



Phrase-Cued Text Lessons

DESCRIPTION: Phrase-cued texts are a means to train students to recognize the natural pauses that occur between phrases in their reading. Because phrases are units that often encapsulate key ideas, the student's ability to identify them can enhance comprehension of the text (Rasinski, 1990, 1994; Rasinski, Yildirim & Nageldinger, 2011).

MATERIALS:

- ☐ Two copies of a student passage: One annotated with phrase-cue marks and the other left without annotation.

PREPARATION: Here are guidelines for preparing phrase-cued passages:

1. **Select a passage.** Select a short (100-250 word) passage that is within the student's instructional or independent reading level.
2. **Mark sentence boundaries.** Mark the sentence boundaries of the passage with double slashes (/ /).
3. **Mark within-sentence phrase-breaks.** Read through the passage to locate 'phrase breaks' —naturally occurring pause points that are found within sentences. Mark each of these phrase breaks with a single slash mark (/).

INTERVENTION STEPS: Phrase-cued text lessons should be carried out in 10 minute sessions 3-4 times per week. Here are steps to carrying out this intervention:

1. [When first using this strategy] **Introduce phrase-cued texts to the student.** Say to the student: *"Passages are made up of key ideas, and these key ideas are often contained in units of words called 'phrases'. Several phrases can make up a sentence. When we read, it helps to read phrase by phrase to get the full meaning of the text."*

Show the student a prepared passage with phrase-cue marks inserted. Point out how double-slash marks signal visually to the reader the longer pauses at sentence boundaries and single slash marks signal the shorter phrase pauses within sentences.

2. **Follow the phrase-cued text reading sequence:** The tutor prepares a new phrase-cued passage for each session and follows this sequence:
 - a. The tutor reads the phrase-cued passage aloud once as a model, while the student follows along silently.
 - b. The student reads the phrase-cued passage aloud 2-3 times. The tutor provides ongoing feedback about the student reading, noting the student's observance of phrase breaks. Tutor and student can also briefly discuss the content of the passage during intervals between re-readings.
 - c. The session concludes with the student reading aloud a copy of the passage *without* phrase-cue marks. The tutor provides feedback about the student's success in recognizing the natural phrase breaks in the student's final read-aloud.

Additional Ideas for Using Phrase-Cued Texts. Educators might consider these additional ideas for using this strategy (Rasinski, 1994):



1. **Use phrase-cued texts in a group-lesson format.** The teacher can modify the intervention sequence (described above) to accommodate a group or class. The teacher models reading of the phrase-cued passage; the teacher and students next read through the passage chorally; then students (in pairs or individually) practice reading the phrase-cued text aloud while the instructor circulates around the room to observe. Finally, students individually read aloud the original passage without phrase-cue marks.
2. **Encourage parents to use the phrase-cued text strategy.** Parents can extend the impact of this strategy by using it at home. The teacher meets with the parent (e.g., at a parent-teacher conference) to demonstrate the phrase-cued text instructional sequence (described above). The teacher then gives the parent a collection of prepared passages (with one copy of each passage marked for phrase cues and the other left unmarked). The parent is instructed to use one passage per session with their child at home.

References

Rasinski, T.V. (1990). *The effects of cued phrase boundaries on reading performance: A review*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED313689).

Rasinski, T. V. (1994). Developing syntactic sensitivity in reading through phrase-cued texts. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 29*, 165-168.

Rasinski, T. Yildirim, K, & Nageldinger, J. (2011). Building fluency through the phrased text lesson. *The Reading Teacher, 85*(5), 252-255.