

Using Poems from *The Endless String* by Tom and Tess Hannah for a fluency development lesson based upon research by Tim Rasinki, Ph. D.

Tom and Tess Hannah described poetry as “user friendly”. Poetry can also be “learning reader friendly”. A poem’s rhythm and rhyme can make it fun to read and perform. Use the steps outlined with the included poem or with your favorite poems to help improve fluency (speed and rate of reading along with expression).

Later, Gator

**I took a wrong turn in a bleak boggy swamp
And found I was floating where the big gators romp.
Mean hungry eyes tracked wherever I drifted
and charted my moves each time that I shifted.**

**One massive gator came close to my seat
and offered to take me to a nice place to eat
Was I his dinner or was I his guest?
I started to feel quite nervous and stressed.**

**I finally announced, “I really can’t stay...”
and now I never go boating that way.**

Used with Permission from Tom and Tess Hannah - Later, Gator • The Endless String

Have your children draw a picture for this poem:

Steps:

1. Parent reads poem to child.
2. Parent and child read poem aloud together as a paired reading - child reads in tandem with an accomplished reader.
3. Child practices reading alone to parent.
4. Practice together by dividing the poem into parts for members of the family. Note: Each poem is different. I chose “Later, Gator” because it provided equal parts, and an opportunity for everyone to read together as the Grand Finale!
5. Have a performance night. Child can read alone or read divided poem as a group production. Pick a common and consistent time to perform your poems! (Maybe Sunday Evenings) Many enjoy taking videos of the performance to watch later.