

"A word is dead when it is said, some say. I say it just begins to live that day."

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## Reading together beyond elementary school

**Read Aloud.** Many parents quit reading aloud after elementary school. Middle- and high-school readers need to hear both fiction and non-fiction out loud. Since it is also not typical for teachers to read aloud after grade school, you may be your child's only model for how more mature texts should sound.

**Paired Reading.** Many parents want to read with their reader, but do not have a good model for how to do it. Paired reading is a simple technique where two readers read simultaneously, one taking the role of leader and the other following along. Agree on hand signals for pausing, starting, and slowing down. Your reader should tell you when she or he is ready for you to 'let go' and let her or him read alone, or when she is tired or frustrated and wants to listen to you read. If your reader has a tutor, paired reading is easy for tutors to implement.

<http://www.jimwrightonline.com/pdffdocs/prrdng.pdf>

**Tandem Silent Reading.** Simultaneous silent reading is an alternative that allows two readers to check in with each other after a set time (such as 10 minutes) or a set passage of text (such as 2 pages). Silent reading removes the pressure of social performance in reading aloud. At the 'check in' you can focus on comprehension instead of words. Avoid discussing pronunciation and vocabulary *during* the reading unless your reader stops to ask. Send the message that understanding is what matters most.

**Reading Threshold.** All three of the methods above should help you discover about how long your reader typically stays engaged. Keep an informal record of how long engagement lasts; when your reader starts to need help; and how long your reader can listen well while you read aloud. If you can tell engagement is a matter of attention span, try to avoid quick increases in duration of reading, and take timed breaks to match the threshold. Increasing attention span may be a matter of increasing a minute or so per week. Most adults need breaks in reading after about 20 minutes, so that is a good goal.

**Feed the Brain.** After ten minutes sitting, coach your reader to stand up and move around. The brain needs body movement to get the blood needed for learning. Some studies have shown memory and comprehension are better when readers walk on a treadmill. Sitting will not send the brain the oxygen and glucose it needs to build new connections (i.e., to learn). So help your reader take measured breaks. Or coach your reader to read while standing or walking around the house or block. See John Medina's Brain Rules for information on what everyday people need to know. <http://brainrules.net/exercise>

**Tutoring.** One-on-one teaching is among the most effective research-proven methods for improving reading. Ask your school counselor first about in-school programs. While it is difficult for many schools to provide tutoring programs, individual reading teachers are often interested in doing private tutoring. Talk to teachers about their hourly fee. Peer tutors are not likely to know many teaching strategies, but sometimes a young tutor has social and motivational advantages over an adult. Struggling readers often prefer a tutor who is slightly older.

