

PAIRED READING

The purpose of paired reading is to allow students the individual attention they need and often do not receive, as our classrooms are so overcrowded. Paired reading frees up the teacher to sit in on paired reading sessions and work with different students while other students continue reading together. It encourages peer teaching and learning that can often be powerful learning. It increases the students' comfort level with oral reading skills without the added pressure of reading in front of a large audience. This strategy can be used to build oral skills so that reluctant readers can work toward reading in front of a large group.

Be sure to pair readers according to their abilities before class. Pair high level readers with low level readers, ensuring the extra help and support that many students need. Let the class know in advance that you will be pairing them so that they can help each other grow as readers and explain to them the importance of the activity. This activity should be used over an extended period of time so students can become comfortable with each other. It should be used after you have introduced all other Unit 1 reading strategies so students can pick the reading strategies that they feel most comfortable with for a Paired Reading session. During this activity they will have quite a bit of autonomy. Make sure that you have built to this level of independence and are comfortable with the pairs you have selected.

Before pairs start, ask them how they will be reading. Will they read out loud, simultaneously? Will they take turns with each person reading a paragraph? a page? Or will one person read while the other person listens? It is important that you ask this question and then wait for a response from each pair. It provides accountability and helps students be clear about their roles. Have them start immediately. Your role is to visit each group and observe. You may want to take notes about how each person is reading and what each can work on. Then photocopy your notes and give them to the students the next day. Ask them to work on your suggestions the next time they read together. This is a great way for you to keep track of development and progress and it helps guide their sense of their reading development.