find engrossing. For struggling readers of this age, nonfiction topics are most appealing.

Informational texts can capitalize on children's interest and curiosities, provide opportunities for children to apply and further develop areas of expertise, and provide valuable links to children's home literacy experiences. Caswell & Duke, (1998); Guthrie & McCann, (1997); Moss, Leone, & Di Pillo, (1997); Oylar, (1996).

Nonfiction that is more narrative or story-like tends to be more considerate than pedantic, expository text. Keen & Oliver (1997).

The books must be written with special care to make them accessible to readers with limited reading experience. The text must be readable at the student's instructional or independent reading level, depending on whether it is being read as guided or independent reading. Also, the text must carefully introduce unfamiliar, topic-related words, presenting them in contexts that help reveal the meaning of those words.

# Fluency

Fluency is a critical component of skilled reading. The National Reading Panel findings show that repeated oral readings followed by feedback and teacher guidance help students make meaningful improvements in their reading expertise.

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, they can focus their attention on what the text means.

Researchers determined that repeated and monitored oral reading (commonly called “repeated reading”) is an effective approach for developing fluency. In this approach, students read passages aloud several times and receive guidance and feedback from the teacher.

Effective activities for repeated and monitored oral reading include:

- Student-adult reading
- Choral reading
- Tape-assisted reading
- Paired reading
- Leveled reading passages and instruction for calculating words per minute

Fluency develops as a result of many opportunities to practice reading with a high degree of success. It is essential to provide students with texts at their independent reading level, a text containing mostly words they know or can decode easily.

Fourteen studies reported demonstrable improvements in fluency with the use of repeated and guided repeated oral reading. Studies by Van Bon, Bokseveld, Freide, & van den Hurk (1991); Rasinski (1990); and Smith (1979) noted improvement when students practiced oral reading while listening to the text being read simultaneously.

Studies show that re-reading is a strong strategy in building a student’s fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. According to a study published in *The Reading Teacher*, 52 (1999) titled “I Never Thought I Could Be a Star: A Readers Theatre Ticket to Reading Fluency,” even short amounts of using a reader’s theater approach can greatly enhance a student’s vocabulary skills, as much as a year’s growth!

Blum and colleagues (1995) found that the use of repeated reading with tape recorders led to marked improvements in student reading performance.

# High Five Reading Books and Teacher's Guides Feature Supports for Fluency Instruction:

- Student books feature:
  - Mature/appealing design
  - Considerate text/strong narrative style
  - High-interest topics to grab readers' attention
  - Glossaries, indexes, bibliographies
  - Safe internet sites for extended learning
  - Level-appropriate supports for visual literacy
  - Point of use Word Bank
- **High Five Reading** contains four levels of instructional texts which progress from grade one to grade five.
- Teacher Guides provide explicit and systemic instruction for success through effective strategies including:
  - Modeled fluent reading
  - Choral reading
  - Recorded reading
  - Paired reading
  - Practiced reading
  - Performance reading
- Reader's Theater scripts for each title build reading fluency. According to *The Fluent Reader* by Timothy Rasinski (Scholastic Professional Books, 2003), when students hear a text that sounds like natural speech, they naturally bring their own experience to the learning process and begin to build their reading comprehension.
- Audio CDs accompany each student book and build fluency and listening comprehension. Each CD contains a normal speed and a natural sounding slower speed (ranging from 12%-17% of normal speed) for the lower performing reader.

# Vocabulary

Researchers have long recognized the importance of vocabulary instruction, noting that “growth in reading power means, therefore, continuous enriching and enlarging of the reading vocabulary” (Davis, 1942).

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. In general, vocabulary is described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Vocabulary is important in learning to read as well as to reading comprehension. Researchers often refer to the following four types of vocabulary:

- Listening vocabulary
- Speaking vocabulary
- Reading vocabulary
- Writing vocabulary

Effective vocabulary instruction utilizes both indirect and direct learning approaches. (Indirect learning involves daily engagement in oral language, listening to adults read, and independent reading. Direct learning involves specific word instruction and word learning strategies.) Direct instruction of vocabulary relevant to a given text leads to better reading comprehension.

McKeown, Beck, Omanson, and Perfetti (1983) reported that vocabulary instruction had a strong relationship to text comprehension for 4th grade students. Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) concluded that vocabulary instruction was an important component for comprehension.

# High Five Reading and Teacher's Guides

## Feature Support for Vocabulary Instruction:

- Teacher's Guides provide word study activities aimed at helping students develop as decoders, spellers, and users of words.
  - Cloze procedure
  - Word ladders
  - Making and Writing Words
  - Making and Breaking Words
  - Semantic Feature Analysis
- Dual-speed audio CDs provide develop listening comprehension and are a model for vocabulary pronunciation. There are ample opportunities to listen to various genre and text structures, as each student book has a CD.
- The National Reading Panel indicated that students through grade 7 benefit from Word Study strategies. This is particularly true and important for struggling readers. With this in mind, High Five includes a strong and consistent component in the guide. Look for *Key Vocabulary* and *Building Background* and *Anticipation Builders*, along with *Decoding and Word Study* sections in the Teacher's Guides.
- Graphic organizers help students summarize, analyze and clarify the content of the text.

# Comprehension

Comprehension can be viewed as the “essence of reading” (Durkin, 1993). The ultimate goal of reading is comprehension.

Comprehension is the reason for reading. Research over 30 years has shown that instruction in comprehension can help students understand what they read, remember what they read, and communicate with others about what they read.

Comprehension of subject matter does not occur automatically once students have “learned to read.” Teachers should emphasize comprehension from the beginning, rather than teaching only “the basics.” Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension.

The following six strategies have a firm scientific basis for improving text comprehension:

- Monitoring comprehension
- Using graphic and semantic organizers
- Answering questions
- Generating questions (reciprocal teaching)
- Recognizing story structures
- Summarizing

Effective comprehension strategy instruction is explicit. In explicit instruction teachers tell readers why and when they should use strategies, define which strategies, and determine how to apply them.

The National Reading Panel (2000) stated that narrative texts assisted reading comprehension in poor or below-average readers, finding that the treatment “successfully transfers to question answering and recall.”

Bramlett (1994) reported that cooperative reading leads to improved academic performance, increased motivation toward learning, and more time on task. Klinger (1998) also found that students of all reading abilities benefit from cooperative learning. Furthermore, cooperative learning has been found effective for integrating academically and physically handicapped students into regular classrooms.



# High Five Reading Books and Teacher's Guides Feature Support for Comprehension Instruction:

- Comprehension is fostered not only before and during reading; it is nurtured and extended after the reading experience through response. Through the process of response, readers think through what they have acquired in their reading, combine it with what they already know, and orchestrate a “re-representation” of what they have learned.
- Teacher's Guide lessons feature multiple instructional comprehension strategies.
  - List – Group- Label
  - Artifact Files
  - Hypothesis and Prediction
  - Prevoke
  - Main Idea Question Strategy
  - Linguistic and Non-linguist Comprehension Response Strategies
- **High Five Reading** books have been carefully written and designed to provide numerous internal supports. These features help struggling readers clarify, underscore, enhance, and extend the meaning and content of the text.
  - Chapter and section headings provide clues for predicting what will come next.
  - Key words are in bold text and defined on the page so readers don't have to stop reading, when faced with a new word.
  - Engaging photos pique student interest and support comprehension of text.

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