

## FLUENT

### LEVEL 4

Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrase groups. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure of the story. Preservation of the author's syntax is consistent. Some or most of the story is read with expressive interpretation.

### LEVEL 3

Reads primarily in three- or four-word phrase groups. Some small groupings may be present. However, the majority of phrasing seems appropriate and preserves the syntax of the author. Little or no expressive interpretation is present.

## NON-FLUENT

### LEVEL 2

Reads primarily in two-word phrases with some three- or four-word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings may seem awkward and unrelated to larger context of sentence or passage.

### LEVEL 1

Reads primarily word-by-word. Occasional two-word or three-word phrases may occur—but these are infrequent and/or they do not preserve meaningful syntax.

*SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2002 Oral Reading Study.*

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## SUGGESTED REFERENCES

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Ad Hoc Committee on Reading Fluency for School-Age Children Who Stutter. (2014, July). Quick: Talk fast and don't stutter. *The ASHA Leader*, 19, 44–48.

Games, D., Paul, D., & Reeves, N. (2014). SIG 4 Perspectives on Fluency and Fluency Disorders, December 2014, Vol. 24, 38-45.

Reutzel, D. R. (2009, April 14). Reading Fluency: What Every SLP and Teacher Should Know. *The ASHA Leader*.



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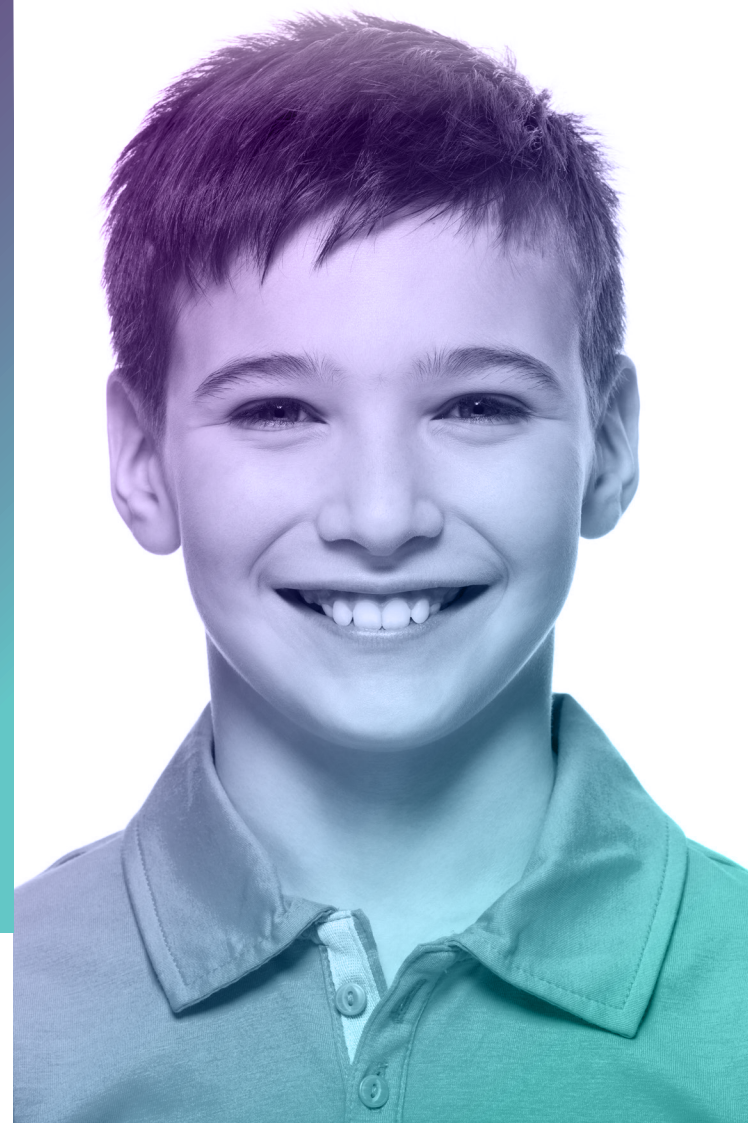
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# STUTTERING & FLUENCY: ASSESSMENT FOR TEACHERS



## ASSESSMENT OF READING FLUENCY

Time pressure does not cause stuttering, but may create added anxiety in the moment. In addition, reading aloud can be quite stressful for those who stutter, mostly because they are worried about how others might react to their stuttering. Because of these issues, you may want to assess a child who stutters' reading fluency individually, away from others. Doing so will reduce pressure that is created by the test and/or the child's anticipation of listener reactions. The result is often a reduction in stuttering, which will allow you to gain a better picture of the child's decoding ability.

A child should not be penalized for moments of stuttering when assessing reading fluency. Fluency of speech is not the same as fluency of decoding. A child may appear not to know how to decode a certain word when in fact s/he does, but simply can't get it out due to stuttering. To gain a true assessment of reading fluency, videotape reading segments, time any moments of stuttering, and remove them from the overall time of reading.

## ORAL READING FLUENCY

Reading fluency is often assessed in school-aged children through the collection of a words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) score. This score is obtained by individually assessing students "as they read aloud for one minute from an unpracticed passage of text" (Hasbrouck, 2006). In many cases, this can result in students who stutter being assessed using a scale that taps straight into their most difficult speaking task—speed and fluidity of speech.

Parents and SLPs can be advocates for children who stutter by recommending they be exempt from the timed oral reading fluency sections of assessments. These children can be offered alternative silent reading assessments (such as the Test of Silent Work Reading Fluency, or the Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency, etc).

Creating an individualized plan for the child who stutters will help maximize the child's ability to be successful in the classroom as a person who stutters.

## STUTTERING VS. READING FLUENCY

A little detective work with the child will help you tell the difference between true stuttering and difficulties with reading fluency. Here are some things to look for:

- Observe how the child stutters in class during conversational situations. Once you start to see the child's speaking patterns, it will be easier to tell the difference between decoding difficulties and moments of stuttering.
- When the child is struggling with a word while reading aloud, look to see if there are any signs of tension in the face, mouth, or other areas of the body. This would likely indicate a moment of stuttering rather than a decoding issue.
- Work with the speech-language pathologist (SLP) at your school. They can assist you with the process of differentiating between stuttering and issues with reading fluency. You and your SLP can meet privately with the child and have them read aloud to you. If the child is able to identify moments of stuttering, they can raise a finger when they feel a stutter. This will help you and the child work together to note patterns and distinguish stuttering from decoding issues.

## COLLABORATION IS KEY

Collaboration between parents, teachers, speech-language pathologists, and the child can help determine the individual needs of each child who stutters.

This can be accomplished in several ways:

- Including accommodations for the child when developing an initial individualized education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.
- Requesting a meeting to modify an existing IEP or 504 plan to include accommodations necessary for the child.
- Meetings between parents, teachers, speech-language pathologists, and children (when appropriate) to discuss the individualized needs of the child.
- Ongoing "therapy journal" between the teachers, parents, and speech-language pathologists so that everyone is on the same page with treatment goals.
- Providing materials to classroom teachers to help them understand the nature of stuttering and its potential impact on classroom performance.

### 3 types of disfluencies common in stuttering:

#### 1. REPETITIONS

A child repeats a sound or syllable, "I-I-like this," "like-like this," or "some-some-something like this".

#### 2. PROLONGATIONS

A child stretches out part of a word, "Iiiiiike this," or "ssssomething like this," or "liiiiike this". This may or may not be accompanied by a slight shift in the child's pitch.

#### 3. BLOCKS

A child gets stuck on a word and cannot move forward. There are silent blocks, in which a child may just hesitate silently before saying a word. You may or may not see tension or struggle around the mouth or other parts of the body as the child is trying to get the word out. There are also audible blocks, when you may hear some struggle with a sound before a child gets the word out.