Fluency

PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What is Fluency?

Fluency is the ability to read at an appropriate rate, accurately, and with proper expression. Fluency helps students understand what they read, whether they're reading out loud or silently.

Why is Fluency Important?

Fluent readers understand what they read. When reading is smooth and automatic, children can focus on the meaning of text, not reading the words. Fluency builds confidence and helps make reading fun!

Goal by the End of Kindergarten

- **Read simple decodable books** using the sounds and words they've learned—this includes short vowel words like *cat*, *dog*, and *sun*.
- **Read High Frequency Words** with automaticity.
- **Join in group reading time**, building listening and speaking skills by talking about stories and practicing reading.
- **Say all letter sounds clearly and quickly**, aiming for 42 sounds in a minute—this shows they know their phonics!
- **Read short words (CVC words)** quickly and accurately—our goal is 12 words correct in a minute.
- **Quickly name common items, colors, shapes, letters, and numbers**—this helps build brain connections needed for reading and literacy.
- **Letter Sound Benchmarks:** Fall: 2 letter sounds per minute. Winter: 27 letter sounds per minute. Spring: 42 letter sounds per minute.

By the End of First Grade

Your child will be able to read books that include:

- Short vowels like bat, bet, bit, hop, hut
- Digraphs *sh, ch, th, ck, wh, ph*
- Blends like *clip, mask, blend, strap*
- Long vowels like *bike, cake, poke, cute*
- Common vowel teams *ai, ee, oa, ay*
- Endings like *-ed, -ing, -er*
- First grade "high frequency words"
- Practice HFW so they become automatic

They'll move from sounding out to reading with fluency and understanding.

Benchmark Words/Minute
Fall: 14
Winter: 37
Spring: 66

By the End of Second Grade

Your child will read more complex books with:

- Short and long vowel words
- Digraphs, blends, and vowel teams that repesent one sound *(ay, igh, ee, oa)*
- Vowel teams with *more than one sound (ow, ea, ue)*
- R-controlled vowels (*car, bird, her, corn)*
- Longer words with prefixes, suffixes, and word parts *preview, running, redo*
- *Practice K-2 HFW so they become automatic*

These skills help build strong, confident readers!

Benchmark Words/Minute
Fall: 56
Winter: 84
Spring: 101

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By the End of Third Grade

- Identify and know the meaning of and read words with common phonics patterns and common prefixes and suffixes.
- Read grade-level texts fluently with sufficient accuracy, rate and expression to support comprehension (Fall: 87 WPM, Winter: 110 WPM, Spring: 125 WPM)

By the End of Fourth Grade

- Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns and word origin (Anglo-Saxon roots) to decode and comprehend unfamiliar multi-syllabic words in and out of context.
- Read grade-level texts fluently with sufficient accuracy, rate and expression to support comprehension (Fall: 115 WPM, Winter: 133 WPM, Spring: 147 WPM)

By the End of Fifth Grade

- Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns and word origin (French and Latin roots) to decode and comprehend unfamiliar multi-syllabic words in and out of context.
- Read grade-level texts fluently with sufficient accuracy, rate and expression to support comprehension (Fall: 132 WPM, Winter: 149 WPM, Spring: 162 WPM)

Ways to build fluency:

- **Reread texts** to correct errors each time
- Read sentences together
- Echo read sentence by sentence
- Read to a stuffed animal
- Read like a YouTuber
- Read to a neighbor
- Read to a grandparent
- Read over FaceTime
- Read with a silly voice, monster voice, tiny voice...
- Record students' reading so they can hear their fluency and accuracy improve

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) is the number of words a student reads **accurately, with expression, and appropriate pacing**. Fluent reading supports strong comprehension. The benchmarks below show where students should aim each season to keep growing as confident, fluent readers. **WPM** stands for Words Per Minute—a measure of how many words a student can read correctly in one minute.

Fastbridge Benchmarks

Grade	Fall	Winter	Spring
Grade 1	14 WPM	37 WPM	66 WPM
Grade 2	56 WPM	84 WPM	101 WPM
Grade 3	87 WPM	110 WPM	125 WPM
Grade 4	115 WPM	133 WPM	147 WPM
Grade 5	132 WPM	149 WPM	162 WPM
Grade 6	144 WPM	159 WPM	171 WPM