

# Developing fluency

One of the key areas to focus on in Year 2 and beyond is reading fluency. If children can't read fluently, they will have difficulty in accessing the whole curriculum throughout their school careers – and they will also miss out on the many benefits of reading for pleasure.

The Framework stresses that both **accuracy** and **reading speed** (i.e. the number of words a child can read per minute) are essential for fluency. Fluency is progressive – as a teacher, you can help children increase their fluency at whatever stage of development they're currently at, using the carefully levelled books in Bug Club Independent. You don't have to wait until a child has fully mastered decoding before starting work on fluency – all of

the Bug Club Independent books up to the end of Phase 5 are fully decodable and matched to the Bug Club Phonics progression offering young readers even more opportunity to practise as they learn to read. The book banded books are recommended for children who have finished learning phonics, starting with Orange books which revisit Phase 5 sounds and include a small number of non-decodable words to help children get used to tackling the phonically irregular words they will meet as they progress through Year 2. As children become more confident and fluent at each level, they can move up through the book bands so they are reading increasingly rich, complex texts and new language structures.



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## What is reading fluency?

- Fluency starts with **accurate reading**. For children who are struggling with reading, or reading at less than 90 words per minute, it's particularly important to assess their reading and find out where the gaps might be in their phonic knowledge. For children who have relatively few gaps but need a little extra support, use Bug Club Phonics (or whichever phonics programme your school uses) to address these gaps. Children who have significant gaps will need a more thorough intervention such as Rapid Phonics before they are able to develop fluency.
- Whilst consolidating their phonics learning will help develop accuracy, a **reading speed** of 90 words per minute is a good starting point. Children reading more slowly than this are usually too focused on decoding to be able to work on their comprehension, accuracy and expression, so the target is to first make sure that all children in Year 2 can read at least 90 words per minute, and to help them build on their fluency from that point.
- **Prosody**, also known as reading with expression, is also part of becoming a fluent reader. Children need to hear expert readers modelling fluent and expressive reading – so it's a great idea to read aloud to the class and show them what fluent reading sounds like. The Bug Club Shared books are ideal for this, or you could select books from Reading Corner to read aloud. A couple of techniques you could try are:
  - echo reading – you read a sentence and the children copy you with the same intonation
  - choral reading – children practise reading part of a text expressively together as a group, before performing it together.Reading playscripts is a fantastic way to encourage children to practise reading aloud with expression in a fun and non-threatening way. The Bug Club Julia Donaldson Plays to Act are fun and engaging playscripts that are specially written for a whole class to read and act.
- **Vocabulary development** is important for fluency as well as comprehension, so it's important to make sure that children understand the words they meet in books – take time to explain word meanings and practise using new words, whether you're reading a Bug Club Shared book aloud to the class or leading a guided reading session.

## How do children develop fluency?

For all children, **reading a lot** is the key to developing fluency! This means it's a good idea to provide a lot of different kinds of reading materials for them to choose from – including favourite comics and picture books, stories you've already read aloud to the class, non-fiction books on topics of interest, and easy-reading 'page-turners'. Almost any book that a child's motivated to read will help them to gain 'reading miles' and develop fluency. Bug Club provides a wealth of books with a wide variety of genres, topics and characters to encourage every child to read! The small steps between Bug Club book bands at Year 2 mean that children are supported as they develop fluency one step at a time, whilst Reading Corner provides a range of diverse, top-quality texts to encourage children to read widely and try new topics or genres.

**Re-reading** books is important for developing fluency. When children re-read a book, they don't have to focus so much on decoding and understanding the words – they are free to concentrate on reading with pace, accuracy and expression. Bug Club eBooks are an ideal way for children to be able to access and re-read books they have already read as many times as they want.