

Scheduling Reading Practice Time

Tips for All Grades

Research shows that students gain the most when they practice reading every day. For independent readers, we recommend scheduling at least 30 minutes in elementary and middle school and at least 20 minutes in high school. Emergent readers also require at least 30 minutes of practice, although this will likely be a combination of listening to someone read to them and assisted reading. Here are suggestions for how to find the time for reading practice. Keep in mind that “practice” means reading AR™ books that students select themselves and is in addition to the reading students do in basal readers or other instructional materials.

Enlist the support of your principal.

Ask your principal to schedule a time for each grade—or the entire school—to practice reading. When you present your case, point out that reading is a “carry-over skill” that benefits all areas of instruction. Making reading practice time part of the school’s daily schedule helps you and your students succeed.

Increase classroom efficiency.

Take a look at daily “housekeeping” chores such as taking attendance and collecting homework. Can you make any chores more efficient? Reduce the number of tasks? Ask students or aides to help?

Look at the daily schedule.

Does it include homeroom, study hall, or other time you can allocate, at least in part, to reading? Can time scheduled for peer tutoring be used for paired reading activities?

Use power lessons to teach skills and concepts.

Present instruction in power-packed sessions of 10 to 15 minutes. Then ask students to practice the skill or think about the concepts as they read their AR books.

Take advantage of the existing schedule.

If your school’s schedule includes both a reading class and an English class, transform the reading class into an Accelerated Reader period. Students would then use this time for reading books, taking quizzes, and selecting their next book.

Include nonfiction reading practice in content-area classes.

Many nonfiction books about the environment, animals, and science can help children who struggle with science textbooks learn concepts. Historical fiction interests many students, and biographies can bring historical figures to life and add depth to history lessons. Teach comprehension strategies so that students can maintain an average of at least 85 percent correct on quizzes for nonfiction materials.

Promote reading as a recreational activity.

Reading practice can take place almost anywhere. You might be surprised by how many students will want to read during recess! When students read at home, ask parents to sign the Student Reading Log.

Use reading as a reward.

Ask teachers of all subjects to allow students to read their books after they finish in-class assignments. This motivates students to spend free time reading and reinforces the notion that reading is its own reward.

Plan a schoolwide read-in.

Bring in community leaders, sports celebrities, and local media figures to read to students. Motivate students and give the event focus by setting a schoolwide goal of 85 percent or higher as an average quiz score. End the day with a celebration that recognizes your achievement.

Scheduling Reading Practice Time—Continued

Tips for Upper Grades

If you teach middle or high school, you know the challenge of adding an activity to an already full schedule. Here are some ideas for how to schedule 30 minutes of daily reading practice in middle school and 20 minutes in high school.

Get people involved early.

Set up a meeting with the principal and faculty to discuss what will work best in your school. Support your request with research that shows the positive effects of reading practice on all subjects.

Create a reading class for all students.

Change from a six- to a seven-period day or a seven- to an eight-period day. Shorten pass time between classes. Here's one example:

Period	Time	Subject
1	8:15–9:00	Writing
2	9:04–9:49	Science
3	9:53–10:38	Social Studies
4	10:42–11:27	Electives
Lunch	11:31–12:01	
Reading Practice	12:05–12:35	Accelerated Reader
5	12:39–1:24	Math
6	1:28–2:13	Env. Sciences
7	2:13–3:08	Electives

Build reading into English classes.

Set aside part of your English or language arts classes for reading practice.

Build reading time into each class period.

Form academic teams to teach core subjects to a common group of students. Each teacher on the team can then devote one class period a week to reading practice. For example, students might practice reading in algebra class on Monday, in history class on Tuesday, in English class on Wednesday, and so on.

Create a schoolwide reading time.

Add guided independent reading practice as a no-credit course, similar to the way you would add a study-skills class or tutoring period.