

How to Avoid Guessing

When your student guesses, they are taking a shortcut around the decoding process. Whether or not they guess correctly, they are not strengthening their skills or building a growth mindset.

If your student is prone to guessing, make sure to set clear expectations at the beginning of the session (or a specific section of the lesson).

When you notice your student is guessing, reset the expectation and remind them of the tools in their toolbox.

Use growth mindset language to reinforce that becoming a decoder and problem-solver takes practice.

"Remember that it's okay to make mistakes and feel unsure, but it's not okay to guess."

"You don't need to guess right now! Let's try reading this word using the Word Chop strategy."

"I noticed that when the first strategy didn't work you tried another one! That's what good problem-solvers do."

Keep in mind that moving slowly and building these skills is far better than moving quickly through the lessons while reinforcing guessing.

Make it a game: Your student gets a point for every word they read correctly or attempt to decode. You get a point when they guess!