

Timing Students

Timing students to see how many words per minute they are reading *can* be helpful in building automaticity.

Benefits can include:

- Focusing on speed rather than being perfect
- Being able to graph progress – many students are motivated when they can *see* how their hard work is paying off.
- Can be a very short activity that is done multiple times a day at home.
- Some students are motivated by any type of competition type goal: to read faster than last time

Possible cons to timing:

- Focuses some students so much on speed that they move away from comprehension
- Some students focus on and panic about the timing so much that they read worse and more slowly than when they aren't being timed
- The stress it gives some students cancels out any benefits

If you time students:

- Only time students on lists or material they are already comfortable reading.
- Have students graph their progress
- Watch the timer rather than let it beep. This way you can mark the last word the student read within the minute and wait for a good time to stop the student's reading. Waiting for the beep sound can be very stressful.
- Explain the goal is a nice fluent reading speed. Reading too fast is a negative also. The goal is a nice, calm, understandable pace.
- Consider giving any word the student trips up on after 3 seconds, but then not counting that word as read. This leads to more words read and prevents the panic of struggling with a word.
- **Use pages with numbers down the side!** If a student reads 3 words into a line, take the number at the beginning of the line and add three to get the total number of words read!

For Example:

- If a student reads to the red forward slash /, start with the 11 at the beginning of the row and add the 2 words read on that row for a total of 13.
- If a student reads to the green forward slash /, start with the 24 at the beginning of the row and add the 6 words read on that row for a total of 30.
- If a student reads to the end /, the student read all 45 words.

	Jake had a fake snake.
5	The dog will chase a bone.
11	The tube / was in the tub.
17	He gave her a size ten dress.
24	That paste is safe for us / to use.
32	Chase the mule with a rope.
38	Slide on the slope with your sled. /
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