

YEARS 4–8

Fluency



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Fluency

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Model Good Oral Reading

Read-Alouds (Years 4–8)

Students must hear good oral reading in order to understand what fluent reading sounds like. According to Jim Trelease, “Almost as big a mistake as not reading to children at all is stopping too soon” (2006). With the crowded curriculum in higher years, reading aloud sometimes seems to be a frivolous luxury. We forget what a powerful advertisement it is for the pleasures of reading and how much it assists with modelling fluent reading. In addition, reading aloud provides a number of other important benefits. It allows students to see reading as emotionally powerful, motivates them to read more, exposes them to multiple genres and assists them in exploring sophisticated words and text structures (Rasinski, 2003). Below are some strategies you can use when reading aloud.

Before Reading the Story

1. Search the Internet for recommended read-aloud books for your year level.
2. Select books that are at or above students’ independent reading level but are on their emotional and developmental level.
3. Select a personal favourite so you can demonstrate your enthusiasm for the book.
4. Discuss reasons for selecting this particular book.
5. Introduce the book. Point out the title, author, and front and back cover illustrations.
6. Invite plausible predictions about the book.
7. Ask for possible text-to-self and text-to-text connections.
8. Discuss things students can watch or listen for during the story.

During the Story

1. Read only one chapter and allow students to decide if they want to continue with that particular book. Be flexible; if it’s not working, try another book.
2. Monitor the class. Watch students’ body language to become aware of signs of boredom or confusion.
3. Use enthusiasm and expression to make the story more interesting and understandable.

Fluency Development

The Megafauna

Today Australia is the home of many animals that don't live anywhere else in the world. It was the same thousands of years ago. Back then it was the home of many huge creatures that are the ancestors of the smaller ones we have now. They are called the megafauna.

Diprotodon was the size of a rhino. This made it the largest marsupial to ever live. It must have needed to eat and drink a lot. Its closest relatives living today are wombats and koalas. Scientists think it probably looked like a huge wombat.

Procoptodon was the largest kangaroo ever. The shortest found were two metres tall. This is the size of a very tall man. The largest have been about three metres tall!

Megalania was like a giant goanna that could grow up to seven metres long. Its closest relative today is probably the Komodo dragon. But megalania makes them look small. It might have weighed 600 kilos!

The Marsupial Lion was the biggest meat-eating mammal to ever live in Australia. Scientists think it probably hunted most animals. It might have even hunted the giant diprotodon.

These huge animals lived for millions of years. They did well until the first humans came to Australia. The megafauna were so big that nothing could hurt them. But Aborigines hunting for food were probably the first and last threat they ever faced.



Fluency Development

ANZAC Day

The word ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. ANZAC day takes place every 25th April in Australia. On ANZAC day we remember all Australians who have died in wars. It is a public holiday full of services to honour the dead. There are also many parades that reflect on our history in war.

ANZAC day is celebrated on the 25th April every year because it was on this day in 1915 that ANZAC soldiers landed at Gallipoli in Turkey. This was during World War I. Australia was fighting as one of the Allied nations. They were fighting against the Central Powers of Germany, Turkey and Austria-Hungary.

Because of bad instructions from their English commanders the Anzacs arrived at the wrong place. Instead of facing a nice beach with a gentle slope, they found themselves at the bottom of steep cliffs. The Turkish army had an excellent position to fire on them. The Anzacs managed to make a camp. But they found it impossible to move forward. After eight months of this stalemate the Allies withdrew. Ten thousand Anzacs were dead.

There were a lot more soldiers there from other countries than there were Anzacs. But they became famous for their determination and heroism. They were also known for their sense of humour and lack of respect for officers.

Gallipoli became a very important event in the history of Australia. We were only a very new nation at the time. The Anzacs showed Australian virtues like mateship, having a laugh and working hard in the face of impossible situations. The area where the Gallipoli landing took place is now called Anzac Cove in honour of all those who died there. The first ANZAC day was nearly a hundred years ago now. All of the original Anzacs have died. But by continuing to celebrate ANZAC day every year we prove that we will never forget both their sacrifices and just how horrible wars are.

Read Around

The Bunyip

There are plenty of things in Australia,
That bite or sting or nip,
But for a truly vicious monster,
There's nothing like a Bunyip.

What it looks like no one really knows,
But their worst nightmares say,
That if you value your own life
You won't get in its way.

From way back since the dawn of time,
Aborigines lived in fear
The monster's chilling night-time call,
A terrible thing to hear.

Round swamps, creeks and billabongs,
Rivers, waterholes and streams
Lived the fear that everything,
Was not really how it seemed.

When in later times from overseas,
The Europeans invaded
The Bunyip myth it didn't die,
In fact it got upgraded.

For Englishmen the land was strange,
Our creatures far from plain
The Bunyip then, just one more thing,
That they could not explain.

And so it became a common scare,
To hear the Bunyip's wail
And many searched both far and wide,
Though they were bound to fail.

Today we know a bit better,
Or think we do, at least
If the Bunyip ever lived,
It is now long gone - deceased.

Perhaps it's just a memory,
Of a dim and distant time
Where massive creatures walked the earth,
And giant koalas climbed.

But if it were alive today,
It wouldn't make a fuss
With the way we've treated everything else,
It should be scared of us.

Keeping Track

The Old Inn

Until 2008, the people of Glenrowan didn't know much about the Ann Jones Inn. Then a dig to find out the past of the area found more than anyone would have guessed possible. (17) (33)

It all started in 1880. The famous bushranger Ned Kelly and the Kelly gang were in the small town of Glenrowan in northern Victoria. They had taken sixty locals hostage in the local pub, the Ann Jones Inn. (51) (68) (71)

Ned Kelly was already a legend in Victoria. His gang had managed to avoid the police for years. Today people aren't sure how many crimes Ned Kelly and his gang actually committed, and how many things they just got blamed for. Back then, some people thought Ned was a menace and some thought he was a hero. Today people feel much the same. (88) (103) (120) (134)

But Ned Kelly's luck ran out at the inn. Here the gang would have a huge gun battle with police. It would end with all of them dead except Ned, and he would be hanged later. At the inn, the Kelly gang wore their famous armour. But they were defeated once the police worked out that its metal didn't protect their legs. (153) (173) (189) (196)

During the siege, the inn was burnt to the ground. In time the area was forgotten. Only the old stories remained. (214) (217)

But in May 2008 a group of archaeologists, scientists who learn about the past through what is left from it, started a search. It found more than anyone could have hoped for. (233) (249)

First, the dig proved that the area they were searching was actually the site of the Ann Jones Inn. They found what was left of the old building. But they also found bullets and bits of weapons from the battle itself. (267) (286) (290)

These finds were very exciting and important to Australian history. The place of the Kelly gang's last stand told us more about the final battle, and the last days of Australia's most famous bushranger. It proves that the past is never really gone. (305) (322) (333)

Words Correct Per Minute: _____

