

## MAKING READING FUN

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Students learning English can have differing reading abilities. Strong readers are more likely to enjoy reading in class, but those who find reading more difficult may not enjoy it as much or may even dread it. Planning activities that incorporate peer support and interactive tasks, and that can be adjusted for different reading levels, can help make reading enjoyable for all learners in your English classes. This week in the Teacher's Corner, we will explore activities that can help make reading fun for all of your students.

### ACTIVITY: READING RELAY

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In this activity, teams of students will race to read a text and answer a set of questions about it. The first team to complete the questions correctly wins!

#### LEVEL

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Beginner and above

#### GOAL

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To improve students' reading skills by having them answer comprehension questions and refer back to the text.

#### MATERIALS

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- Containers (a paper bag or shoebox) for each team
- Pencils and writing paper for students
- Text (previously studied or not)
- Questions about the text

#### PREPARATION

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1. Choose a text that you want students to use for the activity. This can be something they have been studying (such as a novel or part of a textbook) or a completely new passage.

2. Prepare the questions you will ask students about the text. Keep in mind that students need to be able to answer all of the questions in the time available to play the game. You can write questions similar to those in the *Listen and Buzz!* activity from Week 1 of this month's Teacher's Corner. Depending on the level of your students, the answers to the questions can be things the students can locate within the text, or more challenging ones that require them to draw conclusions or use context clues.
3. Once you have determined all of the questions you want students to answer, create one set of all of the questions for each team. For example, if your class will have ten teams, you need to create ten sets of all the questions. Cut out each of the questions and fold them up individually. Place each set of questions into a separate container for each team to use during the activity.
4. If you have a lot of variation in reading levels in your classroom, group students into teams ahead of time. This way you can ensure that students who struggle can be on teams with strong readers. Teams with five or fewer members are best for this activity.

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### PROCEDURE

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1. Introduce the activity to students by saying, "You are about to take part in a reading relay race. During the relay, you will have to read a text and work with your teammates to answer questions about the text. You will need to write the answers down on a piece of paper for your group." At this point, you can put students into their teams and distribute paper and pencils if needed. Have each team choose a name or assign each team a number.
2. Continue giving students instructions by showing the containers with the questions and saying, "All of the questions you need to answer for the race are in this box/bag. Each team has its own container. Only one person from your team can take a question at a time. They can take only one question. They must return to the group, read the question aloud, and you all must work together

to find the answer and write it down. When you finish writing, another group member may come get a new question.”

3. Place the containers in a central location, such as a table in the front of the room or your desk. It is helpful to put each team’s name or number on the containers to avoid confusion during the race.
4. Tell students, “The first team to write down the correct answers to each of the questions is the winner. If you believe you have done this, send one person from your team to me with your written work. I will check it and announce when a team has won the race.”
5. Answer any questions students may have about the relay activity. Be sure that they know which member of their team will go get a question first and what order will follow after that. If you prefer, you can tell students to go alphabetically by first name, by height, or by birthdate.
6. Once the students are ready, yell “Go!” Monitor the teams as they complete the activity to be sure all members participate and that everyone takes only one question at a time.
7. When a team has finished and you have checked their work, you can announce the winner. To wrap up, the whole class can review the answers to the questions as well as where they found them in the text.

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### VARIATIONS

- This activity can be adapted for students with different reading abilities or levels of English proficiency. Instead of dispersing strong readers and struggling readers, you can create homogenous (unmixed) groups by placing strong readers/advanced students on one team, intermediate students on another, and struggling readers/lower level students together. The tasks can be adjusted according to the needs of each group. Keep in mind that since the activity is a race, you will need to create tasks that will take groups about the same amount of time to complete. Ideas for differentiation include:
  - Beginner students:

- Create a cloze passage for the text and cut it up instead of using questions in the grab bag. Students must locate the corresponding section of the text and work together to fill in the blanks in the cloze.
  - Give students tasks to complete such as locating text features (headings, titles, captions, charts, etc.), finding dates or names, or counting how many times a specific vocabulary word is used in the text.
  - If students are just learning how to read, you can place words with a specific spelling pattern or sound that you want them to practice in the grab bag for their team. Instead of a text, give them a set of pictures. Then they can take one word at a time from the bag, work together to decode it and match it to the correct picture. This can also be done with vocabulary words or simple sentences and a set of corresponding pictures.
- Intermediate students:
    - You can modify the relay for intermediate students by making the questions multiple-choice instead of open-ended. To make questions more accessible, make them multiple-choice or provide only two options for answer choices.
    - Cloze passages can also be used with intermediate students. Eliminating more words or using longer sections of the text can make them more challenging.
  - Advanced students:
    - Ask students to provide expanded responses to questions. For instance, if they are reading a persuasive essay, ask them to restate the author's position and the three reasons used as justification. If they read a fictional text, ask for multiple

examples of a specific literary element such as foreshadowing, symbolism, or metaphors.

- Create questions that challenge students to use information in the text to make inferences or draw conclusions about things that are not directly stated by the author.
- Have students use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar or difficult words from the text.