

# FATHOM READS

**Research on Read Along, Reading While Listening, Listening While Reading, etc.**  
Includes research on struggling readers, second language learners (ESL), and students with social/emotional needs:

Chang, Anna C-S., Millett, Sonia. [Improving reading rates and comprehension through audio-assisted extensive reading for beginner learners](#), System, Volume 52, 2015, Pages 91-102, ISSN 0346-251X

“The test results show that both groups improved their reading rates and their comprehension levels, and the improvement was maintained for up to three months without further treatment. However, **the audio-assisted reading group's improvement in reading rates and comprehension levels were substantially higher than for the silent reading group.**”

Chang, A.C. (2011). [The Effect of Reading While Listening to Audiobooks: Listening Fluency and Vocabulary Gain](#). Asian Journal of English Language Teaching, 21, 43-64

Abbreviation used: Reading While Listening (RWL)

“After the 26-week intervention, **the RWL group outperformed the control group in both vocabulary gain and the listening scores.** The RWL group improved more than 100% on dictation scores, implying that RWL increased students’ speed in the listening process. Regarding the vocabulary levels test, the RWL group gained 17 marks (approximately equal to 566 individual words), but only 4 marks (or 123 individual words) for the control group. The RWL group studied a total of 86 books in the first 13 weeks and another 156 books in the second 13 weeks, increasing 81% in quantity. Students also studied longer and more difficult books in the second semester. Based on such successful outcomes, the study calls for more and larger scale studies of this kind.”

Conklin, K., Alotaibi, S., Pellicer-Sánchez, A., & Vilkaitė-Lozdienė, L. (2020). [What eye-tracking tells us about reading-only and reading-while-listening in a first and second language](#). *Second Language Research*, 36(3), 257–276.

Abbreviation used: Language Learner (L2)

“**Reading-while-listening has been shown to be advantageous in second language learning.**”

“In the case of the L2, reading is slower in the reading-only mode and there is no additional slowdown in reading-while-listening.”

“L2 readers’ fixations were aligned more than those of the L1 readers (33% vs. 17%). This might indicate that L2 comprehenders are making more use of the visual text to aid listening than L1 comprehenders and/or that the speed of the audio was better matched to the L2 readers’ reading rate. Also, readers with smaller vocabularies (some of the L2 readers) had greater alignment of eye fixations with the audio. **This could indicate that those with a smaller vocabulary size used the audio to help segment, decode, parse and/or make the form-meaning link for words in the text.**”

Gerbier, Bailly, G., & Bosse, M. L. (2018). [Audio–visual synchronization in reading while listening to texts: Effects on visual behavior and verbal learning](#). *Computer Speech & Language*, 47(January), 74–92.

Abbreviation used: Reading While Listening (RWL)

“The oral rendition provided in RWL presumably allows the release of cognitive resources, typically devoted to decoding, towards higher-level processes like comprehension. **Besides helping young and struggling readers by providing the oral version of the words they decode with difficulty, RWL may also help learning new words or help comprehension because it provides multimodal input of the same information.**”

“Reading while listening to texts (RWL) is a promising way to improve the learning benefits provided by a reading experience.”

Verlaan, W., Ortlieb, E., & University-Australia, M. (2012). [Reading While Listening: Improving Struggling Adolescent Readers' Comprehension Through the Use of Digital Audio Recordings](#).

Abbreviation used: Reading While Listening (RWL)

“Results indicated that **RWL not only produced a statistically significant reading improvement over silent reading in the comprehension performance of the entire sample, but also an even greater improvement in the comprehension performance of struggling readers**, thus providing the foundation for reading professionals to incorporate RWL in their instruction to scaffold students’ comprehension abilities.”

WOODALL, B. (2010), [Simultaneous Listening and Reading in ESL: Helping Second Language Learners Read \(and Enjoy Reading\) More Efficiently](#). *TESOL Journal*, 1: 186-205.

Abbreviation used: Language Learner (L2)

“This study investigated the effects of simultaneously reading and listening to the same text on comprehension and fluency gains for basic-level English language learners at a university in Puerto Rico”

“According to these findings, listening while reading appears to have a beneficial effect on comprehension for basic-level L2 learners of English.”

“From a purely cognitive point of view, it is possible that these basic-level readers of L2 English can devote more of their processing capacity to comprehension if they are freed from using those mental resources for decoding.”

“With additional cognitive resources available for comprehension, these students achieved higher quiz scores. In other words, their improved reading fluency facilitated their reading comprehension.”

Other, non-research but related:

*Audio-assisted reading: Classroom strategy*. Reading Rockets. Retrieved January 11, 2023, from [https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/audio\\_assisted\\_reading](https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/audio_assisted_reading)

Why use audio-assisted reading?

- “It helps build fluency skills including proper phrasing and expression.”
- “It helps students improve sight word recognition.”
- “It helps build comprehension.”
- “It allows students to hear the tone and pace of a skillful reader.”
- “It’s a flexible strategy that can be used across content areas.”