

Reading Rates

According to Timothy Rasinsky, educator and author of numerous articles and books in the area of fluency, reading fluency is multi-dimensional: one dimension stresses the importance of accurate word decoding, a second dimension focuses on quick and automatic recognition of words in connected text, and a third dimension stresses expressive and meaningful interpretation of text. These dimensions are related to one another and all three are important for effective comprehension and overall good reading. All must be taught, and all must be monitored. (Rasinski, page 4)

Reading rates associated with fluent reading for grade levels have been established through a number of research studies. There is some variation in the rates identified for a given grade level by different studies, but the variation is not large.

Some contexts, such as the *Idaho Reading Indicator* and Idaho’s State Content Standards, identify a target number of words read correctly per minute. Many studies, however, identify a range of word per minute rates for each grade level at three times in the year (fall, winter, spring). The range of scores gives a minimum and maximum rate. “Readers who perform at or near these target norms should be considered as progressing adequately in automaticity. Readers who are significantly and consistently below or above the norm span for their grade level and time of year may be at risk in their reading fluency development.”

“We generally think of disfluent readers as reading in a very slow and disjointed manner. However, disfluency can also come from readers who read too fast and fail to pay attention to intra- and inter-sentential [phrase and sentence] boundaries or the meaning of the text.” (Rasinski, page 9) Just as readers performing consistently and significantly *below* the norm span may be at risk in fluency development, so too may be those readers who consistently and significantly perform *above* the norm span for their grade and time of year.

The following table of target reading rates by grade level comes from the *3-Minute Reading Assessments* by Rasinski and Padak (copyright 2005). The single correct word per minute rate used for grades 1-3 on the IRI and for grades 4-6 in the state standards have been inserted into the table for reference.

Target Reading Rates By Grade Level			
Grade	Fall wcpm*	Winter wcpm	Spring wcpm
1	1 – 10	10 – 50 IRI – 23	30 – 90 IRI – 53
2	30 – 80 IRI – 54	50 – 100 IRI – 77	70 – 130 IRI – 92
3	50 – 110 IRI – 77	70 – 120 IRI – 96	80 – 140 IRI – 110
4	70 – 120	80 – 130	90 – 140 Idaho Standards: 140
5	80 – 130	90 – 140	100 – 150 Idaho Standards: 150
6	90 – 140	100 – 150	110 – 160 Idaho Standards: 150
* wcpm = words correct per minute			

Assessing Reading Fluency by Timothy V. Rasinski, Ph.D. (See the Lewiston School District curriculum website to read the complete document.)