# Upper Grade Level Literacy: Instructional Strategies for Struggling Readers

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## Research Questions:
What can teachers do to improve reading ability in upper grade level struggling readers?  
What are the characteristics of a struggling reader?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misconceptions of Struggling Readers</th>
<th>Three Themes from Highly Effective Literacy Teachers</th>
<th>Characteristics of Struggling Readers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Assumptions about reading skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theme 1: Increase enthusiasm</strong></td>
<td><strong>From previous research</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>• Belief that only elementary school teachers can teach reading (Pope, 2007, p. 60; Biancarosa, 2012, p. 23)</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Reflect the excitement students should have</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Perform poorly on reading measures</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Unbalanced literacy instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Exposure to a large variety of reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Often vocalize</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Assumption that students want to and will read on their own</strong></td>
<td><strong>“rich in print” classrooms</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Coast” through school</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Literacy: the ability to read, write, comprehend, and explain texts</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Student choice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Amotivation</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Three Themes from Highly Effective Literacy Teachers

**Theme 1: Increase enthusiasm**
- Reflect the excitement students should have
- Exposure to a large variety of reading
  - “rich in print” classrooms
- Student choice
- Relatable texts

**Theme 2: Low stress**
- Students need to feel comfortable; have rules
- Show it’s okay to make mistakes
- Non-intimidating assignments

**Theme 3: Targeted literacy instruction**
- Continually teach reading and writing
- Work out reading and writing “muscle”
- Teach academic language and vocabulary
  - Attach “visual discoveries”
  - Show vocabulary in context
- Strategic novels

## Characteristics of Struggling Readers

**From previous research**
- Perform poorly on reading measures
- Often vocalize
- “Coast” through school
- Amotivation
- Decline in academic and pleasure reading

**From case study**
- Personal mental blocks
- Lack of self efficacy: severe limitation
  - Able to complete tasks, but need assistance
- Avoids reading