

# Teaching Tips

## for Transitional Readers, Level J–M

### LEVELS J–M PHONICS FOCUS TEACHING TIPS

- Have students look at the words (and not at you) while reading.
- Teach syllable types to help kids decode longer words. Create an anchor chart for each for reference.
- Do some isolated phonics work with the skill kids will need while reading the text *before* they read. But don't have them decode all the new words ahead of time. Leave some decoding work for kids to do while reading.
- Use mini-anchor charts to remind children of the phonics sounds or syllable types they will be using as they read.
- Help students use parts, including affixes and syllables, to read words accurately. Teach kids to think about affixes to help with word meanings.
- Don't focus on too many phonics pieces at once in your small group lesson. Focus on what you think your students need a bit of assistance with (usually specific vowels or syllables).
- Use word hunts and sorts to help children learn the phonics patterns being studied.

### LEVELS J–M FLUENCY FOCUS TEACHING TIPS

- Model how to move your eyes quickly across the page rather than stopping on every word as students learn to read silently.
- Remind children to read silently unless you are listening to them read (to check on accuracy and fluency).
- Select easier text for kids to practice fluent oral reading, if needed, to build skill and confidence.
- Consider using reader's theater or poetry in small groups to build fluent oral reading. Students might read aloud different parts to work on reading dialogue with expression.
- Have children point out punctuation on a page before reading. Review what to do if you come to a period or question mark. Remind kids to stop at end punctuation.
- Help students notice quotation marks and read those parts in the voice of the character.
- You might have the music teacher help students make connections to phrasing, too. We read and perform music in phrases to improve its flow.
- Some students may benefit from practicing reading simple phrases. You can find Fry's reading phrases here: [https://www.d57.org/Downloads/frys\\_sight\\_word\\_phrases.pdf](https://www.d57.org/Downloads/frys_sight_word_phrases.pdf)
- Review high-frequency words as needed if kids aren't reading them fluently in text.
- If students typically speak slowly or in a nonphrased way, help them with oral language before fluent reading. Try teaching students to record themselves and listen back to hear their speaking and eventually their reading. They may not read faster than they talk.

## LEVELS J–M COMPREHENSION FOCUS TEACHING TIPS

- Break the reading of longer text into sections across several days to deepen comprehension.
- Be sure students know they should read to understand. Encourage them to reread if meaning breaks down.
- Think of your small group time as an opportunity for conversations with readers—before, during, and after reading.
- Observe children when they get a new book. Do they thoughtfully examine the cover and preview the text or just flip to the first page and start reading words?
- Before reading, ask kids about genre and what they expect to see in the text (e.g., *Stories have characters, settings, and plots. Folktales have threes. Informational text may be written in sections with headings telling central ideas.*)
- Give kids sticky notes to jot down things related to the lesson focus (e.g., character traits, point of view, text structure).
- Have children use graphic organizers *during* reading, not just as a comprehension check after reading.
- Give students sticky notes to help them interact with the text.
- Teach kids how to take simple notes or draw sketches on the side *during* reading to deepen comprehension, especially when reading about unfamiliar topics.
- Encourage students to reread if they don't comprehend something (a word, a sentence, a section).

## LEVELS J–M VOCABULARY FOCUS TEACHING TIPS

- Introduce new vocabulary from the book if there is a word that kids need to comprehend the text well. Model how to use clues from the words and graphics. Have children use this word orally as they talk before reading the book.
- Remind students to pay attention to new words as they read, including figurative language in literary text and bold words in informational text.
- Model how to use a dictionary or glossary during read-aloud. Show how to find word meanings students might just skip over.
- Let kids keep cool little notebooks where they jot down new words.
- Remind students to use new vocabulary as they discuss and summarize what they read.
- Model how to use words and sentences that surround a new word to figure out its meaning.
- Begin to study multiple meaning words, homophones, and idioms at this stage.