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# Daily Reading Practice

## What we know, but sometimes forget

You know, as a parent or a former kid, that when children are first learning to walk, ride a bike, or roller skate, they want to do this activity again and again. Kids don't realize that they are practicing certain motor skills; they think they are just having fun. As with any new physical skill that is learned, that skill needs to be done often in order to attain mastery.

The same thing happens with mental skills. We sometimes wish a child would "finally start talking." Then, when it happens, we wish for a little peace and quiet! We know that when children begin working puzzles or building with blocks, they want to do the same puzzles or build the same castles over and over. They want you to read them the same stories, and they help you read the same stories numerous times.

We, as teachers, have students practice addition facts, multiplication facts, spelling words, cursive writing, and many other skills again and again. We try to vary the means of practice. Games, relay races, Mad Minute, flashcards, and other activities help children become proficient at the various skills needed for further learning.

Research has shown us that this repeated practice, if done correctly, can lead to success. But the problem with this kind of practice is that in order for it to be effective, it can't be squeezed into two or three weeks. The children will retain the material for that amount of time and then promptly forget it. Spelling words are learned for the Friday test and can't be spelled correctly two weeks later on a writing assignment. Vocabulary words are memorized for the end of the unit test and then put aside. Parts of speech are remembered for the grammar test and then can't be recalled later when needed.

The problem with this kind of "drill and kill" is that the learned information goes into short-term memory but never makes it to long-term memory. Research has proven that in order for students to apply skills that they have learned, they need to know the skills on a subconscious level. To achieve this understanding, children "must engage in practice that gradually becomes *distributed*, as opposed to *massed*" (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

Students should do quick, short, daily reviews on a regular basis so that any learned skills can be forced into long-term memory to be recalled as needed. This process works for math, spelling, grammar, reading, and other subject areas.

The *Daily Grammar Practice* program by Dawn Burnette of DGP Publishing, Inc., is a proven example of how the practice of distributing-the-learning works. Students have unbelievable understanding and recall of grammar skills when this program is implemented in the classroom.

The *Daily Reading Practice* program is patterned after *Daily Grammar Practice*. A reading selection is used for a whole week, and skills are practiced with that selection on a daily basis. Teachers who have been using *Daily Grammar Practice* and know that it works have asked for the same help with reading. Read on!

# The rationale for daily practice

Reading is everywhere. It is a part of everything that we do. Reading is the most critical part of a child's learning. It is the most important skill that a child needs to learn to function in the world today. All of these statements are true, and you are saying, "Yes, I know all that!"

We, as educators, also know that children learn in a variety of ways. In schools today, many different methods of teaching reading are practiced. So why not present students with a brief collage of methods every day? Using a short passage with repeated readings and repeated practicing of various skills will move these skills into long-term memory.

According to research, students who can use self-monitoring techniques when they read have learned a critical component of reading comprehension (Gersten & Baker, 1999). But in order to use these techniques, the students must have them firmly implanted into their long-term memory. These self-monitoring techniques include such activities as rereading parts of the text, figuring out unfamiliar words, summarizing the text in their own words, relating the selection to prior knowledge, visualizing the text, making inferences, and making predictions.

Traditionally, students read a text once and then move on to a new text. However, "repeated readings of a passage make it significantly easier for students to recall its important content" (Gersten & Baker, 1999). Working with the same text a few minutes a day is beneficial to students of any ability level and especially so for struggling readers. I have used this plan for years in my classroom and found that students don't get bored reading the same short text for a week, but enjoy revisiting it to work with different aspects of the text. Besides, by Friday, even the struggling readers can feel successful with reading and understanding the passage. This approach works especially well with beginning and second language readers.

## How the program works

*Daily Reading Practice* is a program that gives kids the daily practice they need to improve their reading comprehension skills and to be able to use these skills forever. It is a simple process using repeated practice that forces the reading concepts into long-term memory.

The key to *Daily Reading Practice* is that it is daily. Give the students one reading selection each week. Each day of the week, students have different tasks to accomplish with this selection. Your students read the selection each day before starting the activities for the day. Using the Help Pages in Appendix A, students work with the whole class, in groups, in pairs, or individually to figure out the answers to the questions. You take a few minutes a day to go over the day's lesson. Then explain any new concepts and answer any questions that they might have about the daily assignment.

Students learn through daily repetition. They carry the skills they are working with in this program into their other reading assignments. The concepts are revisited on a weekly basis so they aren't forgotten.

The concepts build throughout the week. On Monday, students work with the subject, title (simple main idea), author's purpose, and genre of the selection.

On Tuesday, students work with the vocabulary in the selection. Synonyms, antonyms, base words, and words in context are a few of the skills practiced on this day. Sometimes they will need to utilize a dictionary in this section.

On Wednesday, students practice inferences, use prior knowledge, test true/false statements, find problems in the fiction selections, and use visualizations skills.

On Thursday, students work with information they discussed on the previous days and find the main idea, author's viewpoint, topic sentence, and details. On some selections they practice skimming, using figurative language, or building and using graphic organizers to understand the text.

On Friday, after the students have dug deeply into the selection for four days, they identify key words and use these key words to write a summary of the selection.

The reading selections begin easy and get more difficult as the year goes on, and skills are reviewed throughout the year. The selections and skills get harder from grade to grade, and skills are reviewed throughout the levels.

You will see your students' reading comprehension improve as the year goes on. They will retrieve the skills and understandings from their long-term memory and build on these skills in their other reading activities.

The more children read, the better readers they become. The better readers they become, the more children read. Reading is **for** life. Reading is **about** life. Reading **is** life.

## How to do DRP daily

As teachers, we are fond of using terms such as morning activity, problem of the day, sponge activity, or bell-ringer. We then create activities, or find a book with them already created for us, to fit into these categories. Over the years, I have done WOTD (Word of the Day), DD (Daily Dictionary), DL (Daily Language), IOTD (Idiom of the Day), and on and on. Some I created, and some I borrowed. Of course it is much easier to use a program that is already done for you. *Daily Reading Practice* is ready for you to use.

You have two options for presenting DRP to your students.

1. **Workbooks:** The workbook approach is the most teacher friendly and student friendly. You have to buy a workbook for each student, but the books are cost-effective and time-saving. Each workbook provides students with an introduction to the program, a quick reference guide like the one in Appendix A, and a separate page for each week's lesson. The workbooks are designed to be inserted easily into a three-ring binder. If you choose the workbook approach, read over the introduction with your students. I suggest you and your students work together on the passage and questions for the first few weeks. Later, students follow directions in their workbooks to complete the tasks. You can find more information about the workbooks or order workbooks at [www.dgppublishing.com](http://www.dgppublishing.com). For your convenience, you can also find an order form in the back of this book.

2. **Reproducible passages:** Appendix B provides pages of passages for each week's lessons. They are the same passages that appear in the workbooks. If you use the reproducible passage approach, provide each student with a copy of the passage for the week. They can keep this page in a binder or folder. Write the daily questions on the board or overhead, or ask them orally. Also provide students with copies of the Help Pages to keep for the year. Some teachers copy these on different colored paper for each day of the week, some laminate them, and some copy them on tagboard. Have the students refer to these Help Pages on a regular basis. The pages are set up very simply,

with only the information that is needed for the particular day of the week. Then, students will use notebook paper to do the daily assignments. For your convenience, DGP Publishing offers overhead transparencies and overheads on CD so you can project each week's questions rather than write them out yourself. See [www.dgppublishing.com](http://www.dgppublishing.com) for more information.

You need to set aside a time to complete the **DRP**. The “**D**” stands for daily, so you need to do it every day. The “**P**” stands for practice. Let your students know they are practicing activities that will help them with reading at other times. You can have them try to work out the day's practice ahead of time, or you can work on it together. It all depends on your group. You will probably want to do the first several weeks' lessons together until they get comfortable with the process.

Have the students reread the selection each day. For some questions the students need to draw a picture, make a list, or create a graphic organizer. If the students are using workbooks, you might have them do their graphics and summaries on other paper. Be sure to have the students explain their answers and give documentation from the selection. In this way you know that they are not just guessing.

Make sure you use the vocabulary and reading terms during their other reading tasks each day. The more opportunities they have to hear the words, practice the skills, or use the terminology, the easier it will be for the students to remember the concepts and apply them to all of their reading.

The answers to the questions are in the teacher's guide. Some of the answers will vary and not be a right or wrong answer. In that case, I have just given you suggestions for reference.

Good luck. I know you and your students will benefit from using *Daily Reading Practice*.

You might also want to try some of our other programs:

***Daily Grammar Practice (grades 1-college)***

***Daily Spelling Practice (levels 1-4)***

***Vocabulary: An Elementary Approach (grades 1-5)***

***Vocabulary: A Novel Solution (grades 6-12)***

***You Can Picture It: Fiction***

***You Can Picture It: Nonfiction***

***You Can Picture It: Poetry***

***Burnette Writing Process***

***Focused Writing***

A complete list is in the back of this book or on our website at [www.dgppublishing.com](http://www.dgppublishing.com).

# Appendix A

## Help Pages

### Monday Notes

#### SUBJECT OF A SELECTION

- Look at the first sentence.
- Look for any repeated words or names.
- Read the selection a second time.

#### TITLES

- The title should hint at what the selection is about.
- The first word should always begin with a capital letter.
- The last word should always begin with a capital letter.
- All important words should begin with capital letters.
- Words like *a*, *an*, and *the* don't need to be capitalized unless they are the first word of the title.

#### AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

- entertain – The author tells a personal or fictional story that is based on real or imaginary events.
- persuade – The author lets the readers know how he/she thinks about the subject or tries to talk the reader into thinking like the author thinks.
- inform – The author gives information about a subject.
- explain – The author helps the readers understand a subject.
- teach – The author gives directions on how to do something.
- describe – The author gives a picture with words of a person, place, event, or item.

#### GENRE

- Genre is the name used to identify types of literature.
  - ex: *realistic fiction, fantasy, folktale/fairytale, science fiction, poetry, drama, nonfiction, real-world writing, biography, autobiography*

# Tuesday Notes

## WORDS

- **analogy** – An analogy shows the relationship between two things.
  - ex: *inside : outside :: up : down*
  - This is how you read this analogy: **inside is to outside as up is to down.**
  - The single colon stands for *is to*. The double colon stands for *as*.
- **antonyms** – Antonyms are words that have opposite or almost opposite meanings.
  - ex: *hot/cold*                      *inside/outside*
- **base word** – A base word is the main part of a word without any prefixes or suffixes.
  - ex: *unhappy = happy*                      *jumping = jump*
- **compound word** – A compound word is one word made up of two words.
  - ex: *downtown*                      *into*                      *playground*
- **contraction** – A contraction is a word that is made from two words. An apostrophe is put in where the letters are left out.
  - ex: *cannot = can't*                      *is not = isn't*
- **homograph** – A homograph is a word that is spelled the same as another word, but is pronounced differently and has a different meaning.
  - ex: *live – live*                      *project - project*
- **homophones** – (sometimes called **homonyms**) Homophones are words that sound alike, but are spelled differently and have different meanings.
  - ex: *two, to, too*                      *weak, week*
- **prefix** – A prefix is the letter or group of letters put at the beginning of a base word to change the word's meaning.
  - ex: *un + happy = unhappy*                      *re + new = renew*
- **singular/plural** – These are words in which the suffixes are added or removed to show number.
  - ex: *house + s + houses*                      *families – ies + y = family*
- **suffix** – A suffix is the letter or group of letters put at the end of a word or part of a word.
  - ex: *quick + ly = quickly*                      *move + able = moveable*
- **synonyms** – Synonyms are words that have the same or almost the same meaning.
  - ex: *small, tiny*                      *large, big*
- **unknown words** – The author uses a word that you don't know or understand.
  - Sometimes you need to look up the word in a dictionary.

# Appendix B

## Student Selections for Grade Four

### Teaching Points

When working on **Monday** activities, be sure to

- remind the student to use the Monday Help Notes.
- explain the word selection to the student. This word is used throughout the program to identify a story, poem, letter, etc.
- have the student explain how he/she found the subject.
- have the student create an interesting title. (All About Elephants, for example, would not be creative.)
- have the student choose the most appropriate author's purpose and explain choice.
- have the student give examples from the selection to support choice.
- add any questions of your own to the daily lesson.

When working on **Tuesday** activities, be sure to

- remind the student to use the Tuesday Help Notes.
- have the student explain his/her answer and give documentation from selection.
- have the student refer to a dictionary when necessary.
- add any questions of your own to the daily lesson.

When working on **Wednesday** activities, be sure to

- remind the student to use the Wednesday Help Notes.
- have the student give documentation from selection for answer choice.
- remind the student to use complete sentences to answer questions when required.
- add any questions of your own to the daily lesson.

When working on **Thursday** activities, be sure to

- remind the student to use the Thursday Help Notes.
- have the student give documentation from selection for answer choice.
- expect the student to create organized and neat graphics.
- add any questions of your own to the daily lesson.

When working on **Friday** activities, be sure to

- remind the student to use the Friday Help Notes.
- have the student explain Key Word choices.
- expect the student to write complete sentences with correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- add any questions of your own to the daily lesson.



# Appendix C

## Answer Keys for Grade 4

Some of the answers will vary.  
Suggested answers and graphics  
are given for each question.

SAMPLE

# Week One

## A Smelly Lesson

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### Title

Even though the skunk is not strong, not big, and not fast, its enemies don't often bother it. Most other animals won't mess with a skunk because of its one very powerful weapon. It has two little sacs in its body that it uses to spray a dreadful smell. Animals, including the skunk itself, don't like the smell.

When a skunk feels threatened, it stands up on its front legs and lifts its tail as high as it can. By doing this, the skunk is actually trying to avoid spraying itself. The skunk doesn't spray right off the bat. It waits to see if the foe will go away. If the enemy doesn't leave, the skunk sprays its nasty smell. It usually only takes an animal one time to learn a very smelly lesson.

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### **Monday** Read the selection carefully.

1. The subject of this selection is skunks.
2. At the top of this page, write a title for this selection.
3. The author's purpose in writing this selection is to \_\_\_\_\_.  persuade.  inform.
4. The genre of this selection is nonfiction.

### **Tuesday** Read the selection carefully.

5. A synonym for the word enemy in the selection is foe.
6. What does the word threatened mean in this selection?  
 in charge  ready to leave  in danger
7. A word that describes the skunk's smell is dreadful.

### **Wednesday** Read the selection carefully.

8. A skunk only sprays its smell in emergencies.  
 True  False
9. The last sentence of the selection is a/an \_\_\_\_\_ fact. opinion. (Circle one.)
10. Why does a skunk's enemy only bother it one time?  
It doesn't want to be sprayed a second time.

### **Thursday** Read the selection carefully.

11. Underline the idiom in this selection. It means immediately.
  12. The main idea of this selection is the skunk has a powerful weapon to use against its enemies.
- 

### **Friday** Read the selection carefully.

13. Highlight 5-6 key words in the selection. Write a 3-4 sentence summary of the selection using your key words. It is not necessary to use all of your key words. Be sure to use correct spelling and punctuation.

*Suggested Key Words: skunk, smell, dreadful, enemies, weapon*

*Suggested Summary: The skunk has a weapon to use against any animal that tries to attack. It teaches its enemies a very smelly lesson. The enemy usually learns very quickly to leave the skunk alone.*

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# Week Twenty-three

*I Recommend*

Title

Dear Mr. Mills,

This selection is to inform you that I recommend Dillan Michaels for the job he is seeking. He would be a wonderful volunteer at your restoration museum. I have known Dillan for several years and have found him to be conscientious, prompt, and reliable. He follows directions well and follows through on tasks that are given to him. Overall, Dillan is a hard-working young man.

Dillan would like to learn how to restore old airplanes one day and believes that working with you at your museum would be a good place to start.

If you have any questions about this excellent young person, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Nathan Bennett

## **Monday** Read the selection carefully.

1. The subject of this selection is Dillan.
2. At the top of this page, write a title for this selection.
3. The author's purpose in writing this selection was to \_\_\_\_\_.  teach  persuade
4. The genre of this selection is real-world writing (letter).

## **Tuesday** Read the selection carefully.

5. A synonym for the word trustworthy in the selection is reliable.
6. What does the word prompt mean in this selection?  
 on time  quick  bring about
7. Circle the prefix on the following selection words. restore restoration

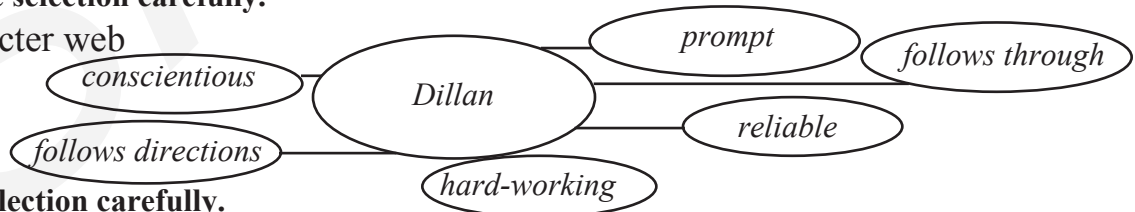
This prefix means back, again.

## **Wednesday** Read the selection carefully.

8. Dillan will be paid a salary for doing this work.  True  False
9. This selection is a \_\_\_\_\_.  recommendation  commendation
10. This selection is written in the third person point of view.

## **Thursday** Read the selection carefully.

11. Make a character web about Dillan.



## **Friday** Read the selection carefully.

12. Highlight 5-6 key words in the selection. Write a 3-4 sentence summary of the selection using your key words. It is not necessary to use all of your key words. Be sure to use correct spelling and punctuation.

*Suggested Key Words: Dillan, volunteer, job, restoration museum*

*Suggested Summary: Dillan is seeking a job. He wants to volunteer at a restoration museum.*

*Nathan writes a letter about why Dillan should get the job.*

# Appendix D

## Curriculum Objectives Addressed at Each Grade Level

Throughout the course of the year, each student will

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
compare and contrast				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
complete analogies				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
determine characterization									●	●
distinguish between true and false statements	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
draw and use graphic organizers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
figure out words in context	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
form an opinion about a selection		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify a base word	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify a fiction selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify a nonfiction selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify a metaphor						●	●	●	●	●
identify a prefix	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify a realistic selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify a root								●	●	●
identify a simile		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify a suffix	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify alliteration	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify allusion									●	●
identify an opinion in a selection		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify and use chronological order			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify antonyms	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify cause-effect		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify compound words	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
identify contractions	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
identify detail sentences				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify facts in a selection		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify homophones (homonyms)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
identify homographs		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
identify key words in a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify person – 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify rhyming words	●	●	●							
identify singular/plural				●	●	●	●	●		
identify synonyms	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify the author’s purpose for writing a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify the difference between fact and opinion		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
identify the difference between objective and subjective									●	●
identify the genre of a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify the main idea or thesis of a selection		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify the mood of a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify personification									●	●
identify the problem in a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify the reader's purpose for reading selection						●	●	●		
identify the solution in a selection			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify the subject of a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify the tone of a selection									●	●
identify the topic sentence				●	●	●	●	●		
identify the viewpoint from which a text is written				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
identify multiple layers of a text									●	●
make inferences about a selection		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
make predictions from selection content			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
paraphrase a sentence									●	●
recognize characters in a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
recognize hyperboles								●	●	●
recognize imagery									●	●
recognize plot in a selection		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
recognize rhetorical questions									●	●
recognize setting in a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
recognize words with multiple meanings	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
relate new information to prior knowledge	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
reread a selection if the meaning is not clear	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
skim through a selection for information	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
summarize selection content	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
understand an idiom		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
understand euphemisms									●	●
understand that reading is a process of seeking meaning	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
understand the connotations of words									●	●
understand the effects of literary devices									●	●
use a dictionary to understand unknown words	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
use information in text to draw conclusions			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
use self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
visualize a selection	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
write a title using correct punctuation and capitalization	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
write a title using correct spelling		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●