

Timed Reading for Fluency

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Introduction

A well-organized language course provides opportunities for learning through communicative activities involving listening, speaking, reading and writing, deliberate study, and fluency development. The fluency development part of a course should take about one-quarter of the course time, and there should be fluency development activities for each of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

This series of books focuses on fluency in reading. Fluency involves making the best use of what you already know. That comes from working with familiar vocabulary and grammar, and from practicing using them in a comfortable way without having to struggle.

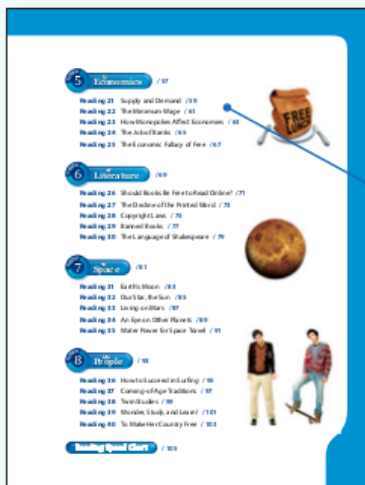
Seven Requirements of Fluency Development:

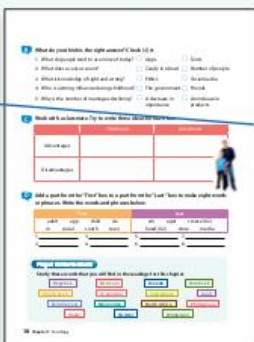
1. Familiar Material

Material for fluency development must be known and familiar. It should not involve unfamiliar language items or content too far removed from what learners already know. This is because to become fluent, learners need to focus on using material they already know well, not on learning new vocabulary or grammar. This is why the texts in these books are grouped into topic areas so that learners can read several texts about very similar information. Their familiarity with the topic will help them increase their reading speed.

2. Quantity of Practice

Another key requirement of a fluency development course is quantity of practice. Fluency develops by doing plenty of practice with easy material. That is why each book in this series contains a lot of reading texts. When learners have finished working through one book in the series, it is a good idea if they go back over the texts they have already read, trying to read them faster than they did the first time.





3. Controlled Vocabulary

Learners do not get fluent in reading by struggling through difficult texts with lots of unknown words. The books in this series are carefully written within a controlled vocabulary so that there is a minimum of unknown words. Words that might be unfamiliar to some learners are dealt with before the reading texts.

4. Limited Headwords

Book 1 is written within a vocabulary of 800 words, Book 2 within 1,100 words, Book 3 within 1,500 words, and Book 4 within 2,000 words.

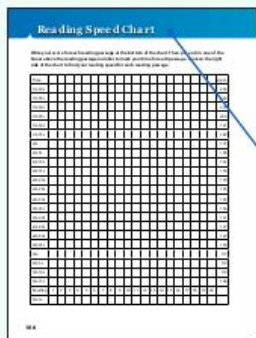


5. Pressure to Go Faster

A fluency development course will work well if there is some pressure to go faster when using the language. This series of books uses timed readings. When the learners read, they measure how long it takes them to do the reading, and they keep a record of their reading speed. Their aim is to increase their speed until it gets close to 250 words per minute.

6. A Focus on Comprehension

Fluency in reading not only involves speed of word recognition, but also involves comprehension. This is why the texts in these books are followed by questions. There is no value in reading faster if there is a big drop in comprehension.



7. Graphs to Chart Progress

At the back of each book there is a graph where learners should enter their reading speed for each text and their comprehension score. The learners' goal should be to make their reading speed graph keep going up.

A Look at the pictures. Circle the right words.



1. The only way to cross the desert in the (average / southern) part of the country was by camel.



2. My grandfather built this treehouse when he was a (census / teenager).



3. Is it accurate to say that marriage is the beginning of (childhood / adulthood)?



4. The birth rate has decreased in some countries, but the worldwide population continues to (increase / decrease).

B What do you think is the right answer? Check (✓) it.

- What do people tend to use more of today? ☐ Apps ☐ Tents
- What does a census count? ☐ Candy in a bowl ☐ Number of people
- What is knowledge of right and wrong? ☐ Ethics ☐ Social media
- Who is a strong influence during childhood? ☐ The government ☐ Friends
- Why is the number of marriages declining? ☐ A decrease in importance ☐ An increase in products

C Work with a classmate. Try to write three ideas for each box.

	Childhood	Adulthood
Advantages		
Disadvantages		



D Add a part from the “First” box to a part from the “Last” box to make eight words or phrases. Write the words and phrases below.

First				Last			
adult	app	child	de	ern	ager	crease (X2)	
in	social	south	teen	hood (X2)	store	media	

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Proper Nouns to Know

Study these words that you will find in the readings for this chapter.

Bagaboa

Bedouin

Canada

Facebook

Gobi Desert

Greenland

Instagram

Inuit

Middle East

Mongolian

North Africa

Philippines

Spain

Twitter

WhatsApp



Should Kids Change Their Names?

Some people like their names, but others are not happy with them. Children are named by their parents. Many times, these names have an important meaning for their parents. Some parents name their children after a member of their family. For example, children may be named after a grandmother or an uncle. Parents may also give children names that will make children feel like they have a certain goal. For example, some children are named after famous kings or queens. At times, there are parents who have named their children something unusual. For example, there have been children named Apple or Peace. Since children do not get to pick their names, they may feel bad. They may want to change their names. As children grow up, they may find a new name that seems to fit them better than the one their parents gave them. Should these children be allowed to change their names?

Some people say children should be able to change their names, especially if their names are unusual. This is because children with very unusual names are sometimes treated badly by others. Other children may make fun of a child with an unusual name. Some children's names are spelled very differently from how they sound. This also causes problems for such children. They may not like the member of the family they are named after, or they may not agree with their parents about certain ideas related to their names.

Other people say that children should not be able to change their names. This is largely because children change a lot as they grow. One name may seem good during childhood, but then may not seem very good in adulthood. Name changing again as an adult leads to confusion all around. Children may also be easily influenced by their friends. Children who only listen to their friends do not always make good decisions. Parents, not friends, should be the major influence in a child's life. Since parents give their children a lot of love and care, they may feel hurt if the child wants to change his or her name.



Word Count 350 words

Comprehension Questions

Circle the right answer.

1. This reading is about
 - a. children who have changed their names and why.
 - b. why children change their names.
 - c. whether children should be able to change their names.
2. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as how parents pick names?
 - a. They want the child's name to sound funny.
 - b. They name a child after a relative.
 - c. They name a child with a special goal in mind.
3. The writer says that children may not like unusual names because
 - a. they know that they will grow up.
 - b. some people will think they are special.
 - c. people sometimes will treat them badly.
4. Some people say children should not be able to change their names because
 - a. people make fun of their unusual names.
 - b. children are easily influenced by their friends.
 - c. some people in the family do not like the name.
5. Parents can feel bad when children want to change their names because
 - a. they want children to have unusual names.
 - b. they love and take care of their children.
 - c. they think their children are like adults.



Extra Practice

Choose the word or phrase with a similar meaning as the underlined part.

1. A good teacher can influence students to make good choices. guide / pick
2. Certain names can be given to both boys and girls. Better / Some
3. During most of my childhood, I lived in Canada. vacation / young years
4. Kids look forward to adulthood when they finish schooling. being older / the afternoon
5. My dad goes by a short form of his name since his real name is long. because / if

Does Wealth Affect Ethics?

Would you lie to get \$50? Would you lie to get \$50 for a friend, not yourself? These are some questions that researchers ask in ethics studies. Money has always caused problems between people, but researchers wanted to know if money affects a person's ethics. They did different kinds of experiments and studied rich and poor people. Some studies were about how people felt about money, and others were about pretending to be a richer person.

One interesting study was about people who drove very nice cars and people who did not. Researchers watched how rich people acted when they were driving. They also watched how poorer people acted. Another study was about candy. In this study, researchers told a person that a bowl of candy was for children in the next room. The person was allowed to take some candy before the bowl was given to the children. Each person in the study was told to think about being rich or being very poor. Researchers also did a study in which people imagined getting money according to their actions. Researchers told people they could get \$50 if they got a certain score in a game. Then they told other people their friends would get \$50 if they got a certain score in the game.

These studies showed some surprising things about people and ethics. The people with very nice cars tended not to be very careful when they were driving, and they sometimes cut off other drivers. The people who thought about being rich tended to take more candy from the bowl. The richer people also tended to lie about their score in the game to get the money. Researchers found that richer people tended not to lie for friends. Were the findings any different for poorer people in any of these studies? Poorer drivers tended to be kinder and more careful drivers. Poorer people tended not to take much candy from the bowl. They also tended not to lie about their scores. But poorer people did lie when they were told that their friends would get something good.



Word Count 350 words

Comprehension Questions

Circle the right answer.

1. This reading is about
 - a. why richer people are better than poor people in ethics studies.
 - b. how the ethics of rich and poor people tend to be different.
 - c. research on the ethics of drivers and how much money they have.
2. Researchers watched people driving to find out
 - a. if rich people and poor people acted in certain ways.
 - b. if richer people have nicer cars than poorer people have.
 - c. if rich people cut off poor drivers more often than other drivers.
3. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as part of a study?
 - a. People were told they could take candy from a bowl.
 - b. Researchers watched rich people and poor people driving cars.
 - c. People watched researchers pretend they were rich.
4. The writer says that
 - a. poorer people tended to be more careful drivers.
 - b. poorer people tended to take more candy from the bowl.
 - c. poorer people tended to lie to their friends.
5. Richer people tended to
 - a. lie more often about driving nicer cars.
 - b. eat more candy when they are driving.
 - c. not respect others while driving.



Score _____

Extra Practice

Write the right word in each blank to complete the summary.

candy

ethics

experiments

kindly

tended

Researchers wanted to see how money affected people's 1. _____. They asked some rich and poor people to help with their 2. _____. In one study, they had people think about being rich or poor and then asked them to take 3. _____ from a bowl. It was interesting to find that people 4. _____ to take more candy when they thought about being rich. People who were poor or thought about being poor tended to act more 5. _____.

The Age for Marriage

Marriage is an old and common custom in all cultures. Most marriages are between two adults, although some countries allow children to wed. And in the United States, studies show that the average marriage age of adults is changing.

In the United States, records of couples getting married have been kept since the country's beginning. Those records are not complete, but they can give us an idea of how old people were when they got married. People started keeping better records in 1880. In that year, the government began to take a census of families. After that time, the average age of marriage was more clearly understood by researchers and the government.

From the information that is available about marriages in the US, some interesting trends have been found. In the 1600s, women usually married as teenagers or in their early twenties. The average age for men was around 25. By the end of the 1800s, the marriage age for women had increased, but for men, it had stayed about the same. The 1880 census showed that the average age for men was 26.5. The average age for women was 23.0. In the next census ten years later, the numbers were 23.6 for women and 27.6 for men.

Surprisingly, into the 1900s, the average age for marriage began to decrease. The marriage age for men and women decreased to its lowest point in 1960. For men, the typical marriage age was around 23, and for women it was 20. But, since 1960, the average marriage age has been rising again. By 1990, the age at which men typically wed was again around 27 and for women 25. And it is still going up. Recent studies show that men are now getting married at 29 and women at 27.

For more than 400 years, the average marriage age in the US has gone up and down. But these latest average ages are the highest ever. And because they are continuing to rise, some people are worried. They are afraid that the numbers mean that marriage is becoming less important.



Word Count 350 words

Comprehension Questions

Circle the right answer.

1. This reading is about
 - a. the earliest marriage age for American women.
 - b. the average marriage age in the world.
 - c. the average marriage age in the US.
2. In the United States, marriage records have been kept
 - a. since before 1800.
 - b. since the mid 1800s.
 - c. since the 1960s.
3. Which of the following is NOT true according to the article?
 - a. Marriage is common to all cultures.
 - b. Child marriages are very common.
 - c. We can learn about families through a census.
4. The marriage age was lowest for men and women in
 - a. 1960.
 - b. 1600.
 - c. 2000.
5. Some people are worried about the increasing marriage age today because
 - a. they think governments will stop taking censuses.
 - b. they say records are being taken incorrectly.
 - c. they are afraid marriage is becoming unimportant.



Score _____

Extra Practice

Choose the word or phrase with a similar meaning as the underlined part.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. My mom and dad <u>got married</u> when they were young. | wed / separated |
| 2. Marriage is a <u>custom</u> found in nearly every culture. | government / tradition |
| 3. <u>Governments</u> record information about families during each census. | Teenagers / Leaders |
| 4. The <u>average</u> marriage age in the US is higher than ever. | common / unusual |
| 5. The <u>couple</u> plans to marry after they both graduate college. | pair / group |



How Social Media Is Changing the World

Facebook is a social media app that allows people to connect with each other. Facebook, created in 2004, is by far the most popular social media site so far. In fact, as of 2016, there were over 1.6 billion Facebook users around the world. In total, there are about 2 billion people who use any type of social media. Before 2020, this number is expected to grow to 2.5 billion people. With so many people connecting online around the world, social media has changed our lives a lot in recent years.



First, social media brings people closer together. Families who live far from each other can have conversations and share pictures with each other on social media. Strangers who don't know each other can talk about similar interests. Even people who live in different countries can connect as if they were sitting in the same living room.

Second, almost every business uses social media to tell customers about their services or products. The power of social media comes from the fact that so many people use it. In addition, social media sites record a lot of information about a person and the things he or she likes. Facebook is set up in such a way that only the ads that a person would be interested in are shown on his or her page. Not only can people see products, but they can also "like" the products and offer reviews on them. The more "likes" a product has, the more likely others are going to buy it. This is why many businesses now consider social media sites as important factors affecting sales.

Third, social media has increased the voice of the people. For example, through pictures and video, people can now put their own news and ideas on the internet. No longer is the media in control of what kind of information is reported. People can now tell millions of others what they think about events in the news. With text, videos, and pictures, social media is able to influence public opinion on just about any event reported in the news.



Word Count 350 words

Comprehension Questions

Circle the right answer.

1. This reading is about
 - a. different types of social media.
 - b. how to use social media.
 - c. social media's influence today.
2. What is social media?
 - a. Websites and apps that allow us to share information
 - b. Television and radio stations
 - c. News that is made available online
3. The writer thinks social media
 - a. makes people feel more alone.
 - b. brings people closer together.
 - c. is bad for the relationship of friends.
4. The writer says most businesses
 - a. are not interested in social media.
 - b. think social media hurts their business.
 - c. use social media to tell people about products and services.
5. Who can make news available through social media?
 - a. Anyone
 - b. No one
 - c. Only people working in media



Score _____

Extra Practice

Write the right word in each blank to complete the summary.

billion

connect

influencing

app

products

Social media is changing the way people 1. _____ with each other. In fact, over a(n) 2. _____ people are using Facebook! This makes the 3. _____ a useful way for people to share ideas. In addition, businesses are able to use social media as a way to sell their 4. _____. When people talk about ideas and products using such apps, social media becomes a powerful tool for 5. _____ public opinion.

Homes Around the World

When you hear the word “home,” you probably think of the place you are living in right now. Maybe it is an apartment, a single house, or a two-story house. Maybe it is made of wood or stone. You may think houses are rather normal buildings, but some houses around the world are rather unique!

- 5 The Bedouin people of the Middle East and North Africa live in interesting homes. The Bedouin people live in the desert, and they move around without staying to live in one place very long. So, they live in tents that are made of animal hair. The tents are easy to put up and take down when they move from place to place. In a similar way, a group of Mongolian people of the Gobi Desert also live in tents rather than buildings. These homes, called “ger” homes, are also made of animal hair, but they are round instead of square like
- 10 Bedouin tents.

Before people made the first tents, they lived in caves. Some people in the southern part of Spain live in caves today, too! They call these cave homes “cuebas.” These caves keep the house cool during the summer and warm during the winter.

- 15 Another type of home is the “igloo” used by the Inuit people of Canada and Greenland. Igloos are normally made of ice and snow. The igloo protects the people from the wind as well as keeps them warm. In fact, the temperature inside an igloo can even reach 16° C just from body heat alone.

- 20 The Bagabao people of the Philippines used to live in what may be a childhood dream for some—a treehouse! These treehouses were built so that the people could watch for enemies and protect themselves from wild and dangerous animals. In addition, the people could stay cool in their treehouses during the hot summer season. Although the Bagabao people don’t live in these treehouses anymore, they still use things like them for resting and for meeting people.

- 25 If you ever get the chance, be sure to check out different homes of different cultures!



Word Count 350 words

Comprehension Questions

Circle the right answer.

1. This reading is about
 - a. where the best place to live is.
 - b. different types of homes.
 - c. how to build a house.
2. Which of the following is what the Bedouin used to make their tents?
 - a. Animal hair
 - b. Parts of plants
 - c. Sand
3. The writer says that the "cuebas" in Spain are like
 - a. cold houses.
 - b. underground houses.
 - c. treehouses.
4. An igloo can be kept warm by
 - a. a heater.
 - b. a fire.
 - c. body heat.
5. The writer says that the people who used to live in treehouses are from
 - a. North Africa.
 - b. the Philippines.
 - c. Mongolia.



Score _____

Extra Practice

Choose the word or phrase with a similar meaning as the underlined part.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. <u>Wind, rain, and snow</u> may influence what type of homes people live in. | Weather / Culture |
| 2. <u>Caves</u> are warm in the winter and cool in the summer. | Small tents / Big holes |
| 3. <u>Igloos</u> are unique to people living in the far north. | Ice houses / Treehouses |
| 4. Living in tents <u>rather than</u> stone buildings makes it easier to move around. | in addition / instead of |
| 5. Houses protect people from weather, animals, and <u>enemies</u> . | friends / strangers |