

## Growing Independent Readers At Home

The following are possibilities or ways to extend your child's independence as readers.

1. Have discussions with your child to determine what conditions they read best in:
  - finding a reading spot at home,
  - what time of day do they do their best reading,
  - creating reading routines.
2. Continue guiding your child in making book selections that are just right for them.

### **I PICK** good-fit Books

I select a book and look it over, inside and out.

**Purpose:** Why might I want to read it?

**Interest:** Does it interest me?

**Comprehend:** Do I understand what I'm reading?

**Know:** Do I know most of the words?

3. Work with your child to monitor their own reading (giving wait time if they make mistakes and determining what fix up strategy to use) Then explore with child about what they did to correct themselves.
4. Encourage your child to respond authentically to what they are reading through conversations with you, drawing pictures in response to what they read, or questions that come to mind.
5. Besides listening to your child read aloud from their right fit book, consider having a read aloud book for the family that you read from each night for about ten minutes. This could be a longer book that can feed deeper conversations around comprehension.



# HOUSTON **A<sup>+</sup>** CHALLENGE

Percentile rank on reading tests	Minutes of book reading per day <sup>3</sup>	Words read per year
98	65	4,358,000
90	40	1,823,000
70	22	622,000
50	13	282,000
30	6	106,000
10	2	8,000

<sup>3</sup> The authors also looked at reading of other material: magazines, newspapers, comic books, and mail. The stronger the readers, the greater the proportion of their reading time was with books.

Excerpt from:  
Quality and Quantity  
By: Sandra Wilde



# HOUSTON **A<sup>+</sup>** CHALLENGE

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON TEACHING WRITING

LESS:	MORE:
<p>Teaching control of decision making by: deciding all writing topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suggesting improvements without student problem solving effort first</li> <li>setting learning objectives without student input</li> <li>providing instruction only through whole-class activity</li> </ul>	<p>Student ownership and responsibility by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>helping students choose their own topics</li> <li>and goals for improvement</li> <li>using brief teacher-student conferences</li> <li>teaching students to review their own progress</li> </ul>
<p>Time spent on isolated drills on "sub-skills" of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc. Writing assignments given briefly, with no context or purpose, completed in one step</p>	<p>Class time on writing whole, original pieces through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>real purpose and audience for writing</li> <li>instruction and support for all stages of writing</li> <li>prewriting, drafting, revising, editing</li> </ul>
<p>Finished pieces read only by teacher</p>	<p>Writing for real audiences, publishing for the class and wider communities</p>
<p>Teacher talks about writing but never writes or shares own work</p>	<p>Teacher modeling of writing--- " writing aloud" as a fellow author to demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>drafting, revising, sharing</li> <li>writing skills and processes</li> </ul>
<p>Isolated grammar lessons, given in order determined by the textbook, before writing is begun</p>	<p>Learning grammar and mechanics in context, at the edit stage, and as items are needed</p>
<p>Devaluing of students' ideas: Students viewed as lacking knowledge and language abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sense of class as competing individuals</li> <li>Cooperation among students viewed as cheating, disruptive</li> </ul>	<p>Making the classroom a supportive setting, using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>active exchange and valuing of student's ideas</li> <li>collaborative small-group work</li> <li>conferences and peer critiquing that give responsibility to authors</li> </ul>
<p>Writing taught only during "language arts" period</p>	<p>Writing across the curriculum as a tool for learning</p>
<p>Evaluation as negative burden for teacher and student by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>making all papers heavily for all errors, making teacher a bottleneck</li> <li>editing by teacher, and only after a paper is completed, rather than having the student make improvements</li> <li>grading punitively, focused on errors, not growth</li> </ul>	<p>Constructive and efficient evaluation that involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>brief informal oral responses as students work</li> <li>focus on a few errors at a time</li> <li>through grading of just a few of students-selected, polisher pieces</li> <li>cumulative view of growth and self-evaluation</li> <li>encouragement of risk taking and honest expression</li> </ul>

*Best Practice, Fourth Edition* by Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH); ©2012



## RECOMMENDATIONS ON TEACHING READING

### LESS

### MORE

Students compelled to read aloud to whole class or reading group, being corrected and marked down for errors	Teacher reading good literature aloud to students
Exclusive emphasis on whole-class or reading-group activities	Time for independent reading
Teacher selection of all reading materials for individuals and groups	Children's choice of their own reading material
Exclusively difficult "instructional- level" books	Balance of easy and hard books
Relying on selections in basal reader	Exposing children to a wide and rich range of literature
Teacher keeping his/her own reading tastes and habits private	Teacher modeling and discussing his/her own reading processes
Primary instructional emphasis on reading subskills such as phonics, word analysis, syllabication	Primary instructional emphasis on comprehension
Teaching reading as a single, one-step act	Teaching reading as a process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use strategies that activate prior knowledge</li> <li>• Help students make and test predictions</li> <li>• Structure help during reading</li> <li>• Provide after-reading applications</li> </ul>
Solitary seatwork	Social, collaborative activities with much discussion and interaction
Grouping by reading level	Grouping by interests or book choices
Round-robin oral reading	Silent reading followed by discussion
Teaching isolated skills in phonics workbooks or drills	Teaching skills in the context of whole and meaningful literature
Little or no chance to write	Writing before and after reading
Punishing preconventional spelling in students' early writings	Encouraging invented spelling in children's early writings
Segregation of reading to reading time	Use of reading in content fields (e.g., historical novels in social studies)
Evaluation focused on individual, low-level sub skills	Evaluation focused on holistic, higher-order thinking processes
Measuring success of reading program only by test scores	Measuring success of reading program by students' reading habits, attitudes, and comprehension

## Richard Allington's Six T's of Effective Literacy Instruction

**Time** – Kids spend more time actually reading and writing than other activities  
**Texts** – Kids need to spend a lot of time reading a "rich" supply of books they can actually read. Students need successful reading experience in which students perform with a high level of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension  
**Teach** – Teachers model and demonstrate useful strategies that good readers employ  
**Talk** – Teachers foster purposeful student talk that is more conversational than interrogational.  
**Tasks** – Assignments are long, substantive, challenging and require self-regulation  
**Test** – Evaluation based more on effort and growth than achievement

## Six ELEMENTS of Research-Based Effective Reading Instruction

1. **Every student reads something he or she chooses.** Students read more, and are more likely to continue reading when they choose what they read. The experience of choosing boosts motivation and improves performance. There is no evidence that workbooks, photocopies, or computer tutorial programs improve performance.
  2. **Every student reads accurately.** Good readers read with accuracy almost all the time. A body of research that began with Betts (1949) consistently demonstrates the importance of having students read texts they can read accurately and understand. When students read accurately (98%+), they solidify their word recognition, decoding, and word-analysis skills.
  3. **Every student reads something he or she understands.** Understanding what you've read is the goal of reading. But too often, struggling readers get interventions that focus on basic skills in isolation, rather than on reading connected text for meaning. Developing the ability to read takes a lot of reading and rereading of text that students find engaging and comprehensible.
  4. **Every student writes about something personally meaningful.** Writing is called composition for a good reason: We actually compose (construct something unique) when we write.
  5. **Every student talks with peers about reading and writing.** Research has demonstrated that conversation with peers improves comprehension and engagement with texts in a variety of settings (Cazden, 1988). Such literary conversation does not focus on recalling or retelling what students read. Rather, it asks students to analyze, comment, and compare—in short, to think about what they've read.
  6. **Every student listens to a fluent adult read aloud.** Listening to an adult model fluent reading increases students' own fluency and comprehension skills (Trelease, 2001). Rather than conducting whole class reading of a single text that fits few readers, spend a few minutes a day reading to your students.
- The things that really matter:** *First*, eliminate almost all worksheets and workbooks. Use the money saved to purchase books for classroom libraries; use the time saved for self-selected reading, self-selected writing, literary conversations, and read-alouds. *Second*, ban test-practice. There are no studies demonstrating that engaging students in test practice ever improved their reading proficiency (Guthrie, 2002).