

Four Healthy Reading Exercises **Proposed by Else Gottgens – February 2001**

The following exercises are suggested by Else for parents and/or teachers working with children who are “slower” at developing reading skills. She recommends that the exercises be done regularly and in the order given. The mood of each session/lesson should be light, encouraging, and conducive to concentrated effort.

- 1) **“Follow With Your Finger”**: Read the chosen text out loud quite fast and have the learner silently follow with his/her finger on the page. Read in spurts, some short and others long, with pauses in between for the learner to adjust. Reason for speed and for varying length of spurts is for pupil to “un-learn” the common practice of “breaking reading into parts”.
Note: Text should be interesting and meaningful, not too simple; do for a few minutes only, extend as child’s capacities progress.

- 2) **“The Hawk”**: Create an imagination that the learner’s hand is a hawk. Have the hawk circle slowly approximately one foot above the page of a book. Read one randomly chosen word from the page out loud. The student is then to have the hawk swoop down and point at the word as soon as he/she has spotted it. Repeat half a dozen times (or so) before going to next exercise.

- 3) **“Guessing Game”**: This time, your hand is a hawk circling above the book. Tell the learner to pay close attention, for the hawk is about to dive! Spiral down and hold your pointer finger very briefly under a word, then quickly slide your finger up to cover the word. Ask the reader what word the hawk has “captured”. Start with simple words; continue with more complex ones (and go faster) as the learner gets more proficient. Here, the learner is taught to “guess words at a glance” rather than to decipher every syllable.

- 4) **“Reading Out Loud”**: For this exercise, the learner is asked to read out loud, but not a word at a time. Rather, “a phrase at a time”. The learner must therefore be quiet and hold the phrase internally until it is ready to be spoken, all at once. This teaches the reader to instill meaning into what is read (not just to read meaningless clusters of letters). Begin with short phrases, progress to longer ones as appropriate.