

# Importance of Read Aloud

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BY MARY ROSE



**E**very teacher I know is trying to improve their students' reading fluency and comprehension skills. We would all love for our students to read smoothly and confidently and to understand what they have read. Some of the biggest names in education, like Richard Allington, past president of the International Reading Association, believe that the best way to improve students reading skills is to have them do much more reading out loud.

Dr. Allington insists that silent reading allows students to skip unfamiliar words, ignore end-of-sentence punctuation and to misinterpret meaning because they lack voice inflections and often cannot tell who is doing the "talking" in the passage. But most teachers shy away from "round robin" reading, so what is a teacher to do? Here are some easy ways for every teacher to incorporate more read aloud into his or her classroom.

- 1. Reread familiar passages.** We have students that will watch the same movie six times, yet we insist that because a story was covered in the previous grade, we cannot read it again. Encourage students to read aloud stories with which they are already familiar.
- 2. Assign passages to be read out loud.** At the end of your reading period, tell each student that they will have to read a particular page out loud the following day. This allows students to practice before they have to read in front of a group.
- 3. Read plays.** Our own *Storyworks* magazine provides the perfect opportunity for reading out loud. Students love plays and rarely lose their place during the reading of a play. For best results, assign the parts a day ahead of time so students are not embarrassed with unfamiliar language or difficult words.
- 4. Choral reading.** Once again, *Storyworks* comes to the rescue. For years, we have been asking teachers to present poetry as choral reading. In this format, students learn the rhythm and beat of poetry in a whole group setting.
- 5. Paired reading.** Have students read passages 2x2 or in small groups.
- 6. Reading buddies.** Connect with students in a lower grade and have your students read stories out loud to them. Most picture books contain challenging reading, so be sure to have students practice reading before they read aloud to a younger child.
- 7. Have students read their own essays and stories to the class or to a small group.**
- 8. Use homework that requires students to read out loud to the parents.**