

THE FAITHFUL READER

Supports for Struggling Readers

You notice that a student is struggling with reading. You have administered a universal screener like DIBELS or AIMSweb or Fountas & Pinnell Benchmarking System, or you have administered a running record. The assessment shows that this student is performing below grade level. What do you do?



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First, analyze the assessment. What specifically is causing this student to struggle? Be as specific as possible: “Michelle struggles with understanding what she reads, especially when the text is non-fiction” or “She struggles with decoding words that have long vowel patterns.”

Now that you know what the student’s challenges are, you can teach her/him those skills. It is likely that there is at least one other student who needs this instruction, too. When the class is silently reading their free-choice books, pull these students to your back table or drag your chair near two desks. Provide them with a text from your basal series, from Reading A-Z, from readworks.org, newsela.com, or any text you have available. It should be at grade level or lower.

For up to fifteen minutes (no longer), do a think aloud and show and tell the students how you comprehend non-fiction text. “Okay, so now I am going to stop at the end of this paragraph and check - do I understand? I am going to try to give a summary of that paragraph...nope. I need to reread.”

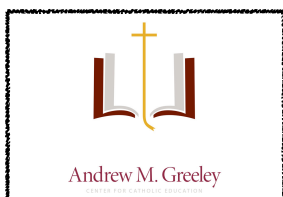
Don’t have fifteen minutes? Do this for five minutes. Do it while you walk the students to PE or lunch. **Any** time on task to improve a skill with direct instruction will help.

- glaze
- blaze
- daze
- graze

For decoding, have small dry erase boards and dry erase markers. Give the students words with that pattern and have them practice spelling while saying the letters and the pattern aloud. (“G-L-A-Z-E spells glaze. Magic e at the end makes the a long.”)

Do this for 5-10 days. Then check again - re-administer the running record or assessment and see what progress the student has made. Progress in comprehension skills will take longer (usually) than decoding skills.

Didn’t make progress? That’s okay. Reading is hard! Try a different text, something easier or something the student knows a lot about. Keep trying.



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My students who struggle with reading say they “hate to read.” What should I do?

This is a common problem. No one wants to do something that is hard or that they don't feel successful doing it.

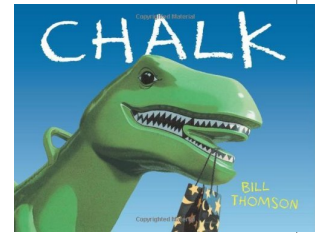
It will be really important that you work with the student to find out what they like - video games? dinosaurs? Minecraft? Whatever it is (and I mean WHATEVER it is) work to find a book that fits with these interests. No Minecraft books? Do you have books about Legos or construction or building? If they are interested, they will likely stay engaged.

Also, work with the student to set goals each day. Determine how many pages the child can read in 15 minutes (typical silent reading time). Then say, “I know you can read four pages in 15 minutes. So when the clock says 1:35 (in 7 minutes) come and see me. We will talk about what your book is about so far.” Breaking up the task gives the student some relief, some movement, and some very specific feedback from you: “Excellent! You are doing a great job stopping when you aren't sure what it means and rereading!”

Book Recommendations

Chalk by Bill Thomson

Three children enter a playground and find a bag of chalk. When they start to draw objects on the ground, the objects come alive! When they draw a T-Rex, it gets a little scary, but they use the chalk to solve their problem. This wordless picture book would be great for preschoolers up to fourth graders.

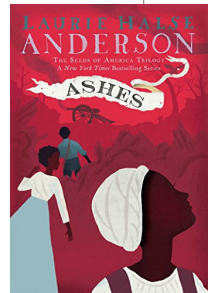


Read Aloud for PreSchool - 4th graders

Independent Rdg Level NA (wordless) **Lexile** NA (wordless)

Genre fantasy

Ashes (Book 3: The Seeds of America Trilogy) by Laurie Halse Anderson



Isabel is still searching for her sister, Ruth, who was kidnapped and taken south. Curzon is at her side as he promised. But the Revolutionary War is escalating, and Curzon wants more than anything to serve on the Patriots' side, because he believes in their cause but he also no longer wants to be a slave and wants his freedom.

This story, the conclusion to the trilogy, has themes of friendship, loyalty, and family. If you love *Hamilton*, this book parallels that story with battles and personalities. It also has excellent quotes at the start of each chapter from primary sources.

Content appropriate for 7th and up

Lexile 820; **Reading Level** 5th

Genre historical fiction



Andrew M. Greeley

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