

The 2-Minute Fluency Spot Check

A Quick Guide for UK Primary Teachers

No stopwatch? No spreadsheet? No problem. Just listen.

What You Need

- Any age-appropriate text (100+ words)
- 2 uninterrupted minutes
- This checklist
- Your ears (your best assessment tool!)

The 5 Things to Listen For

1. Speed & Pace

Are they reading at a natural speaking pace?

✓ Sounds like talking

→ Slow or rushed

2. Phrasing

Are they grouping words meaningfully?

✓ Natural phrase groups

→ Word... by... word... reading

3. Expression (Prosody)

Does their voice rise and fall naturally?

✓ Voice changes for meaning

→ Monotone/robotic

4. Accuracy

Are they reading words correctly?

✓ 95%+ words correct

→ Frequent errors/substitutions

5. Self-Correction

When they make an error, do they notice and fix it? This shows they're monitoring for meaning — a great sign!

✓ Goes back to correct mistakes

→ Ploughs on without noticing errors

Quick Error Key (What to Mark)

ERRORS

Misread words
(said 'house' for 'horse')

OMISSIONS

Skipped words
(missed entirely)

SELF-CORRECT

Child fixed it!
(positive behaviour)

ADDITIONS

Added words
(not in text)

What Next? (Quick Decision Guide)

FLUENT READER

Natural pace & expression
Few errors, self-corrects

Try: Readers' Theatre
Poetry performance

DEVELOPING

Slow but mostly accurate
Some expression emerging

Try: Choral reading
Echo reading / Rhymes

NEEDS SUPPORT

Word-by-word, laboured
Many errors, no expression

Try: Syllable pyramids
Paired reading

KEY INSIGHT: Fluency is the bridge between decoding and comprehension.

A child who decodes every word but reads slowly may struggle to comprehend.