

What to Do When Your Child Rushes Through Reading Assignments

Rushing through a reading assignment does not always mean a child is careless. Some children read quickly because the text feels easy; others are trying to finish an unpleasant task, avoid difficult vocabulary, or get to a preferred activity. Start by checking the result instead of criticizing the speed. Ask your child to tell you the gist of one section and point to a detail that supports it. If the explanation is accurate, speed may not be the main problem. If the child cannot explain what was read, build in short stopping points. The What Works Clearinghouse recommends helping readers ask and answer questions, determine the gist, and monitor whether the text makes sense.¹ Reading Rockets also recommends reading in short sections, checking understanding, and going back to the text for answers.² Give the assignment a purpose before reading: “When you finish this page, be ready to tell me the most important idea.” Then let the child read independently to a marked stopping point. Ask one check question, not ten. If the answer is vague, say, “Show me where you found that,” and allow a reread. For younger readers, IES guidance supports explicit comprehension strategies and attention to text structure.³ Teach one self-check the child can eventually use without you: Stop. Think. Tell. Avoid repeated commands to “slow down.” The goal is not slow reading; it is accurate understanding. Praise evidence of careful reading: “You went back and checked that detail.” If rushing occurs across subjects, regularly causes incomplete work, or is paired with attention or reading difficulty, share examples with the teacher.

Did You Know?

- ✓ WWC guidance includes identifying the gist and monitoring comprehension as evidence-based practices for struggling readers.¹
- ✓ Reading Rockets recommends short reading sections, self-checking, and returning to the text when meaning is unclear.²
- ✓ IES guidance for younger readers supports explicit comprehension strategies and teaching how text is organized.³

Research Sources

- [1. Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. “Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9.” Released March 2022.](#)
- [2. Reading Rockets. “Target the Problem: Comprehension.”](#)
- [3. Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. “Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.” Released September 2010.](#)

Ten-Minute Read-Check-Review Plan

Use this page to replace “slow down” reminders with one simple reading routine your child can learn to use independently.

Child's name: _____ Date: _____

Assignment: _____ Pages: _____

1. Set the Purpose - About 1 Minute

Choose one thing your child should understand before beginning.

When I finish this section, I should be able to explain: _____

2. Mark a Stop Point - About 1 Minute

Choose a short section or page where the child will pause and check meaning.

Stop after page/paragraph: _____

3. Read Independently - About 3 Minutes

Let the child read without reminders until the agreed stopping point.

Finished the section: ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

4. Stop, Think, Tell - About 3 Minutes

Ask for the gist and one supporting detail. Have the child return to the text if needed.

Gist: _____

Detail that proves it: _____

5. Self-Check - About 2 Minutes

End by having the child decide whether the section needs a reread.

☐ I understand it ☐ I need to reread ☐ I need help with: _____

What Parents Can Say: “You checked your understanding before moving on.”