

Learning together

Traffic Lights

ACTIVITY #5

SEQUENCE: DEVELOPING FLUIDITY –
RESPECTING PUNCTUATION – PRIMARY

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Purpose of the activity

The goal of this activity is to get your child to respect different punctuation marks when reading.



Relevance of the activity (student's perspective)

"It's time to eat children."

"It's time to eat, children."

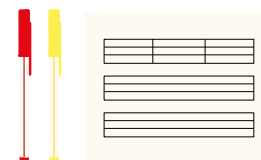
These two sentences don't have the same meaning at all, do they? This difference is as simple as respecting a short—but essential—pause as called for by a comma. Respecting punctuation is essential when reading.

These signs help to better separate and organize ideas in a text.



Supplies

- Sentences in appendix
- Red pen
- Yellow highlighter



LET'S GO!

Explain the activity:



We will learn to read by respecting punctuation marks when you read.

Explain why:



In a text, you find punctuation marks such as periods, commas, colons, and question marks. These signs are there to tell you to take the necessary pauses when you read. These pauses allow you to better understand the ideas presented in the sentences and to create a better image in your head of what you are reading.

Listen carefully to the sentence I'm going to read to you:

Since noon the sky has been grey there are many big clouds a storm is coming says Jacob he runs to take shelter because of his big rain boots he stumbles.

Phew! I didn't take any pauses when I was reading. It's hard to put the ideas together to understand what was written and get a good picture in my head.

Explain when:






When should you take pauses? Every time you encounter punctuation marks in sentences.

Try it together:



Each punctuation mark requires a pause. For some signs, the pause is longer. For others, it is shorter. It's like respecting traffic lights in a car.

-  When there are no punctuation marks in the sentence, it is like a green light. You can read at a good pace without stopping.
-  When you see a yellow light, you have to slow down. When you're reading, the comma, for example, indicates that you need to slow down. It means you should take a short pause.
-  For the red light, you know you have to stop when it appears. In reading, the periods at the end of sentences become our red lights. So, you have to take a longer pause.

Let's try to read the following sentences while respecting the pauses.

First, I can take a quick look over my sentences. I see periods and commas. I know I'm going to have to take two kinds of pauses. To help me, I will highlight the periods in red and the commas in yellow, like my traffic lights.

The two friends were slowly making their way into the forest. The forest was dark, cold, and deep. Since this morning, they knew that they should not have listened to their classmates' ideas.

I will now read the sentences with the right pauses. Then it will be your turn. You'll have to read the same way I do.

Reading by the adult, then by the child.

Very good! Now, you will follow the same steps as me with new sentences. This time, I am the one who will imitate your reading.

Continuation of the activity with sentences in appendix.



Quick tip

Short texts or passages from books that your child has already read and knows are ideal for this type of activity once they have fully understood the importance of pausing when reading. The goal is to get your child to respect punctuation, not to spend their energy decoding words.



Respecting punctuation marks

● Green	I read at a good pace without stopping.
● Yellow	I take a short pause: Comma (,) Colon (:) Semicolon (;) Ellipsis (...)
● Red	I take a long pause: Period (.) Exclamation point (!) Question mark (?)

Sentence banks to practise

The whole family is going to the beach. To make the outing a success, they need an umbrella, beach games, towels, and a good meal.

This afternoon, the sun is shining in the blue sky. The birds are singing, and the flowers in the garden sway in the wind. It's a wonderful day to play outside with friends.

My neighbours are lucky: Tomorrow, they are going camping for three nights in their new trailer. I would love to go with them! I have always loved outdoor activities.