

# Florida Center for Reading Research

## QuickReads

### What is QuickReads?

*QuickReads* is a program for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade students that is specifically designed to improve students' fluency, and has strong comprehension, vocabulary, and background knowledge elements as well. The *QuickReads* program consists of short informational texts that are read quickly for meaning. The texts are all expository, covering a variety of topics in science and social studies. Each grade level has 3 books that sequentially develop reading rate. Within each book there are six units (3 social studies and 3 science), and within each unit there are five readings related to a topical theme. Ninety-eight percent of the words in *QuickReads* are a combination of high-frequency words and words with a grade-appropriate set of phonic/syllabic patterns. Other words are words that are related to the topic being read. They are purposely written into the text more than one time, so that the student has repeated opportunities to see the new words and incorporate them into their sight word vocabulary.

There is a prescribed lesson format in *QuickReads*, which consists of three readings of the same passage within an instructional period of approximately 15 minutes. During the first read, the children read the selection silently. They scan for key words before they read, and discuss what they already know about the topic. After the first read, each child completes a graphic organizer to help him remember key points. During the second read, the teacher reads aloud as the students follow along silently. The target rate is one minute to read the passage. A comprehension question is discussed (further comprehension activities follow in subsequent parts of the lesson). For the third read, students read silently while the teacher times the reading. At the end of one minute, students circle the last word they've read and record the number of total words read. The reading is followed by answering comprehension questions based on the selection. It is suggested that teachers encourage rereading of passages with a partner, in a small group, or as a choral reading. In addition, students can read along with CD-ROMS that accompany the program. The Read-Along CD-ROMS model good prosody and fluency for the students, as well as give them an opportunity to hear new vocabulary used in the text. Teacher involvement and guidance throughout each lesson is critical to success with the program.



The teacher's manual provides benchmark reading selections which can be used to help place students in the text in one of two ways: within the complete instructional program (as has just been described), or within a modified instructional program, in which a student reads only one paragraph of the selection at a time. The benchmark selection includes several comprehension questions for the teacher to determine whether or not the student has understood what he or she has read. Guidelines are given in the manual as to how to determine a student's placement. However, it is also recommended that the teacher's subjective knowledge of the student serve as a guide in making these decisions. Excellent suggestions are given in the teacher's manual as to how activities and lessons might be extended to further enrich the *QuickReads*

readings themselves. Strategies are given for ESL/ELL students, and additional related readings are listed for each unit.

### Is QuickReads aligned with Reading First?

*QuickReads* is a fluency development program, with a strong comprehension component. It is not intended to address phonemic awareness or phonics instruction. Interactions between teacher and students in preparation for reading each informational text selection provide ample opportunities for the development of vocabulary related to the reading selection. Comprehension is built through several channels. For example, teachers and students engage in discussions about the main ideas of the passages that are read, and students respond in writing to both multiple choice and open response questions. In addition, students develop graphic organizers and write summaries of the selection to organize and bring together the material that they have read. Teachers may model and engage students in the K-W-L comprehension strategy (What do I know? What do I want to learn? What did I learn?). Comprehension and vocabulary can be further developed through additional readings from an accompanying recommended reading list.

*QuickReads* is straightforward in its format and materials and is not a complex program to implement. An orientation is provided for schools and/or districts purchasing the *QuickReads* program; the orientation centers on a one-page instructional routine.

### Research Support for QuickReads



*QuickReads* was published in 2003. Its instructional content and principles are soundly based on research findings (Hiebert & Fisher, 2002). The type of text, the number of words per reading, the types of words included, the number of repetitions of words within a selection, etc. have all been specifically designed based on earlier scientific reading studies. An impressive study was designed to test the effectiveness of the *QuickReads* program. Instructional coordinators assigned teachers in a California school district to either an intervention or comparison group (this did not involve true random assignment). The study involved high-performing 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and low-achieving 4<sup>th</sup> graders. The sample included 446 participants in all. A secondary purpose of the study was to determine whether or not the *QuickReads* program impacted English language learners differently than it did native English speakers. Intervention teachers received training in the use of the *QuickReads* program, including the rationale for the intervention, materials, and procedures. The program was implemented with the students in daily sessions of 10-15 minutes each, such that one topic (5 texts) was covered per week. Reading speed, accuracy, and comprehension measures were given as pre-tests (serving as covariates) and post-tests (serving as dependent variables). The texts used to measure fluency were randomly chosen *QuickReads* topics. Statistical analysis of the results identified a strong consistent effect on reading fluency favoring the intervention group over the comparison group regardless of language background. Students in the comparison group gained 15.8 words per minute during the nine-week study but the intervention group gained 25.4 words per minute—an increase of 61% over the comparison group. Native English speaking students and English language learners benefited equally from the intervention.

In sum, a study conducted by the authors yielded very encouraging results about the effectiveness of the *QuickReads* program. Future third party studies will be needed to confirm these results, and are currently being conducted.

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## Strengths & Weaknesses

### Strengths of *QuickReads*:

- The research foundation for the instructional content and principles of *QuickReads* is solid. Every care has been taken to conform the content and methods of the program to practices and knowledge that have proven to be successful.
- The text of the reading selections is well written and engaging.
- The quality of the comprehension questions and exercises is unusually good.

### Weaknesses of *QuickReads*:

- None were noted.

## Which Florida counties have schools that implement QuickReads?

Pinellas County      727-588-6011

## For More Information

[www.pearsonlearning.com/mcp/quickreads.cfm](http://www.pearsonlearning.com/mcp/quickreads.cfm)

## References

Hiebert, E.H. & Fisher, C.W. (2002). Text matters in developing fluent reading.



Manuscript submitted for publication. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Preconvention Institute, "Tools for Global Understanding: Fluency, Comprehension, and Content Knowledge" at the annual meeting of the International Reading Association, April 28, 2002, San Francisco, CA.

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Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

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