

High Frequency Words

Although the English language contains millions of words, over 50 per cent of all text is composed of the first 100 high Frequency words. A child knowing the first 100 high frequency words will know approximately 50% of children's literature. A child knowing the first 200 high frequency words will therefore be able to recognise the majority of words in children's literature. The first 300 words make up 65% of all written material contained in newspaper articles, magazines, textbooks, children's stories, novels, and more. So it makes sense to teach these words as soon as possible to improve a child's reading ability.

These words often present a special difficulty to early readers. High Frequency words contain a number of "sight words." These are the many words in the English language that cannot be

"unpacked" through phonics. A word like "the" is a good example of a sight word that needs to be read as a whole, utilising a child's memory. Yet these words are essential to reading. If children are to read quickly and fluently, they must memorise these words by sight. Recognising high-frequency words by sight primarily involves memorisation, and therefore repetition is essential.

Studies have shown that the 100 most common words actually make up about 50% of the material that we read. * It is also suggested that the first 30 words make up approximately 1/3 of our written material..

*High Frequency Words list from Fry, Kress and Fountoukidis 2004

1st 100 High Frequency Words

Below are the high frequency word lists compiled by Fry, Kress and Fountoukidis. There are other high frequency word lists such as the Dolch Word list and most English State schools use high frequency words suggested by the National Literacy Strategy. Whatever lists you use the activities and ideas will still apply.

The following 12 words make up, on average, one quarter of all reading:

a and he I in is of that the to was it

The following 20 words and the 12 above make up, on average, 1/3 of all reading:

all as are at be but for had have him his not on one
said so they we with you

Fry's First Hundred Instant Sight Words

a	can	her	many	see	us
about	come	here	me	she	very
after	day	him	much	so	was
again	did	his	my	some	we
all	do	how	new	take	were
an	down	I	no	that	what
and	eat	if	not	the	when
any	for	in	of	their	which
are	from	is	old	them	who
as	get	it	on	then	will
at	give	just	one	there	with
be	go	know	or	they	work
been	good	like	other	this	would
before	had	little	our	three	you
boy	has	long	out	to	your
but	have	make	put	two	
by	he	man	said	up	

Fry's Second Hundred Sight Word List:

also	colour	home	must	red	think
am	could	house	name	right	too
another	dear	into	near	run	tree
away	each	kind	never	saw	under
back	ear	last	next	say	until
ball	end	leave	night	school	upon
because	far	left	only	seem	use
best	find	let	open	shall	want
better	first	live	over	should	way
big	five	look	own	soon	where
black	found	made	people	stand	while
book	four	may	play	such	white
both	friend	men	please	sure	wish
box	girl	more	present	tell	why
bring	got	morning	pretty	than	year
call	hand	most	ran	these	
came	high	mother	read	thing	

Fry's Third Hundred Sight Word List

along	didn't	food	keep	sat	though
always	does	full	letter	second	today
anything	dog	funny	longer	set	took
around	don't	gave	love	seven	town
ask	door	goes	might	show	try
ate	dress	green	money	sing	turn
bed	early	grow	myself	sister	walk
brown	eight	hat	now	sit	warm
buy	every	happy	o'clock	six	wash
car	eyes	hard	off	sleep	water
carry	face	head	once	small	woman
clean	fall	hear	order	start	write
close	fast	help	pair	stop	yellow
clothes	fat	hold	part	ten	yes
coat	fine	hope	ride	thank	
cold	fire	hot	round	third	
cut	fly	jump	same	those	yesterday

Ideas for Teaching the Words and Games to Play

The children in your class will be learning these words at different rates so you may need to adapt some of these ideas and games.

Suggestions for teaching

- Introduce words in small groups of six to eight words or fewer per week. It may be beneficial to present words in phonetic groups (*this, that, they, the, those, there; big, but, by, best, both, etc.*).
- Make sure children read text containing high-frequency words every day. Almost all text contains these words, but the most rewarding reading will come from books children can read easily.
- Create a word wall of high-frequency words. Add new words to the wall as they are introduced. The walls can be structured so that they start with the first 12 words and then increase in difficulty. It may be helpful to create your word wall from these

versatile, movable flashcards. Each day, children can chant or cheer the high-frequency words posted on the wall.

- Allow children to write the words as often as possible. They may practice individual words or write high-frequency word sentences such as "We love to _____," or "I walk by the _____."
- Keep a checklist of high-frequency words. When a child has memorised a word, meaning he or she can read it without decoding or write it without seeing the word, check the word off and move on to the next word.

Games and Activities

Create flashcards for the high-frequency words in your lesson.

Flashcards can accommodate any number of fun activities:

Guess the Word: Lay several high-frequency word cards face up on the floor. Have children sit in a circle around the cards. One

child mentally chooses a word and gives a clue about it: "This word begins with a *b*." The child can continue to give clues ("It rhymes with *tall*.") until another child is the first to touch the correct card. He or she gets to give the next set of clues.

Blast-Off - This is a good game to play with younger children. The children start spelling the word whilst squatting. As they say each letter they grow taller and taller until the last letter when they jump into the air and shout "Blast Off".

Pelmanism: Create two of each high-frequency word card. Lay the cards face down on the floor. Children take turns trying to match identical words. The child with the most pairs wins. This is also very good for improving visual discrimination and memory so will be beneficial to dyslexic children.

Making Sentences: Give one flashcard to each child. You will probably need to add in some nouns that aren't part of the high

frequency words. For very young children these nouns could be presented as picture flashcards. Encourage them to have fun as they play with standing next to each other in various combinations and arrangements in order to make sentences. The sentences can be as silly as they want to increase motivation and enjoyment.

High Frequency Word Pop-Up - Gradually slide a large copy of a High Frequency Word from behind a book or sheet of card. See how long it takes the children to recognise the word. This activity can be played with the whole class, a group or an individual child.

Finger on the Card-A game to be played with 1-4 children.

Children sit on the floor or at a table. Lay a set of High Frequency Word cards in the middle of them so that the words are showing.

Say a word and the first child to put their finger on that card wins it. Continue until there are no words left and the winner is the

child with the most cards. Cards could be strategically placed so that they are nearer to children who are having difficulties.

Kim's Game. Lay a small number of words on a table in front of a group. Let them have a look for a while before asking them to turn around and close their eyes. Remove a card and ask the group if they can tell you which card you removed.

Initial letters. Cover up the first letter on a set of High Frequency Word flashcards. Ask the children what the first letter might be and what the word would then be. Use words which have more than one possibility e.g. could and would. As an alternative, cover up the last letter.

High Frequency Bingo. Choose between 20- 30 high frequency words that your children have been working with and write each one on a separate flash card. Have some cards made up with the

words printed on. Alternatively you could write the words on white boards and the words could be erased after the game is over.

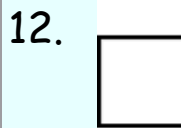
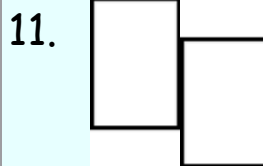
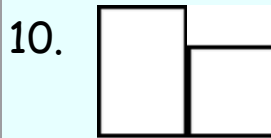
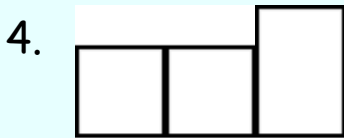
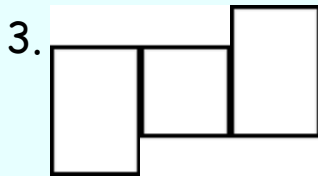
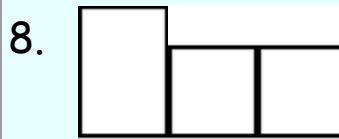
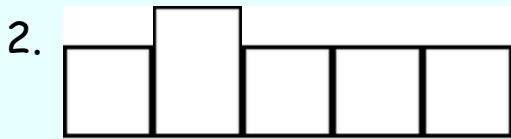
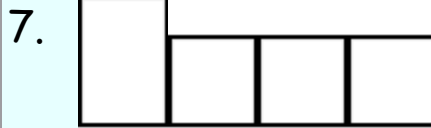
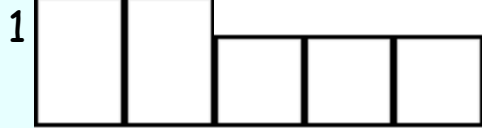
Shuffle the deck of cards and call out one word at a time. The children cover each word (on their card) that is called out with a counter. The first child with their card completely covered calls out "Bingo."

Beat the Dragon- Put high frequency flash cards into a box or bag. The children take turns to take one card out of the box and if they can read it they get to keep it if they can read it, if they can't read it they return it to the bag. There is also a dragon card in there and if they pull that one then they have to return all the cards they have collected. The dragon could be replaced with another character, according to the topic you are covering at the time.

High Frequency Word Shapes

Match the following words with their correct shapes:

By do where there two a the go
was get on know



High Frequency Word Search

Find the following words:

about
must
this
where
me
been
made
did
could
want
went
your

a	b	o	t	m	u	m	a	d	e
y	o	l	e	a	b	o	u	t	d
u	b	e	e	n	w	i	t	h	o
s	v	b	a	d	k	e	a	i	t
c	c	w	f	w	d	r	n	s	i
y	o	f	h	c	n	i	t	t	w
o	u	l	m	e	r	w	d	u	a
u	l	z	p	c	r	h	z	y	n
r	d	x	e	m	t	e	u	a	t
r	o	a	t	m	u	s	t	w	p

This is a wordsearch example. I have produced it in Word so that you can use the idea and change the words accordingly