

## Classroom Techniques for Reading Drill

We know that students must practice reading. There is no substitute for reading drill. The only way to produce fluent readers is to have them read and read, and then read some more!

Too often teachers simply begin at the first row and have the students read line by line, going around the room. Those in the back of the class have no need to follow along. They know it will be quite some time before their turn comes. Further, the students vary in ability. Slower readers can make it difficult to keep the pace of the classroom lively. What can the teachers do?

Here are some techniques for making prayer reading practice more engaging. Teachers should feel free to use whatever suggestions suit their teaching style. They can repeat an activity or method that works especially well for them.

- **Echo Reading.** Divide the class into two groups, choosing from a variety of criteria: boys/girls; students with birthdays before July/after July; students wearing red/wearing no red. One group is “reader”; the other is “echo.” Reader reads a word or phrase, and echo repeats the same word or phrase. Repeat the activity but switch reader and echo groups.
- **Pick a Line.** Allow each student the opportunity to choose one line to read. Have the student identify the line number before reading.
- **Overlapping Words.** Have students read three words at a time. The first student reads three words. The second student overlaps by reading three words beginning with the second word. The third student begins with the third word, and so on. Another variation is to have each student begin with the previous student’s last word.
- **Finger Follow-Along.** Encourage students to concentrate by following the reading with their fingers.
- **What’s Missing?** Have one student read aloud all the Hebrew words on a line, omitting one. Another student reads the missing Hebrew word.
- **Tape Recording.** Have students record themselves reading a prayer. Two or three weeks later, have them read the same prayer on a second tape, play back both, and compare.
- **Tears to Their Eyes.** Ask students to read a line dramatically, as if they were on stage. They can read angrily, tearfully, fearfully, etc. The other students should guess the emotion.
- **Clue Reading.** Direct students to specific phrases or lines by asking them questions that require investigation, such as: “Which two words on line 6 are built on the root *mem, lamed, chaf*?”; or “Read the line with five silent letters”; or “Find the word that ends in a letter that changes its form at the end of a word”; or “Find the two rhyming words on line 7.”
- **Pairs.** Have students work in pairs reading lines to each other. Match a strong reader with a slower reader to correct errors.



- **Staircase.** Draw a side view of a staircase on the chalkboard. Number the steps according to the number of lines in the prayer or passage. Allow students to choose the “floor” (line number) to which they’d like to “climb” (read). Fill in the student’s name on the step he or she reaches.
- **Random Selection.** Let the student roll a die or pick a number out of a hat. Whichever number comes up is the line the student must read.
- **Songs.** Have the students try singing a line to the tune of a simple song such as “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star,” “Doe a Deer,” etc.
- **Responsive Reading.** Have students take turns reading one phrase at a time, with the class responding in unison.
- **Tic-Tac-Toe.** Draw a tic-tac-toe grid on the chalkboard. Divide the class into two teams. To place an X or O on the board, the students must correctly read a line or a phrase.
- **Staccato Interruption.** Have a student read until you clap your hands or sound a bell. Then, the next student reads. Determine the number of words according to the student’s ability and reading fluency, keeping the pace lively.
- **Choral Reading.** Have the first row of students read the first line in unison. Have the second row read the second line, and so on until all the lines have been read.
- **Sit in a Circle.** Seat the class in a circle. Going around the circle, have each student read a word or phrase.
- **Timed Reading.** Use a stopwatch to time reading. Students enjoy competing against their own best time.
- **Stay Alert.** Keep students on their toes by calling on the same child more than once.
- **Students’ Choice.** Have one student read a line and then that student calls out another line number for the next student to read or calls out the name of the next reader.
- **Team Reading.** Have groups of four students work together to correct each other as members of the group take turns reading lines.
- **Special Attention Words.** Call out a specific word, such as “line 3, fourth word” and have a student read that word. Have that student call out the next one, or continue to call them out yourself with emphasis on words that need extra attention or are key sight vocabulary.
- **Odds and Evens.** Change the line sequence by first reading all the odd-numbered lines and then the even-numbered lines.

