

# TIPS FOR TEACHERS



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## SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

### SKILL OVERVIEW: Fluency

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Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluent readers recognize words automatically and read aloud effortlessly and with expression. They are able to group words into meaningful phrases and extract meaning from what they have read. They simultaneously relate what they are reading to the entire selection, as well as their own background knowledge. Unless students can read fluently, reading comprehension is hindered.

Fluent reading takes practice, and therefore the skill is honed slowly. Additionally, students do not develop fluency until they have a solid foundation of word analysis skills. Most students who cannot read fluently must put too much effort into decoding. They read slowly, word for word, with unnatural phrase grouping, and this negatively impacts comprehension. Other students recognize words automatically and understand what they are reading, but their reading still lacks expression. These students may need to be taught the phrases and clauses that signal appropriate breaking points in the text.

A key characteristic of fluent reading is the ability to group words in meaningful clusters while reading. Scrambled sentences are an excellent device for building concepts about blocks of text. As students arrange words into sentences, their awareness of sentence structure improves. They begin to: take cues from capitalization and punctuation; identify subjects and predicates; put modifiers with nouns or verbs; build prepositional phrases; use conjunctions to provide cohesive ties. Students enjoy scrambled sentences due to their puzzle-like format and hardly realize how much they are learning from them.

### MANIPULATIVES: Making scrambled sentences

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#### Step 1 – Select topics and gather resources

Scrambled sentence sets are ideal for teaching interesting facts. Once students move beyond decoding, use nonfiction topics for manipulatives. Not only do students enjoy the challenge of arranging the sentences, they are motivated by learning about a topic, especially if sentences are engaging and well-written. If possible, find photos to go with the sets because these draw students into activities.

#### Step 2 – Write sentences and organize into levels

Scrambled sentences are tedious to make, but it is time well spent. Students develop multiple skills and learn interesting facts as they put the sentences together.

Products in the Reading Manipulatives scrambled sentence series have 5 different colored sentences in each set. These are always put together in the same order since they tell an orderly progression of facts. You could use 4 sentences, but less would not be enough information.

As you write the sentences, consider linguistic difficulty level. It is important to make multilevel series. Each of these should have at least 10 sets. After students work through those, they develop skills that enable them to succeed with longer, more complex sentences.

On the following page, one scrambled sentence set from each Reading Manipulatives level is shown as an example. Notice that sentence length and syntactical sophistication increase in each level.

Reading Manipulatives also offers scrambled sentences targeting Dolch 220 words and Dolch nouns. These give students practice reading these high-use words. The goal is to get students to recognize the words by sight, thereby improving reading fluency.

# READING MANIPULATIVES PRODUCTS: Scrambled Sentences



## LEVEL 1

SENTENCE LENGTH – 5 TO 9 WORDS  
 POSSESSIVES, SINGLE ADJECTIVES  
 SIMPLE ADVERBIAL PHRASES ONLY

Most Americans have turkey for dinner on Thanksgiving.  
 Turkeys are actually very stupid birds.  
 A flock once drowned by staring at falling rain.  
 Aren't you glad Ben Franklin did not get his way?  
 He wanted the turkey to be America's national bird.

Students devour scrambled sentences because they are interesting and fun.

These increasingly complex forms of written language improve linguistic and grammatical competency. Some of the skills scrambled sentences teach are:

- sentence structure (subject/predicate, phrases)
- capitalization and punctuation
- conjunctions (providing cohesive ties)
- adjective and adverbial phrases
- vocabulary and facts
- organizational skills

There are 12 sets in each series. Each set has 5 color-coded sentences that give facts about a topic. The color photo draws students into the activity.

These examples illustrate how levels increase in complexity. Students should start in level 1 or 2 to develop strategies and skills necessary for success.



## LEVEL 2

SENTENCE LENGTH – 8 TO 11 WORDS  
 MULTIPLE ADJECTIVES, WORDS IN SERIES  
 MORE COMPLEX PHRASES & VOCABULARY

Natural cycles have kept Earth in balance for billions of years.  
 People have always done damage to the air, water, and land.  
 Multiplying population, vehicles, and machinery are now huge threats.  
 Environmental pollution is the world's most serious problem.  
 Governments and people worldwide are working to save our planet.

FARM 1	610	\$45
AMERICAN LANDMARKS 1	615	\$45
BIRDS 1	620	\$45
DANGEROUS CREATURES 2	640	\$45
WORLD LANDMARKS 2	645	\$45
NATURE 2	650	\$45
DANGEROUS CREATURES 3	670	\$50
WATCHABLE ANIMALS 3	675	\$50
LOST CIVILIZATIONS 3	680	\$50



## LEVEL 3

SENTENCE LENGTH – 12 TO 16 WORDS  
 COMPOUND & DETAILED SENTENCES  
 SOPHISTICATED LINGUISTIC FEATURES

The behavior of horned lizards is more bizarre than the horns protruding from their heads.  
 When alarmed, horned lizards fluff themselves against the ground and remain motionless.  
 For self-defense, they squirt blood from their eyes or inflate themselves and hiss.  
 Predators don't want to eat them because their horns can pierce the attacker's gut.  
 These "lizards" are not lizards at all, but are North American lizards lizards.