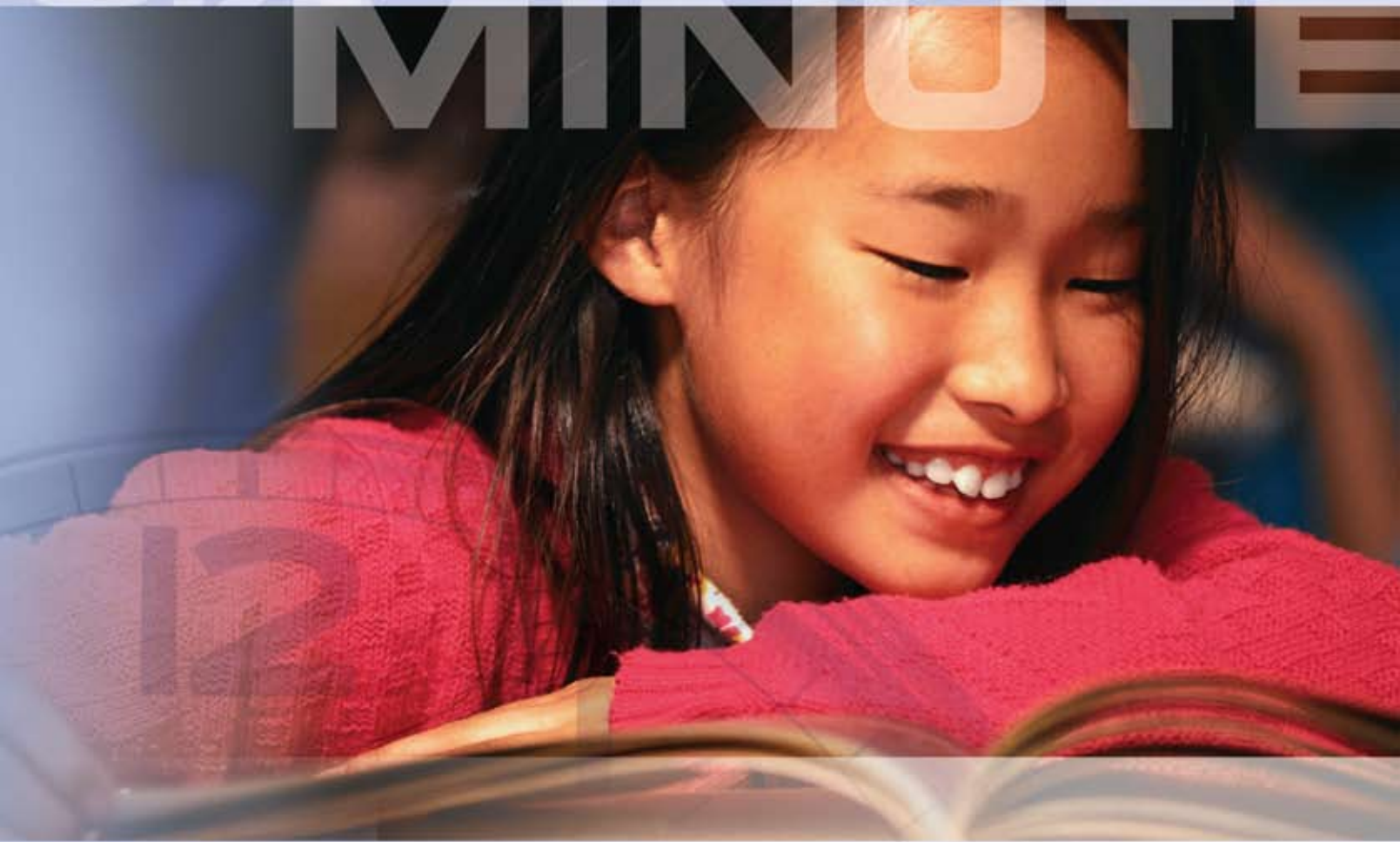


# SIX MINUTE



## The Six-Minute Solution: A Reading Fluency Program (Intermediate Level)

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Grades 3-6 • Intervention 3-8  
Passage Reading Levels Grades 1-6

Sopris West™

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## Introduction

Nothing is more painful and frustrating to a teacher than to hear a student arduously read a sentence word by word, seeming to have to physically drag himself or herself to the end of the sentence. As educators, we have all heard students read in this manner time and again and have wanted to do something—anything—to help these disfluent students become good readers.

*Six-Minute Solution Intermediate* will help students do just that. This research-based, highly effective instructional procedure for students in grades 3–6 builds reading fluency in only six minutes of the instructional day. For an overview of the instructional format, see the table below.

<b>SIX-MINUTE SOLUTION INTERMEDIATE INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
1 minute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Timer</li> <li>■ One portfolio for each set of student partners that contains:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Two copies of the same <i>Grade-Level Practice Passage</i> (laminated or placed inside plastic sleeves).</li> <li>b. Two copies of the <i>Fluency Record</i> or <i>Fluency Graph</i> (one for each student).</li> <li>c. One dry-erase marker and erasing cloth inside a zip-per-lock plastic bag.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<b>Get Ready</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teacher announces that fluency timings will begin.</li> <li>■ Student partners remove fluency materials from the partnership’s portfolio.</li> <li>■ Partners record today’s date on their respective <i>Fluency Record</i> or <i>Fluency Graph</i>.</li> <li>■ Teacher monitors to ensure students are ready to begin their timings.</li> </ul>
1 minute		<b>Partner 1 Reads</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teacher sets the timer for 1 minute and says, “Begin.”</li> <li>■ Partner 1 reads until the timer sounds.</li> <li>■ Partner 2 marks Partner 1 reading errors and stopping point on his/her copy of the <i>Practice Passage</i>.</li> </ul>
1 minute		<b>Partner 2 Gives Feedback</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Partner 2 tells Partner 1 how many words he/she read, the number of errors he/she made, and does the error-correction procedure (see <i>Chapter 4</i>).</li> <li>■ Partner 1 records the numbers on his/her <i>Fluency Record</i> or <i>Fluency Graph</i>.</li> <li>■ Partner 2 wipes off the markings on his/her <i>Practice Passage</i> and gives the marker to Partner 1.</li> </ul>
1 minute		<b>Partner 2 Reads</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teacher again sets the timer for 1 minute and says, “Begin.”</li> <li>■ Partner 2 reads the same <i>Practice Passage</i> to Partner 1 until the timer sounds.</li> <li>■ Partner 1 marks Partner 2 reading errors and stopping point on his/her copy of the <i>Practice Passage</i>.</li> </ul>

1 minute		<p><b>Partner 1 Gives Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Partner 1 tells Partner 2 how many words he/she read, the number of errors he/she made, and does the error-correction procedure (see <i>Chapter 4</i>).</li> <li>■ Partner 2 records the numbers on his/her <i>Fluency Record</i> or <i>Fluency Graph</i>.</li> <li>■ Partner 1 wipes off the markings on his/her <i>Practice Passage</i>.</li> </ul>
1 minute		<p><b>Students Put Away Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ One partner returns the copies of the <i>Practice Passage</i>, <i>Fluency Record</i> or <i>Fluency Graph</i>, dry-erase marker, and erasing cloth in the zipper-lock plastic bag to the partner portfolio.</li> </ul>

Struggling readers as well as good readers benefit from *Six-Minute Solution Intermediate's* daily fluency practice. Struggling readers gain fluency first at the word level and then at the passage level, while competent readers are challenged to read more expressive texts that are increasingly more difficult and sophisticated. All students benefit from fluency practice because as they encounter more challenging texts, they need to continue to grow as fluent readers.

### **Rereading to Build Fluency**

As the saying goes, “Practice makes perfect”—whether it’s shooting basketballs, playing the piano, or processing text in a smooth, efficient, and accurate manner. The benefits of repeated readings of the same passage to build reading fluency have been well documented in many research studies (Levy, Nicholls, & Kroshen, 1993; Meyer & Felton, 1999; Samuels, 1979). *Six-Minute Solution Intermediate* helps students succeed at reading fluency using an instructional model that is based on repeated-reading research and partnering students with closely matched instructional and fluency levels. Research supports the fact that students’ reading skills improve when they work with peers in structured reading activities (Greenwood, Delquadri, & Hall, 1989; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994; and Stevens, Madden, Slavin, & Famish, 1987).

### **Partnering Students to Build Fluency**

In *Six-Minute Solution Intermediate*, students’ current instructional reading levels are determined and then students are placed in fluency partnerships. In these partnerships, one student reads the passage to his/her partner for one minute while the partner tracks the words read correctly as well as the reading errors. Partners then switch roles, with each partner charting his/her own progress. The entire procedure takes only six minutes.

### **Decoding & Fluency**

Experts may disagree as to what exactly is the best approach to teach students how to read, but they are in agreement as to what good reading “sounds” like. According to Carnine, Silbert, and Kame’enui (1997), fluency is “reading smoothly, easily, and quickly.” In order to read fluently, the reader must be able to decode the vast majority of words automatically, with approximately 95 percent accuracy. However, although there is a clear link between fluency and decoding skills, fluency practice alone will not improve a student’s

decoding skills. Any underlying decoding problems must also be addressed either prior to or in conjunction with fluency practice.

### **Comprehension & Fluency**

Research also shows a high correlation between reading *comprehension* and reading *fluency* (Farstrup & Samuels, 2002; Foorman & Mehta, 2002; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Reading comprehension suffers when students lack fluency. If a student is focusing his/her cognitive energies on word decoding and recognition, those energies are not available for comprehension. In the words of Farstrup and Samuels (2002), fluency consists of “optical, perceptual, syntactic, and semantic cycles, each melting into the next as readers try to get meaning as efficiently as possible using minimal time and energy.”

### **Independent Reading & Fluency**

Fluent readers generally find reading to be a pleasurable activity; as a result, they read more. When the amount of time spent on independent reading increases, there are accompanying gains in reading-related skills. As students read more, they increase not only their comprehension but also their vocabulary, background knowledge, decoding, and fluency skills. The “Matthew effect”—a term coined by reading researcher Dr. Keith Stanovich—refers to the effect that in reading, as in other areas of life, “the rich get richer while the poor get poorer” (Stanovich, 1986).

### **Work Completion & Fluency**

Fluent readers will be better able to complete both class assignments and homework. This is significant when you consider the amount of reading assigned to upper elementary, middle school, and high school students. As an example: Student A, a fluent reader, is able to read an average of 180 correct words per minute (cwpm); Student B, a struggling reader, has an average fluency rate of 60 cwpm. Both students are assigned the same amount of reading. Student A, with an appropriate fluency rate, is able to complete the assignment in two hours. Student B, who reads at only one-third the rate of Student A, needs six hours to complete the same assignment.

### **Reading Achievement & Fluency Practice**

Although the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Pinnell, Piluski, Wixson, Campbell, Gough, & Beatty, 1995) found that 44 percent of fourth graders were not fluent readers, research shows that educators have the knowledge and tools to affect this problem. After analyzing many fluency studies, the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) reported that fluency can be taught and that guided, repeated, oral reading procedures are “appropriate and valuable avenues for increasing reading fluency and overall reading achievement.” Skilled readers read words quickly, correctly, and without hesitation. Students who have not become fluent readers continue to plod slowly through each sentence without experiencing the joy of quick, automatic, fluent reading. By its very nature, fluency practice supports comprehension. It provides a skill-building activity that enables students to move quickly through text. As students build fluency through rereading, they amass a larger reading vocabulary. As they begin to read with automaticity, their cognitive

attention can be focused on the text’s meaning instead of on word identification. The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) found that repeated oral reading, accompanied by feedback and guidance, resulted in significant reading achievement.

*Six-Minute Solution Intermediate* uses both of these research-validated components—repeated readings of the same passage and oral feedback from peers—to build fluency.

## **Six Simple Steps for Getting Started**

The *Six-Minute Solution Intermediate* partner fluency model can be easily implemented in a variety of settings. The following is a list of the steps needed to get started and an estimate of how long each step will take.

### **Step 1. Assessment (Chapter 1)**

#### **Estimated Time 1-2 hours**

- Give each student a one minute timing on a grade level passage to determine oral fluency rate.
- Give each student a test to determine instructional reading level—San Diego Quick, silent reading test or a passage placement accuracy test.

### **Step 2. Select Fluency Partners and Instructional Groups (Chapter 2)**

#### **Estimated Time 1 hour**

- Using a class roster, list students by fluency score and then by instructional reading level.
- Assign partners by ranking. For example, students ranked #1 and #2 would be partners and students ranked #3 and #4 would be partners. Partners must be closely matched (fluency rates should be within 10-15 words of each other).
- Designate the stronger of the two as partnership #1 and the other #2.

### **Step 3. Introduce the Fluency Concept (Chapter 3)**

#### **Estimated Time 20-30 minutes**

- Teacher demonstrates whisper reading the sample passage, tracking while reading, underlining unknown words and marking the last word read when the timer sounds.
- Teacher demonstrates totaling correct number of words read and graphing.
- Students whisper read passage for one minute, figure out the number of correct words read and graph. Procedure is repeated for a second minute.
- Students compare number of cwpm on each of their timings. Teacher leads class discussion on the benefits of repeated reading.

### **Step 4. Establish Partner Behavior (Chapter 4)**

#### **Estimated Time 10-20 minutes**

- Teacher models and discusses cooperative and respectful partnerships.
- Teacher selects a student partner to demonstrate correct partner behavior during reading—“lean in and whisper read.”
- Teacher demonstrates giving polite feedback to the partner.

- Teacher demonstrates gently correcting errors using tell and repeat method.
- Teacher states “No Arguing” rule and demonstrates how arguing wastes time.

#### Step 5. Train Students in the Partnership Model (Chapter 5)

##### **Estimated Time 20-30 minutes**

- Teacher demonstrates partner procedure with a student.
- Teacher sets timer for one minute and instructs all partner 1s to read and all partner 2s to follow along and underline errors.
- After the timer sounds, teacher instructs all partner 2s to give feedback to all partner 1s—total words read, number of errors, and correct words per minute.
- Teacher instructs all partner 1s to graph or record their score.
- Teacher instructs students to change roles and get ready for the second timing. Students repeat procedure for a second minute.
- Procedure is repeated. **Note:** Teacher should walk around the room and monitor carefully at all times.

#### Step 6. Train Students to Manage Materials (Chapter 6)

##### **Estimated Time 10-15 minutes**

- Teacher shows students where portfolios and passages are kept.
- Teacher demonstrates choosing new passages and filing old passages.
- Teacher demonstrates storing the pen, cloth or sponge.



## Sample Schedule

The following is a sample of a weekly (5 day) schedule for the *Six-Minute Solution Intermediate* partner fluency model. Notice that the first day of the week includes an accuracy check and the last day of the week may include optional comprehension and writing activities.

<b><i>Six-Minute Solution Intermediate</i> Sample Schedule</b>	
<b>Monday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ All partnerships have new <i>Practice Passages</i>. Partners preview the entire passage for accuracy by whisper-reading or silently reading, underlining unknown words. Teacher monitors and identifies any words unknown to either partner.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <b>Option 1:</b> No timings on Mondays. Have partners use the allotted six minutes for previewing <i>Practice Passages</i>.</li><li>– <b>Option 2:</b> Allow extra time (10–15 minutes) on Mondays. Have partners first preview their <i>Practice Passage</i> for accuracy. Then, conduct partner fluency practice during the allotted six minutes.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Tuesday through Thursday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <i>Six-Minute Solution Intermediate</i> procedure: Fluency practice.</li></ul>
<b>Friday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Partners turn in the week's <i>Practice Passage</i> and select a new one for the following week.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <b>Option:</b> Extend the amount of time to incorporate student practice with comprehension or summary writing strategies. Partners can use the current <i>Practice Passage</i> for these optional activities before turning it in and selecting a new passage for the following week. See <i>Chapter 8</i> for suggestions.</li></ul></li></ul>

## All About Plants

0            There are many plants on our earth. Plants can be big. Plants can  
 13 be small. We can't even see some plants. They are too small. Plants need  
 27 many things to grow. They need sunlight. Other plants need a lot of  
 40 sunlight. Others need very little sunlight. Plants also need water to grow.  
 52 Just like sunlight, some plants need a lot of water. Other plants need very  
 66 little water. A cactus can live without a lot of water.

77            Plants also need food from the soil to grow. Plants use their roots  
 90 to get food and water from the soil. The roots also hold up the plant. The  
 106 leaves make food for the plant. They use the sun to make food. Stems  
 120 are different on plants. The stem holds up the leaves and flowers on the  
 134 plant. It also carries water and food to the plant. The stem of a tree is  
 150 hard and strong. The stem of a flower can bend easily. Plants have seeds  
 164 to grow new plants. Some seeds are very small. Other seeds are in fruit  
 178 that grow on the plants. Some plants have flowers. Other plants do not  
 191 have flowers. Plants give us many things. They are good to us.

203

Total Words Read \_\_\_\_\_

- Errors \_\_\_\_\_

= CWPM \_\_\_\_\_

## Scott Joplin: Father of Ragtime Music

0            Scott was born in Texas in 1868. He came from a musical family.  
 13          His parents played music as a hobby. Scott’s mother played the banjo. His  
 26          father played the fiddle. Not many black men made a living playing music  
 39          in those days. Scott’s parents hoped things would be different for Scott.

51           Scott’s mother cleaned houses for a living. She took Scott to work  
 63          with her. Scott played the piano in the houses where she worked. He  
 76          liked to play songs by Stephen Foster. Scott’s mother worked hard to pay  
 89          for his piano lessons. In those days, there were not many schools for  
 102        black children. Scott did not go to school until he was a teenager. But he  
 117        worked very hard. Scott played the piano every day. When Scott was 17,  
 130        he left home to get a job. He played piano in St. Louis at the Silver Dollar  
 147        Saloon. When Scott was 28 years old, he went to college to study music.

161        Scott played a kind of music called ragtime. It had a bouncy rhythm.  
 174        Ragtime was first called “ragged time.” People thought it sounded like a  
 186        piece of torn, ragged paper. Scott became friends with John Stark. John  
 198        was a white man. It was unusual at that time for a black man and a white  
 215        man to be friends. John helped Scott publish his music. They published  
 227        more than 50 songs. “Maple Leaf Rag” was the most famous. It was  
 240        published in 1899. “Maple Leaf Rag” was the first piece of sheet music to  
 254        sell 1 million copies.

258        Scott also wrote two operas. The first one was called “A Guest of  
 271        Honor.” The original music score was lost. It has never been found. The  
 284        second opera was named “Treemonisha.” It was performed only one time,  
 295        in 1915. Scott died two years later. He was buried in an unmarked grave.  
 309        Fifty-seven years after his death, “Treemonisha” was performed again.  
 319        Everyone who saw the opera loved it. It is considered to be the first  
 333        American opera. “Treemonisha” was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1976.

343        Today, Scott Joplin’s grave has a headstone. It reads “American  
 353        Composer.”

354

Total Words Read \_\_\_\_\_

- Errors \_\_\_\_\_

= CWPM \_\_\_\_\_

## The Cherokee Nation

0           The Cherokee homeland was the Appalachian Mountains. This  
8 land is in the southeastern part of the U.S. The Cherokee lived there for  
22 thousands of years. Then European settlers began to arrive.

31           In 1540, a Spanish explorer came to Cherokee land. His name was  
43 Hernando de Soto. He was looking for gold. He and his men brought  
56 diseases from Europe. These diseases killed many Cherokee. By the  
66 1700s, many other European settlers had arrived. American colonists had  
76 taken over Cherokee lands. The Cherokee tried to protect their homeland.  
87 They signed a treaty with England. They fought with the British against  
99 the colonists. The fight became the Revolutionary War. The colonists won  
110 the war.

112           When Andrew Jackson became U.S. president in 1830, he declared  
122 war on the Cherokee. He suggested the Indian Removal Bill. The U.S.  
134 Congress made the bill law. It became legal for the U.S. to remove  
147 the Cherokee and other Native Americans from their homelands. The  
157 Cherokee were forced to march to what is now Oklahoma. There was  
169 little food or water along the way. More than 4,000 Cherokee died on this  
183 march. It came to be known as the “Trail of Tears.”

194           The Cherokee suffered many hardships. In spite of these difficulties,  
204 their culture has survived. Some Cherokee were able to move back to  
216 their homeland. Others stayed in Oklahoma and made it their new home.  
228 Today, there are three Cherokee reservations with more than 137,000  
238 members.

239

Total Words Read \_\_\_\_\_

- Errors \_\_\_\_\_

= CWPM \_\_\_\_\_