

Paired Reading
Reading Comprehension Strategy

Why use Paired Reading?

Paired (or partner) reading is a research-based strategy used with readers who lack fluency as it provides a model of fluent reading and helps students learn decoding skills. When using this strategy, students read aloud to each other. When using partners, more fluent readers can be paired with less fluent readers, or students who read at the same level can be paired to reread a story they have already read. Paired reading helps students work together, encourages cooperation and supports peer-assisted learning. It allows students to take turns reading and provide each other with feedback as a way to monitor comprehension.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

OL1: Know and use the conventions of oral language interaction, in a variety of contexts, including class groups for a range of purposes such as ... listening to others... informing... commentating, narrating...

OL4: Listen actively in order to get the gist of an account or presentation noting its main points and purpose

R1: Read texts with fluency, understanding and competence, decoding groups of words/phrases and not just single words

R12: Understand how word choice, syntax, grammar and text structure may vary with context and purpose

Possible Key Skills

- Being literate
- Communicating
- Working with others
- Staying well

Preparation

Pair students either by same reading ability or by high level readers with low level readers. Use the following steps to pair high-level readers with low-level readers:

- List the students in order from highest to lowest according to reading ability
- Divide the list in half
- Place the top student in the first list with the top student in the second list
- Continue until all students have been partnered
- Be sensitive to pairings of students with special education needs, including learning or emotional needs. Adjust pairings as necessary

Instructions

Paired reading can be used with any text, taking turns reading sentences, paragraphs, pages or chapters. Once a suitable text is chosen, introduce the students to the Paired Reading strategy. **Modelling the procedure** is crucial to ensure that students understand how to use the strategy.

Part of a successful paired reading approach involves **establishing a routine** for students to adopt so that they know the step-by-step requirements for engaging in paired reading. Allowing some time to read the text in advance of reading aloud is useful to promote confidence. The reader from the first list could read aloud first while the reader from the second list listens and follows along.

Depending on the pairings/ needs of students, the teacher can decide how reading will be structured:

- Will students read out loud simultaneously? Ask students to begin reading in pairs and adjust reading speed if reading simultaneously so they stay together.
- Will they take turns with each person reading a sentence, paragraph or a page?
- Will one person read while the other person listens?

The second reader could pick up where the first reader stops. Assure students that if additional practice is needed, then the second reader can reread what the first reader read.

Encourage pairs to ask each other some **reflective questions** about what was read. Students might ask "What was your extract about? What was your favourite part?". We can also encourage students to offer feedback and praise frequently for correct reading.

Teaching students an **error-correction procedure** to use when supporting each other's reading (i.e. re-reading misread words; signalling for difficulty) is also very worthwhile in promoting student confidence.

The teacher has an opportunity to move between pairings to **observe the learning and support** students as they work.