

Paired Reading

Paired Reading is an easy-to-use approach that allows variable amounts of support for the student reader. It is centered on student control of reading, with the volunteer reading in unison with the student or remaining quiet as the student reads, all at the direction of the student. The reading material is chosen by the student—book, comic, advertisement, magazine article, or whatever. For difficult materials, there will be more duet reading and for easy materials the student will do more solo reading. However, over time the volunteer should encourage the student to select materials that are challenging but not frustrating. Here's how Paired Reading works.

- Explain to the student that sometimes the two of you will read aloud together (duet reading) and sometimes he or she will read aloud alone (solo reading). You will always start reading together but the student should try to go solo as soon as he or she feels ready.
- Select two simple signals that the student will give: one for beginning solo reading and one for beginning duet reading. These signals can be tapping on the table, on your hand or your shoulder. The student also could point to himself (for solo reading) and to you (for duet reading).
- Paired reading begins with duet reading. You and the student count together – “1, 2, 3 – and begin reading together. Adjust your reading speed so that the two of you are reading in unison.
- If the student mispronounces a word, stop reading, point to the word and say it. Ask the student to say the word. (Do not ask the student to sound out the word.) Begin reading together again.
- When the student wants to shift to solo reading, he or she gives the solo signal. When this happens, you should stop reading, smile, and give some brief, positive praise to the student (nod your head in approval, whisper "good", or “well done” or some other words of praise.
- Pause at the end of a section or chapter to discuss what has been read; pause at the end of a student’s solo reading to ask questions to monitor student’s understanding.
- Continue the session for the allotted time, allowing the student to go back and forth between solo and duet reading. Give lots of positive feedback, especially for solo reading. Praise the student at the end of paired reading also.
- Allow some time at the end of the session to talk about what has been read.

This is all there is to paired reading. The student may shift back and forth from duet reading to solo reading several times in a session. This is fine. And you may find that you have too much to try to remember to do in the first volunteer sessions. Don't worry! In a short time the Paired Reading procedure will become automatic and you will be able to focus on the types of errors the student is making and how well he is creating meaning from the text.