



PODCAST LISTENING GUIDE:

# *Fluency*



# Hi Teacher Friends!

## Welcome to the Podcast Listening Guide!

We know the Science of Reading can sometimes feel big and overwhelming. That's why we started the Melissa & Lori Love Literacy podcast. Each week, we talk with researchers, teachers, and literacy experts who break down the research and share ideas you can try right away.

This guide pulls those conversations together around one focused topic. Use it for:

- **your own learning**
- **team discussions**
- **school-wide PD**

You'll find:

- **episodes grouped by theme**
- **conversation starters and classroom takeaways**
- **space to jot down notes or next steps**

There is never enough time in a teacher's day. Between lessons, kids who need you, and stacks of grading, it is a lot. Podcasts make learning feel doable. You can listen in the car, while setting up your room, or when you finally have a quiet moment to yourself at home.

However you use it, we hope this guide helps you feel encouraged, supported, and ready to try something new.

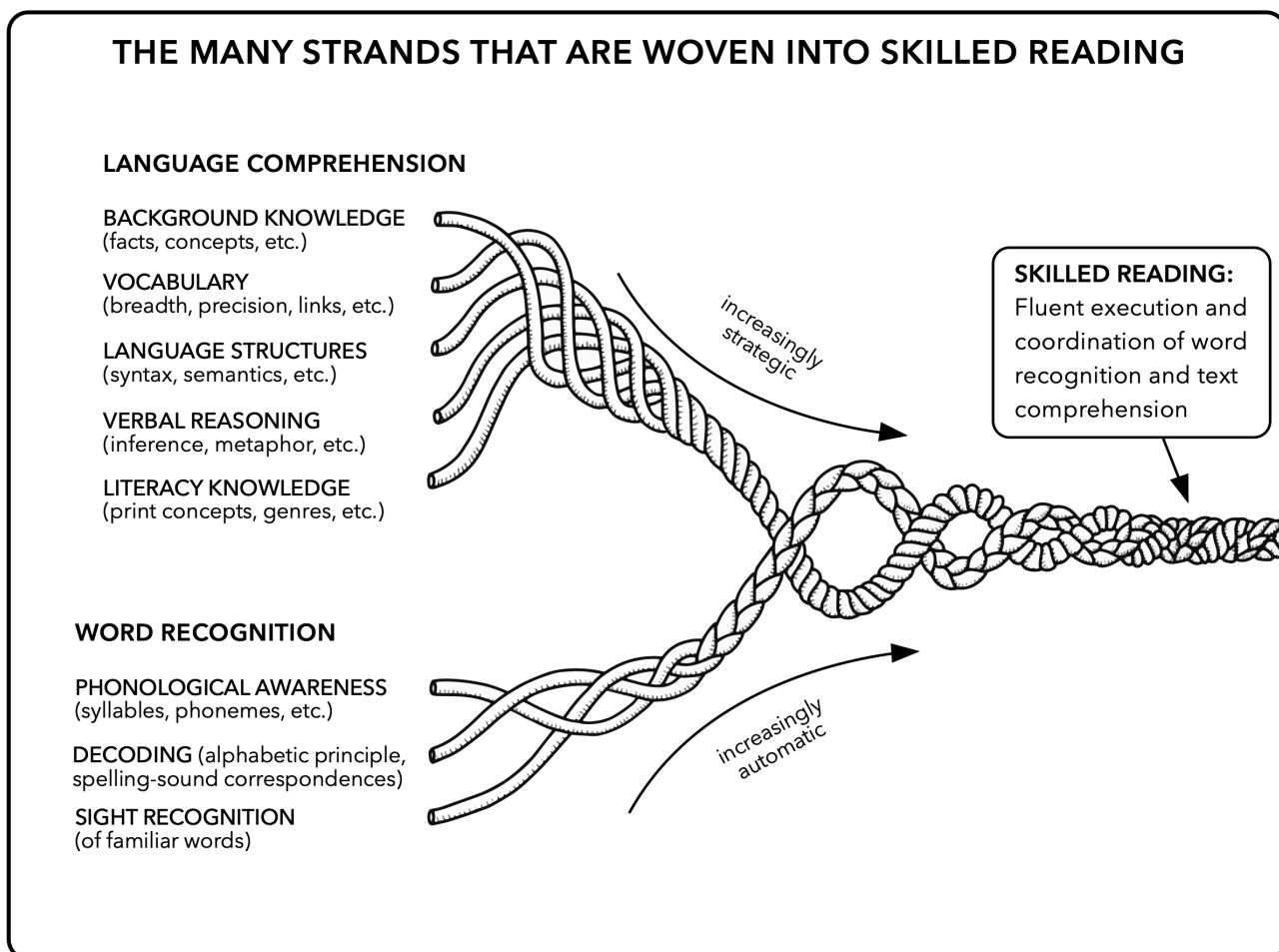
We can't wait to keep learning with you,

♥ *Melissa & Lori*



## Why is fluency important?

Fluency is one of the strongest predictors of reading success. It's the part of Scarborough's Reading Rope that connects automatic word recognition to comprehension. When students read fluently, their brains aren't stuck on decoding; they're free to focus on meaning. In this listening guide, we'll unpack what fluency really is, how to assess it, and simple routines that build fluency.



**LISTEN:** [Ep. 178: The Simple View and Scarborough's Reading Rope with Hugh Catts](#)

Here are three big takeaways about fluency instruction straight from the voices of researchers and real classrooms:

## 1 Fluency Is More Than Speed

Fluency isn't just about reading fast. It's about reading with accuracy, automaticity, and expression. When students read fluently, their brains are freed up for comprehension. As Tim Rasinski reminds us, fluency is the bridge from decoding to understanding.

## 2 Assessment Drives Instruction

Effective fluency instruction starts with knowing where students are. Tools like oral reading fluency (ORF) assessments help teachers pinpoint needs and celebrate growth. Jan Hasbrouck's work with the Hasbrouck & Tindal norms shows how to use fluency data to inform practice and measure progress.

## 3 Practice Builds Prosody

Students need intentional, repeated practice to become fluent readers. Engaging routines like choral reading, paired reading, and readers' theater make fluency fun and meaningful. Research and real classroom examples show these approaches build fluency, comprehension, and motivation for reading.



In this instructional guide, you'll hear from some of the most trusted voices in fluency: Jan Hasbrouck, Tim Rasinski, Maryanne Wolf, and more. Together, they'll help you see fluency not as a side skill, but as a vital strand woven through every part of reading. You'll find assessment tools, classroom routines, and practical ideas to help make fluent, expressive reading a natural part of daily literacy instruction.



LISTEN AGAIN: Episode 62

## Effective Fluency Instruction

with Tim Rasinski



EPISODE 62

# Effective Fluency Instruction

with Tim Rasinski



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

Tim Rasinski, professor emeritus at Kent State University, shares **why fluency should be a daily focus in reading instruction**, and he shares how to support students in all aspects of it in all aspects of it, including accuracy, rate, and expression. Tim offers joyful, practical ways to bring fluency instruction to life through performance, poetry, and repeated readings, helping students connect word recognition to true comprehension.

### Episode Resources

The **Multidimensional Fluency Rubric** is a practical classroom tool that helps teachers easily assess and support students' fluency.

Bring performance to your classroom! Have students rehearse and perform a short poem or passage. Then, reflect on how their fluency improves with each read.

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## Revisiting Fluency Assessment and Instruction

with Jan Hasbrouck



EPISODE 227

## ***Revisiting Fluency Instruction and Assessment***

with Jan Hasbrouck



[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

Fluency researcher and author Jan Hasbrouck **breaks down the science behind reading fluency**: what it is, how to measure it, and why it matters. She explains how automaticity and oral reading fluency (measured by words correct per minute) connect directly to comprehension and student growth. Jan also shares insights from recent research and NAEP data that challenge old assumptions.

### ***Episode Resources***

Listen to another episode with Jan Hasbrouck: **"Science of Reading Beyond Phonics: Fluency"** for a closer look at measuring fluency and connecting prosody to comprehension.

Conduct a 1-minute ORF assessment with students this week.

What do you notice about their accuracy and automaticity? How will you respond?

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## Exploring the Research Behind Paired Oral Reading

with Jake Downs



EPISODE 224

## *Exploring the Research Behind Paired Oral Reading*

with Jake Downs



[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

Helping students become fluent readers can be challenging. Jake Downs, assistant professor at Utah State University, introduces **Synchronous Paired Oral Reading Techniques (SPORT)** and explains why it works. He shares how to implement SPORT with minimal preparation. He also highlights the research showing its impact on fluency and comprehension. This episode is packed with evidence-based strategies to strengthen reading skills in your classroom.

### ***Episode Resources***

This **Reading Rockets** resource offers practical tips for implementing paired reading to build fluency and reading confidence in students.

After trying paired reading this week, reflect on how students responded. Discuss what was most effective and what you would do differently next time.

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## Science of Reading Beyond Phonics

Episode 154

# Fluency Instructional Routines

with Nathaniel Swain



## EPISODE 154

# Science of Reading Beyond Phonics: Fluency Instructional Routines

with Nathaniel Swain



[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

Nathaniel Swain, Senior Lecturer at La Trobe University, breaks down the three key components of fluency: **rate, accuracy, and prosody**. He shares practical strategies like **choral and paired reading** and discusses the importance of exposing students to challenging texts. Tune in to discover how fluency instruction strengthens comprehension and builds confident readers.

## Episode Resources

This article, "[Fluency: Instructional Guidelines and Student Activities](#)," offers practical strategies to help students build fluency.

Pick one fluency routine to add to your small group or whole group instruction this week.  
After trying it with your students, reflect:

Explain why you chose this routine.

Discuss what worked well and what you would adjust.

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## First Steps to Fluency: How Young Learners Become Independent Readers

with Virginia Quinn-Mooney



EPISODE 226

## ***First Steps to Fluency: How Young Learners Become Independent Readers***

with Virginia Quinn-Mooney



[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

First grade teacher Virginia Quinn-Mooney explores the critical role of fluency in K-2 reading, showing how it supports comprehension and overall literacy development. She shares **practical strategies for teaching fluency** through partner, shared, and read-aloud activities, emphasizing the importance of modeling fluent reading. Virginia also highlights **creative ways to enhance prosody**, including using songs and poems, offering educators actionable ideas to improve fluency in early grades.

### ***Episode Resources***

**This video** showcases Virginia's choral reading routine, providing a practical example of how to build fluency, prosody, and engagement in K-2 students.

#### **If You Teach Grades K-2:**

Plan a choral or partner reading activity and think about how you will model fluency for your students.

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#### **If You Teach Grade 3 or above:**

Plan a repeated reading or fluency-focused activity and consider how you will support both fluency and comprehension.

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Episode 209

## Readers' Theater: Easy, Effective, and FUN!

with Chase Young



EPISODE 209

## ***Readers' Theater: Easy, Effective, & FUN!***

with Chase Young



[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

Chase Young, a professor at Sam Houston State University, explores **the power of Readers' Theater** as a tool to build reading fluency, expression, and engagement in the classroom. He provides a clear framework for implementing Readers' Theater with structured practice, showing how dramatic reading motivates students and strengthens fluency.

### ***Episode Resources***

This collection of **Readers' Theater scripts from TheBestClass.org** offers a variety of engaging materials for implementing dramatic reading in the classroom.

Plan a set of Readers' Theater lessons over the course of a week.  
How will the performance help students practice fluency and transfer skills to other texts or subjects?

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## A Classroom Fluency Protocol That Works

with Aaron Grossman



EPISODE 225

## ***A Classroom Fluency Protocol That Works***

with Aaron Grossman



[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

Fourth-grade teacher Aaron Grossman shares his engaging fluency protocol that uses Readers' Theater to build oral reading fluency. He walks through **his structured 5-day cycle**, from introducing scripts to guiding students as they write and perform their own. You will gain practical strategies for repeated reading, using or creating scripts, and supporting students at different reading levels.

### ***Episode Resources***

**Aaron's website** offers a variety of ready-to-use Readers' Theater scripts, perfect for implementing the fluency strategies he shares in this episode.

After implementing a 5-day Readers' Theater cycle, reflect on how students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension developed.  
Which elements best supported fluency? What would you modify in the future?

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Episode 211

## Building Fluency with POSSUM

with Melissa Orkin and Maryanne Wolf



EPISODE 211

## ***Building Fluency with POSSUM***

with Melissa Orkin & Maryanne Wolf

 [LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

Fluency is a cornerstone of skilled reading, encompassing automaticity and the ability to integrate multiple aspects of word knowledge. Researchers Maryanne Wolf and Melissa Orkin explore **the factors that support fluent reading and the importance of an integrative approach to instruction**. They introduce the POSSUM approach, a strategy designed to help students strengthen the connections needed for fluent reading.

### ***Episode Resources***

Check out these downloadable lessons featuring the POSSUM approach:

- [Grades K-2](#)
- [Grades 3-5](#)

### POSSUM Components for Fluency

Phonology	Rules that govern the sound structure of a language	Helps with sound discrimination, segmenting, and blending, critical for accurate decoding and fluency
Orthography	The rules that govern letter patterns and the ways in which they are combined in a language.	Supports automatic word recognition, which leads to fluency
Semantics	Breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge	Knowing multiple meanings of a word improves automatic retrieval and comprehension
Syntax	How words function in sentences (noun, verb, adjective)	Supports automatic word retrieval and is strongly linked to fluency and comprehension
Morphology	Organization and understanding of morphemes (smallest units of meaning)	Makes long words more accessible and highlights semantic and syntactic information

Episode 210

## How Can You Improve Fluency for Older Students?

with Janee' Butler



EPISODE 210

## ***How Can You Improve Fluency for Older Students?***

with Janee' Butler



[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

Fluency is a complex but critical skill, especially for older students. Janee' Butler, Director of Program Design & Implementation at The Center for Literacy and Learning, explores **how fluency instruction evolves from the primary through the secondary grades**, highlighting common challenges for students and teachers. The discussion reinforces that strong fluency skills are essential for comprehension and that teachers need targeted approaches to support every learner.

### ***Episode Resources***

Check out "[Teaching Oral Reading Fluency to Older Students](#)" by Tim Shanahan for practical strategies to support fluency in middle and high school readers.

How do the strategies Tim Shanahan outlines in [this blog post](#) align with or differ from the fluency approaches discussed in the episode?  
Which ideas could you adapt for your classroom?

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LISTEN AGAIN: Episode 110

## Baltimore Secondary Literacy Teachers Talk Fluency



EPISODE 110

## ***Baltimore Secondary Literacy Teachers Talk Fluency***

with Tanisha Dasmunshi, Emily  
Jaskowski, and Emery Uwimana



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

Middle school educators from Baltimore City Public Schools discuss their focus on fluency through Continuous Improvement work. They explain what Continuous Improvement is, and you will hear about their fluency strategies and outcomes. This episode is especially relevant for **secondary teachers looking to strengthen fluency instruction**.

### ***Episode Resources***

Read this [article by Louisa Moats](#) to learn more about helping older students who need more support with reading.

Based on recent fluency data, what patterns do you notice in your students' strengths and needs? How would you adjust instruction based on that data?

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# ***Bringing It All Together...***



**1** Thinking about the episodes and your own classroom, how do you see fluency supporting comprehension in your students' reading?

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**2** After trying out different strategies, which routines or practices have been most effective in helping students build fluency?

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**3** How are you assessing fluency in your classroom, and how does that data inform your instruction?

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# ***Learn More: Fluency***



## ***Melissa & Lori Blogs***

- Everything You Need to Know About Fluency—in 12 Podcast Episodes
- 5-Minute Reading Routines: Simple Ways to Build Fluency at Home

## ***Great Minds Blogs***

- Using Wit & Wisdom and Geodes to Strengthen Fluency in Grades K-2
- Prioritizing Fluency Practice in the Middle Grades

## ***Resources We Love***

- "Why Reading Fluency Should Be Hot!" by Tim Rasinski
- Fluency with Text & Comprehension



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*[The Literacy 50 Book](#)*

# Notes

