



Grades K-4



# Fluency River®

Created by Marlee Colquitt, M.Ed., CCC-SLP and Cheris Frailey, M.A., CCC-SLP

Illustrated by Ryan Bradburn

Edited by Thomas Webber

## Contents

- Teacher Booklet with River Template (8 ½" x 11")
- Game Board with Spinner (16 ½" x 16 ½")
- 8 Character Raft Playing Pieces
- 50 *Ear Training Fluency Cards* (3" x 1 ¼")  
(25 Fluent - *Flowing River Speech Cards* &  
25 Disfluent - *Bumpy River Speech Cards*)
- 175 *Unemotional Fluency Stimulus Cards* (3" x 1 ¼")  
(Words, Phrases, Sentences, Carryover)
- 150 *Emotional Fluency Stimulus Cards* (3" x 1 ¼")  
(Words, Phrases, Sentences, Carryover)
- 30 *Fluency Strategy Cards* (3" x 5")

## Introduction

**Fluency River®** is a fluency game for students (ages 5-9) that helps them learn about stuttering and become more fluent speakers. The goal of the game is for students to become comfortable with their speech and gain confidence by using fluency strategies to improve their speech, all while traveling the **Fluency River®**. **Fluency River®** is a fun way to supplement your fluency therapy programs, kits, and guides.

## Using Games in Fluency Treatment: Evidence-Based Research

According to Ramig and Dodge (2005), fluency games should be selected with a "hierarchical approach." In other words, you should begin fluency treatment with basic games that allow students to focus on their fluency instead of the technical aspects of the games.

Your students will need to learn the individual components of **Fluency River®** prior to playing it. They should first become familiar with the *Fluency Strategy Cards* and *Fluency Stimulus Cards*. You may choose to play games with just these cards before you play the board game. After the students are familiar with the cards and have played **Fluency River®**, you may choose to use your own language cards with the game to add variety or change the level of play. The *Fluency Strategy Cards* are great for other fluency activities too!

For additional evidence-based research that supports the techniques used in **Fluency River®**, turn to page 6.

# Object of the Game

The object of *Fluency River*® is for students to practice fluency strategies at the word, phrase, sentence, or carryover level, in unemotional and emotional situations. They travel down the river on their rafts, beginning at the mountain and ending at the beach.

## Getting Ready to Play

**Ear Training Fluency Cards** - Before playing *Fluency River*®, you may choose to use the *Ear Training Fluency Cards* with your students. These cards will teach students to hear the differences in fluent versus disfluent speech. Say aloud the fluent or disfluent sentences on the cards and have the students take turns identifying fluent or disfluent speech.

Have the students talk about when they have had disfluent episodes. See if they can identify a sound or word that they tend to get stuck on. Ask them if any of the sentences you said were similar to the way they speak. Provide positive feedback. Have the students discuss what happens when they stutter, how they feel, and how they think others perceive them. One positive outcome to discussing disfluency in groups, is that students may realize that their feelings are very similar to others. Here are some sample questions you can ask:

- Do you ever have words or sentences that sound like the sentences I said?
- How do you feel when you try to say a word and it doesn't come out the way you expected it to?
- What types of words, sounds, or sentences do you think you have trouble with?
- How do other people react when you have trouble saying something?
- What do you think people are thinking and why?
- What do you do when you get stuck?

**Fluency River**® **Game Board and River Speech Terms** - Have the students get familiar with the game board and special River Speech Terms.

1. Talk about how a river is always flowing, just like fluent speech. Have the students identify the different things they see in and around the river (e.g., fish, rocks, logs, etc.).
2. Follow the river from the mountain to the beach. Along the way point out the following:
  - The river flows through different land areas like the mountains, grasslands, swamplands, and beach. Likewise, talk about how your speech can change in different situations (e.g., at home, on playground, at school).
  - Sometimes the water slows down, speeds up, or swirls as it passes a fish, turtle, or other animals. Explain that just like the river, our speech can slow down or speed up, but we try to keep speaking smoothly. Name this speech **Flowing River Speech**.
  - Sometimes the water hits a rock or a log, similar to times we have a "bump" in our speech. Call this **Bumpy River Speech**. There are many different types of **Bumpy River Speech**. Here are some silly names.

**Rocky Rapid Speech** - when you repeat a letter or word like "p-p-p-pepper" or "my-my-my"

**Stuck in Speech Muck** - when you block and can't get a word out like "p-epper" (forced with facial grimace and no sound)

**Waterfall** - when you start talking really, really fast

**Log Jam** - when you prolong a word, like "pe----pper" (use vocal fry with this demonstration)

**Whirlpool** - when your speech is completely out of control

*Note: One way to introduce the game to your students is to use the River Template and River Objects on page 8, and follow the Sample Script on page 7.*

**Fluency Strategy Cards** - Once the students become familiar with the game board, introduce the *Fluency Strategy Cards*. Students follow the strategies or techniques on the cards as they play the game to help them become more fluent.

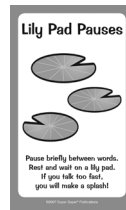
There are several fluency strategies in *Fluency River*® found on the *Communication Skills, Fluency Shaping, and Fluency Modification Cards*. Initially, you may find that most of your students will need to learn all the strategies. Some may only need a few, but it is always good to let the students have several options, so when the river gets bumpy, they can pull out a strategy and keep flowing down the river with **Flowing River Speech**. We recommend you begin with *Communication Skills*, then progress to *Fluency Shaping*, and finally to *Fluency Modification*. You may, however, teach the strategies in any order that you feel is appropriate for each particular student.

The students take the *Fluency Strategy Cards* with them as they travel down the river. The SLP/Helper decides which strategy card(s) the students take with them. Students use the cards to help them when they encounter problems along the way to keep them afloat so they have **Flowing River Speech**.

### 1. Communication Skills Cards (Reardon & Yaruss, 2004)



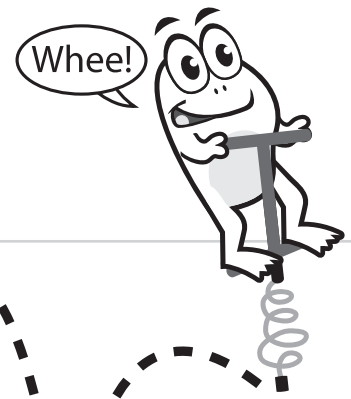
**Frog Eyes Card** – Remember to use your eyes and look at the person you are speaking to.



**Lily Pad Pauses Card** – Pause briefly between words. Rest and wait on a lily pad. If you talk too fast, you will make a splash!



**Load the Raft Card** – Before you can go down the river, you have to plan. Take a moment to plan what you are going to say.



### 2. Fluency Shaping Cards (Gregory, 2003)



**Easy Current Card** – Easily and gently say each sound or word like the easy flow of a calm river current. (Easy Beginnings - Campbell, 2003)



### 3. Fluency Modification Cards (Van Riper, 1982)



**Back-Paddle Card** – Fake a stutter and then back-paddle up river and say the word again with a smooth stroke. (Cancellation – Van Riper, 1982)

p-p-p-paddle paddle

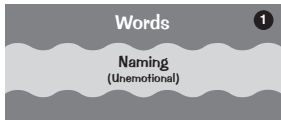


**Paddle-On Card**– Fake a stutter and as you say the word, paddle through the word just as you would paddle down the river. (Pull-out – Van Riper, 1982)

p-p-p-pa----dle

**Fluency Stimulus Cards** - The *Fluency Stimulus Cards* have a variety of fluency “exercises” on them at the word, phrase, sentence, and carryover level. Each level has both unemotional and emotional cards. The SLP/Helper decides what level of stimulus cards a student will practice.

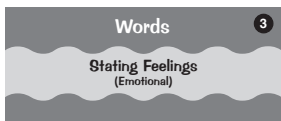
If students are at different levels, then each student may have his/her own stack of stimulus cards to choose from. Vary the game based on the skill levels of the students. We recommend students practice only one level of stimulus cards at a time.



1. **Words - Naming**  
(Unemotional)



2. **Words - Categorizing**  
(Unemotional)



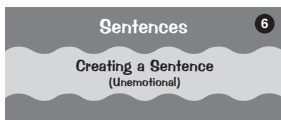
3. **Words - Stating Feelings**  
(Emotional)



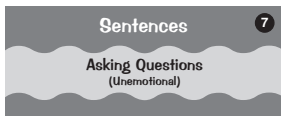
4. **Phrases & Short Sentences - Using Phrases & Short Sentences**  
(Unemotional)



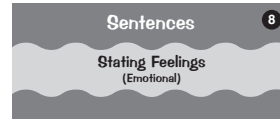
5. **Phrases & Short Sentences - Using Greetings & Manners**  
(Emotional)



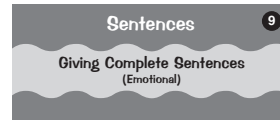
6. **Sentences - Creating a Sentence**  
(Unemotional)



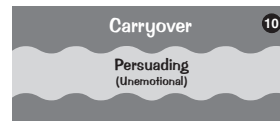
7. **Sentences - Asking Questions**  
(Unemotional)



8. **Sentences - Stating Feelings**  
(Emotional)



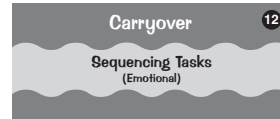
9. **Sentences - Giving Complete Sentences**  
(Emotional)



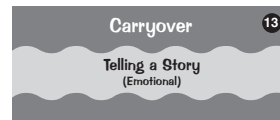
10. **Carryover - Persuading**  
(Unemotional)



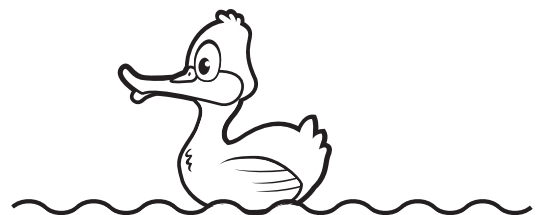
11. **Carryover - Telling a Story**  
(Unemotional)



12. **Carryover - Sequencing Tasks**  
(Emotional)



13. **Carryover - Telling a Story**  
(Emotional)



# How to Play

1. Give each student the *Fluency Strategy Card(s)* that you want them to practice.

Initially, choose one strategy to work on. We recommend you begin with *Communication Skills*, then progress to *Fluency Shaping*, and finally to *Fluency Modification*. You may, however, teach the strategies in any order that you feel is appropriate for each student. Begin with one strategy at a time until you teach all strategies necessary for the student to speak fluently. Follow the lead of your students. As they progress, you may then mix the *Strategy Cards* and have them practice multiple strategies at one time.

The students take the *Fluency Strategy Cards* with them as they travel down the river. They use the cards to help them when they encounter fluency problems. They use these along the way to keep them afloat so they have ***Flowing River Speech***.

2. Place the level of *Fluency Stimulus Card(s)* you want the students to practice on the table.

If students are at different levels, then each student may have his/her own stack of *Stimulus Cards* to choose from. Vary the game based on the skill levels of the students. Begin at the word level for each strategy, and then move to phrases, sentences, and carryover speech. Start with the unemotional cards and progress to the emotional cards.

3. Each student chooses a *Character Raft* playing piece and places it on *Start (the Mountain)*.

4. Player One chooses a *Fluency Stimulus Card*. SLP/Helper reads the card. Then, Player One follows the instructions on the card using his/her strategy. Player One spins the spinner and rides down the river the number of spaces indicated. (As the student plays the game, if there is a playing piece on the space where the student stops, then the student bumps that playing piece ahead to the next space.)

5. There are certain spaces on the board where the Players will move ahead or backward when they land on them.

6. Play continues in turn. The first player to reach *Finish (the Beach)* wins!

## Reinforcing Your Students

Remember to provide positive reinforcement throughout the game as students use their strategies. Below are a few suggestions. Add to this list as you work with the students.

- Your speech is flowing like the river!
- Look at you using *Frog Eyes*!
- I like how you used your *Lily Pad Pauses*!
- You're still afloat!
- You've kept a nice *Easy Current* in your speech!
- Way to go, you *Loaded the Raft*! Nice job planning ahead!
- I like how you *Paddled-On* through that word!

