

# READING FLUENCY MATTERS

## (And reading at home helps!)

Reading fluency refers to speed, accuracy and proper expression. It is *not* about reading as fast as you can. For readers to comprehend text, they must aim to read at their natural rate of speech.

Fluency is consistently and strongly linked to comprehension and motivated reading.

### WHY FLUENCY?



Fluent readers do not rely on sounding out (decoding) when they read. Instead, they can attend to the meaning of texts and develop a greater understanding of the content they have read.



### HOW TO HELP

Practice makes progress! Repeated reading of the same text actually helps! Four to five exposures of a word, in fact, allows it to be embedded into long term memory. If your child is taking home readers from school, these should be exchanged once a week. You can help your child to develop their fluency at home by:

- modelling what fluent reading 'sounds' like. Model appropriate rate, expression and phrasing (e.g., slight pauses at commas and full pauses at full stops). Encourage your child to do the same.
- providing your child the time to practise reading a word. Don't tell them what it is if they get stuck. Instead, offer a prompt such as, 'that is the 'ai' spelling of the ay sound'.

### DECODABLE TEXTS

Decodable texts are simple texts written for the beginning reader. They contain specific sounds that the students have learned, or are learning, in their phonics program at school. They provide learners with the opportunity to use their developing segmenting and blending skills to read words with increasing accuracy, rate and expression (fluency). These texts have little narrative depth (or none if they comprise of just words or phrases). They are not being used for developing comprehension, only fluency. Please encourage repeated readings of these texts. If your child is taking home readers from school, these should be exchanged once a week.

*For more information regarding decodable texts, please see your child's classroom teacher.*



### AUTHENTIC TEXTS

Authentic texts are age-appropriate texts that are not levelled or based on any phonic sequence. They can be fiction or nonfiction. If your child has been provided with an authentic text for home reading:

- encourage them to read books of interest that are at an appropriate reading level. A good way to gauge if the book is suitable, is to use the 'Five-finger Rule':
  - choose a book
  - encourage your child to read the second page
  - hold up a finger for each word your child is not sure of, or does not know
  - if there are five or more unknown words on that page, an easier book should be chosen. Use the five-finger rule on two more pages if you still think the book is not too difficult.

### DID YOU KNOW?



The clearest prediction of reading comprehension difficulties in schools, is a deficiency in instant word recognition – which is targeted through fluency practice.

As readers head into upper primary years, fluency is equally as important. The volume of reading, and the complexity of texts, escalates dramatically into adulthood.



- they are working towards developing their comprehension by building their background knowledge and vocabulary on a topic. See your child's teacher for more information on how you can facilitate this.
- encourage expression (if accuracy and rate are not an issue). These texts are likely to contain vocabulary they will still need to decode, but the purpose is not to build fluency. These texts help to build comprehension.