



How to Implement Independent Reading in an Inclusive Classroom



Independent reading is a daily instructional activity in which students independently practice the reading strategies previously taught and practiced in shared and guided reading activities. Although students are expected to read independently, this activity is nonetheless teacher-supported. The educator observes students, records observations, and uses this information to guide further instruction and intervention.

Students should select their own text for independent reading, to foster their motivation to read. The text should be at a level that the student can read with a great degree of accuracy, so that the focus of the independent reading session is not decoding, but strategy use.

Through independent reading, students reinforce their reading skills and motivation to read, as well as develop confidence in their reading ability.



1

Stage 1: Before Reading

- **Prepare the text selection.** Include texts in a variety of formats and on a variety of topics. Include levelled, non levelled, and multilevel texts. The text selection should be books that students have already worked with in shared and guided readings.
- **Conduct a mini-lesson**, modelling how to select a text and how to apply the targeted skill during the independent reading task. This skill should be one that has been modelled and practiced in previous read-alouds, shared reading, and guided reading activities.
- Where applicable, **help students select a text** that they can decode with a high degree of accuracy, and that will contribute to the targeted skill development. Students with LDs in reading may be tempted to choose books that are too difficult for them, so they may appear to be at the same reading level as their peers.



2

Stage 2: During Reading

Students read for a sustained period of time.

- Although most students will read alone, it may be beneficial for some to read with a partner.
- Students with LDs may require more time and more practice to consolidate their reading skills. Consider engaging them in guided reading while other students are reading independently.**
- Depending on the targeted skill, it may be beneficial to allow students to use text-to-speech software to support their decoding, allowing them to focus more energy on comprehension and fluency.
- Students with reading challenges may find this work very tiring. Consider allowing them to move on to a new independent activity earlier than other students. This will help avoid frustration and preserve their motivation to read.

While students read, the educator circulates to observe students' reading behaviours, record observations, and engage students in one-on-one conferences. During these reading conferences, the educator asks questions to gauge students' comprehension and skill application, and provides support when necessary.



3

Stage 3: After Reading

- Students may share with the class about what they have read. The educator asks questions to prompt discussion.
 - For example, Why did you choose this book?; “Did the story make you think of anything in your life?; “What strategy did you use?; “Did anyone else use this strategy?”**
 - For students with LDs, you may pose questions that were already discussed during the one-on-one conferences so they can feel confident in their answers in front of the class.**
- Students may write about their reading in a journal, reading log, graphic organizer, etc.
- The educator helps students reflect on their independent reading experience, and set goals for the next session.

References

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2003). *A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3*. Retrieved from http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Reading_K_3_English.pdf

Spear-Swerling, L. (2005). *Independent Reading*. Retrieved from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/independent-reading>

Moss, B. (2016) *Making Independent Reading Work*. Retrieved from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/making-independent-reading-work>