

## **Elementary Reading Programs**

The Elementary DI reading program consists of six programs. Reading Mastery I and II reach children to read. Reading Mastery III and IV teach children to learn history, geography and science from text. Reading Mastery V and VI teach children to analyze Literature.

Some students are in **Fast Cycle** or **Horizons** reading programs. These are the same as the Reading Mastery programs, except that they move twice as fast. Students in Fast Cycle I complete all the material in Reading Mastery I in about half a year. Similarly, Fast Cycle II and Horizons III and IV cover all of the material in Reading Mastery II, III and IV, in about half the number of lessons. To understand what your child is learning in these programs, you will need to look at the description for the corresponding Reading Mastery program and double the lesson number for your child's group. For example, if your child is in Fast Cycle II, Lesson 30, you should look at Reading Mastery II, Lesson 60, to get an idea of what is being taught.

*“What did you learn in school today?” Information for Parents*

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Reading Mastery III  
Reading Faster, Learning New Facts

In RM III students work hard to increase the number of words they can read and understand. Each lesson starts with lists of “hard words” for students to read out loud. These lists usually include new words, along with some practice words. Teachers also define the new words and require students to show that they understand them.

Students continue to work on reading faster, with fewer mistakes. Every fifth lesson, teachers check student progress using a timed test. To pass, each child must read a short passage in one minute or less, with no more than two mistakes.

At this level, students are beginning to “read to learn,” preparing them for science and social studies textbooks. Many of the stories teach facts about science, geography and other subjects. The facts are taught using several steps:

First, students learn the fact as a rule, for example, “All insects have six legs.” Later, they use the rule to draw a conclusion. The teacher may say, “A water strider is an insect. So what else do you know about a water strider?” In order to answer the question, students must remember the rule that insects have six legs. In later lessons, students will be asked to remember the rule in other, similar situations. A story about fleas mentions that fleas are insects and says, “You know how many legs an insect has.” Students are then asked, “How many legs is that?” Days, weeks or months later, stories ask students to remember and understand the fact they have learned. One of the stories about fleas says that a flea jumped with all its legs. The teacher will ask, “How many legs did it jump with?” (Six.) “How do you know it has six legs?”(Because it’s an insect.)

From this process, children learn that every fact is important. They cannot just forget what they learn, because it will be used later. When reading stories, students can use their knowledge to predict what will happen next. After every tenth lesson, the class plays a fact game, where students win points for remembering facts.

Most students enjoy reading the stories and facts, so they are motivated to work hard. Another motivation comes from the program’s point system. Teachers award points for good work in reading out loud, doing workbook pages and other activities.

Here are a few of the facts taught in RM III:

- Lesson 4 Forest trees are very tall and straight. Trees that grow in fields are not tall and straight.
- Lesson 38 Water drops have a skin that goes all the way around them. (They don't know the words *surface tension* yet, but it's the same idea.)
- Lesson 44 When something moves in one direction, there is a push in the opposite direction.
- Lesson 58 When you go higher, the temperature gets lower.
- Lesson 73 When things rub together, they get hotter.

Students also learn facts about the following topics:

- Lessons 83-85 The Trojan War
- Lessons 96-97 The story of Achilles
- Lessons 128-140 How to place historical events on a time line, including the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, ancient Greece and Egypt, the travels of Columbus and the Vikings, and the American Revolution.

Students also learn facts about different kinds of insects, spiders, time, temperature, weight, distance, toads and frogs, different kinds of dogs, and ancient and modern horses.

You can see that the rules are simple, but the ideas are sophisticated. Your child should be proud of the facts he or she has learned. Ask him or her to tell you about them!