Why Group ?

Flexible or dynamic grouping—and regrouping—of students is essential for any classroom. Grouping students based on similar instructional needs allows the teacher to work directly with a small group of students while other groups of students are working at Learning Centers or independently. In short, grouping is a classroom management mandate.

That said, it is imperative that students be regrouped frequently as their needs are evaluated and reevaluated. All students benefit from working collaboratively across a variety of tasks with as wide a variety of peers as possible.

Skilled teaching is the key to successful grouping.
Dynamic grouping, which begins with teacher observation, supports the purposes of guided reading.

It facilitates the teaching and learning of individual students. Students in groups are observed as individuals.

It helps make efficient use of time and materials. Almost all students can learn from skillfully managed group practice, and students learn and enjoy together.

It helps students understand reading as a thinking process. By discussing what they read, students support one another as they encounter new material. The teacher has opportunities to model effective problem-solving strategies.

It moves students toward the goal of independently selecting and reading books. The teacher observes individuals and evaluates book selection.

Get Started. Begin by organizing small groups based on Guided Reading levels and skills-based needs assessments. Use a running record with a benchmark book or other informal, or formal, assessment to assign students to groups.

Group together students who process texts in the same way.
After formal or informal assessments, group students who are on the same level or who need to practice the same skills.

Group together students who use the same problem-solving strategies.
Notice how students problem solve as they read. Then group together students who use the same skills, so they can practice those skills or develop new skills.

After group work, pair students with different skills.
Students with different skills make good partners for buddy reading. They also make good partners for doing writing activities.

Regroup as needed. Monitor students in a group. Regroup students who need more help and those who can move up.

Create an environment of support for your groups.
All students should feel free to express themselves and ask questions when they do not understand something.

Create "self-evaluation" sheets.
Self-evaluation sheets will help students keep track of their own progress and their understanding of the books they read, the activities they do, and the discussions they have in their groups.

After group work, pair students.
Pair students with different skill sets and have them read aloud to each other, practicing fluency so they can learn from one another. Sharing is an important part of the learning process.