

## THE AMAZING BACKWARDS PARAGRAPH

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As I read this paragraph, I will find out how it really feels to be a beginning reader. Beginning readers make lots of mistakes when they read and it really slows them down.

Sometimes the beginning reader mixes up letters because they look alike to her or him. They might even confuse the "b" and the "d" or the "p" and the "q", or even the "r" and the "n" and "m" or "u". But, we readers don't have those kinds of problems anymore -- do we?

Another thing that beginning readers do is use their finger (or sometimes even a pencil or a pen) to help them follow the words along on the page, as they try to keep their place on the page and decipher the system that we commonly refer to as the English language. Did you notice anyone in your reading group (or anyone sitting next to you or in your chair) using their finger (or pen or pencil) to help them? (Ask! Ask!)

Another thing that beginning readers do is repeat repeat words over and over over. They sometimes put words in that aren't even on the page. Sometimes they even skip over words as though they were not even there on the page.

You have probably noticed by now that having all three kinds of problems as you read can really slow a person down when they are trying to read aloud.

Sometimes when you are reading a particularly long and involved sentence that seems like it will never end, you get very tired and you may want to ask the teacher if it is really necessary for you to finish the entire sentence (especially when you are feeling embarrassed because all of your classmates are rushing you along by giving you clues and answers). By the time you actually get to the end of a particularly long and involved sentence, you might find that, since you had such a hard time just reading the thing -- it is really hard to recall what it said.

Maybe all of us who can read the good old English language have long since forgotten what it was like when we too were beginning readers. But reading this backwards paragraph has given us all a chance to feel how it feels to be a beginning reader again.

Maybe practicing with this paragraph and feeling the frustrations of a beginning reader will help us to be more patient when we work with children and adults who are learning to read.