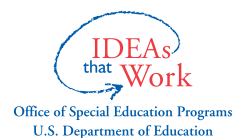


# Read- Aloud Routine

for Building Vocabulary  
and Comprehension Skills  
in Kindergarten Through  
Third Grade



Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Weekly

# Acknowledgments

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### **About This Tool**

Steps 1–5 of the routine take place in one 25- to 30-minute lesson for one passage from a story. The weekly framework is an overview of what will take place over the course of reading the whole story. The routine focuses on language, vocabulary, and comprehension development.

Adapted from: Hickman, P., Pollard-Durodola, S., & Vaughn, S. (2004). Story-book reading: Improving vocabulary and comprehension for English-language learners. *Reading Teacher*, 57(8), 720–730.

## Step 1: Select a Story and Vocabulary Words

### Select a story.

- Use text that is one to two grade levels above students' independent reading level.
- Search for a story that is both engaging and content rich.
- Select a text that is culturally relevant and meaningful to students.

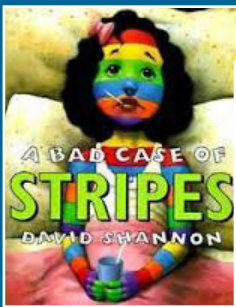
### Prepare.

- The story will be read over 3 to 5 days. Divide the story into 200– to 250–word chunks. Increase the size of the chunks as students' reading progresses.
- Choose three to five vocabulary words per chunk of text.
- Think of a nonlinguistic representation (e.g., picture, gesture) of each word to share with students.
- Create vocabulary word cards with student–friendly definitions and pictures.

### HELPFUL HINTS ON WORD SELECTION

- Focus on high–utility words that are used across contexts and content areas. Will students hear and see the words in math, science, social studies, and extracurricular activities?
- Use words that most students do not know.
- Use words that will help students connect to their own experiences.

### Sample Books



### Sample Vocabulary Card



## examine

To look at something carefully and thoroughly because you want to find out more about it

## Step 2: Introduce and Preview the Story

### Preview and activate background knowledge.

- Show and read the front and back covers of the story.
- Activate students' prior knowledge by making connections between what students know and what they need to know to understand the story.
- Have students predict what the story is about and briefly discuss concepts related to the story topic.

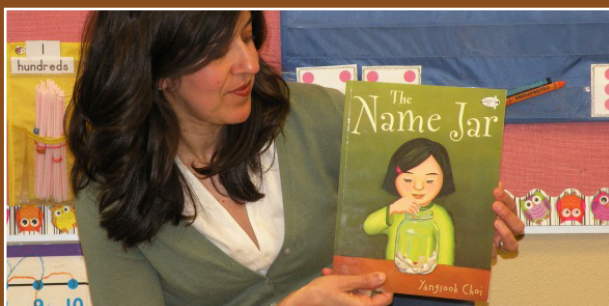
### Briefly introduce the new vocabulary words.

- Say and show each word and have students repeat it.
- Provide a student-friendly definition and nonlinguistic representation (e.g., picture, gesture) of each word.
- Ask students to listen for the vocabulary words while you read.
- Ask students to give a “thumbs-up” when they hear a vocabulary word.
- Make the words visible by displaying them on a pocket chart, vocabulary word wall, or bulletin board.

#### HELPFUL HINTS ON DEFINITIONS

- Definitions should use everyday language and be easy for students to understand.
- Resources for student-friendly definitions include the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English ([www.ldoceonline.com](http://www.ldoceonline.com)) and Merriam-Webster's Learner Dictionary ([www.learnersdictionary.com](http://www.learnersdictionary.com)).

#### Showing the Front Cover



#### Student Thumbs-Up Signal



## Step 3: Read the Passage

Tell students to listen carefully while you read because they will have to answer questions.

This technique sets the purpose for reading and increases student engagement.

Read the passage **WITHOUT STOPPING**, focusing on intonation and enunciation to provide a good model for students.

Reading the entire passage without interruptions allows students to focus on meaning.

Guide students in discussing and retelling the passage.

- Ask students to turn and talk with a neighbor to retell what happened in the passage (focus on who, what, when, and where).
- Encourage students to use the new vocabulary words during the retell.
- Use the student responses to write a main idea statement on the board.
- Ask students an inferential question that focuses on synthesizing information not directly present in the story (e.g., How do you know \_\_\_\_\_? What clues led you to believe \_\_\_\_\_?). Ask students to explain their thinking and justify their answers.

### Reading the Passage



### Turn and Talk



## Step 4: Reread the Passage

Read the passage a second time, focusing on vocabulary words.

- Review words and meanings with students.
- Tell students to give you a sign (e.g., thumbs-up, hand on head, finger on nose) when they hear a vocabulary word.
- Stop at each vocabulary word and ask students to repeat it and explain what it means in their own words. Have students turn and talk to explain the word to a partner.
- Guide students in creating sentences that use the vocabulary word. Have students turn and talk about the sentences with a partner.
- Use sentence stems as scaffolds if necessary.
- Continue reading the passage until all vocabulary words have been identified and students have discussed their meanings and created new sentences.

### Sample Sentence Stems

#### **examine**

I would like to **examine**

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **expert**

A/An \_\_\_\_\_

is an **expert** at

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Step 5: Extend Language and Comprehension

Extend comprehension, focusing on deep processing of vocabulary knowledge.

- Have students turn and talk to a neighbor about the story, connecting it to their own experiences. Use prompts such as, “Talk about when you felt like the main character.”
- Encourage students to use the vocabulary words.
- Serve only as a facilitator of this conversation.
- Extend comprehension by having students write in a reader’s response journal. Use prompts such as, “What do you think will happen next in the story? Write a prediction in your journal.”

**Summarize what students read and learned.**

- Briefly review the title and author, main events and ideas, and new vocabulary words.
- Challenge students to listen for and use the new vocabulary words throughout the day.

### Students Discuss the Story



### Reviewing and Summarizing



#### EXTEND THE LESSON THE FOLLOWING DAY

- Begin the following day by reviewing what was read and learned the day before.
- Emphasize key words and have students summarize the text by stating the main events and reviewing the main idea statement.
- Review the vocabulary words and briefly give a student–friendly definition of each.
- Ask students whether they used or heard the words outside of the classroom.
- Encourage students to continue using the new words.

# WEEKLY FRAMEWORK

## Introduction Day

- Introduce the story.
- Introduce three to five new vocabulary words from the day's passage.
- Read the passage.
- Have students turn and talk to a neighbor to retell what the passage is about (who, what, when, and where).
- Based on student responses, write a main idea statement on the board for the day's passage.
- Review the new vocabulary words.
- Reread the passage, stopping at each vocabulary word to review, clarify, and check understanding.

## Subsequent Days

- Review content and vocabulary words from the previous day's reading.
- Introduce the day's passage.
- Introduce three to five NEW vocabulary words from the day's passage.
- Read the passage.
- Have students turn and talk to a neighbor to retell what the passage is about (who, what, when, and where).
- Based on student responses, write a main idea statement on the board for the day's passage.
- Review the new vocabulary words.
- Reread the passage, stopping at each vocabulary word to review, clarify, and check understanding.

## Wrap-Up Day

- Choose four or five vocabulary words from the previous days' lessons that were challenging for students or difficult to remember.
- Review the words.
- If time allows, read the entire story to students.
- Lead an activity that reinforces the meaning of the chosen vocabulary words, such as acting out the meaning of words through charades or using props.
- Place vocabulary words on a word wall and revisit their use throughout the day and in future days.
- Review the prior days' main idea statements. Use the statements to create a summary of the entire story.
- Extend learning by having students use the vocabulary words to create a new story or a new ending for the story.