What is Shared Reading?

An interactive approach to the teaching of reading that promotes the development of new skills and consolidates those previously taught. During shared reading, the teacher provides instruction to the whole class by reading a text that all students can easily see (big book, smartboard or individual copies). The teacher reads the text to the students, inviting them to join in.

“Shared reading is an important missing piece in many reading programs...when teachers shift their attention to give more time to shared reading, guided practice is more meaningful and efficient, and teachers don’t have to work so hard in small reading groups. Also, and this is very important, teaching reading becomes much more enjoyable.”
(Regie Routman, 2003, p. 130)

What are the benefits of Shared Reading?

- encourages conversations about text
- while teacher is demonstrating, students are encouraged to participate with no pressure or fear of failure (i.e. safe environment)
- used to demonstrate and practice all aspects of the reading process
- every student is engaged regardless of instructional level
- enriches the readers' experience in an enjoyable way
What does quality Shared Reading look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Instruction**     | - instructional focus is based on curriculum and on the assessment of students’ needs  
                      - same text is revisited several times for a variety of instructional purposes  
                      - while teacher is reading students join in; it is **not** round robin reading  
                      - lessons are planned with a specific purpose  
                      - can be whole class or small group depending on purpose and students’ needs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| **Assessment for learning** | - assessments are ongoing (e.g. observations, checklists and anecdotal notes,...)  
                      - assessment information is **then** used to guide instruction  
                      - assessment also allows for feedback and differentiation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| **Texts**           | - teacher intentionally chooses relevant text to match instructional purpose (i.e. comprehension, fluency and word study)  
                      - a variety of genres and texts (e.g. fiction, non-fiction, poetry, environmental print, multimedia, big books, brochures,...) are used  
                      - highlight how text works (e.g. text features, author’s craft, story structures,...) in context vs. isolation  
                      - text **MUST** be visible to all students  
                      - texts are chosen to support readers, therefore the level of text is considered to ensure participation by all readers and to meet the learning target of the lesson (i.e. not beyond students’s reading reach as in modelled reading or too easy and more suited for independent reading)                                                                                             |

How does shared reading differ from choral reading?

- choral reading can be part of shared reading (i.e. when the students are joining in and reading in unison)
- shared reading, unlike choral reading, has specific purposes and/or learning targets
- occasionally, choral reading was thought to have a performance attached to it; shared reading typically does not
- shared reading encompasses more of intentional teaching around reading strategies (decoding and comprehension), word study, vocabulary, fluency, ...
Frequently Asked Questions

How do I fit shared reading into my class schedule?
• Shared reading can occur during ELA, but it can also be incorporated into other subject areas such as health, science or social studies.
• Shared reading can support cross-curricular connections (e.g. nonfiction text features).

How does shared reading fit within a Balanced Literacy framework?
• It is part of the gradual release of responsibility. In shared reading, teachers offer students more support than in guided reading and less support than in modelled reading.
• Shared reading is the “We do it”
• Shared reading is “teacher with students”

How does word work fit within Shared Reading?
• Word work is embedded, as it is in all aspects of balanced literacy.
• Word study is practiced in the context of authentic reading situations (e.g. noticing and highlighting high frequency words in a text selection).

What do I focus on during repeated shared readings?
• Typically, comprehension is the focus during the first reading. Subsequent readings can focus on word study, fluency, vocabulary development,…

How is shared reading different than round robin reading?
• In shared reading, students are encouraged to join in during the reading of the text. The collection of voices reading along offers all students a safe and supportive environment.
• In round robin reading, students take turns reading snippets of text out loud without practice. Students typically spend most of the reading time looking ahead and listening to other students read.

How do before, during and after reading strategies apply to shared reading?
• Teachers are selective about which before, during and after reading strategies they focus on and/or model during shared reading.
• Shared reading can be followed by guided reading or conferring (during independent reading) where the teacher is looking for evidence that the student has transferred or applied the strategies.