

Sight words are NOT the same as HFWs

Sight words are simply all words, not just high-frequency words, that we have come to know through **sight, sound, and meaning** and have **stored** away in the **visual word form area** of the **brain** for **quick retrieval**. As an expert reader, almost **every** word you read has become a sight word for you.

High-frequency words – those that show up more frequently in text – are especially important for students to learn. This means that **strategic effort** helping readers **store a few dozen high-frequency words** in the word form area of the brain can **free up** a lot of **working memory**. Less attention spent on deciphering the words means that students can direct **more attention** toward **comprehending** the text.

All words have some degree of decodability...

For each word, notice what IS reliable about the sound spellings within it:

are, been, come, could, do, does, done, give, have, live of, one, said, some, the, their, they, their, to, was, want, who, would, you

Many high-frequency words are ABSOLUTELY decodable, such as:

a, and, big, came, can, down, each, fast, get, how, in, like, make, not, play, read, see, stop, them, try, went, will, yes

High Frequency Power Words

109 Power Words

Jan Burkins and Kari Yates © 2020 TheSixShifts.com

1	*the	21	be	41	which	61	into	81	made	101	get
2	*of	22	this	42	their	62	has	82	over	102	through
3	*and	23	from	43	said	63	more	83	did	103	back
4	*a	24	I	44	if	64	her	84	down	104	much
5	*to	25	have	45	do	65	two	85	only	105	before
6	*in	26	or	46	will	66	like	86	way	106	go
7	*is	27	by	47	each	67	him	87	find	107	good
8	*you	28	one	48	about	68	see	88	use	108	new
9	*that	29	had	49	how	69	time	89	may	109	write
10	*it	30	not	50	up	70	could	90	water		
11	*he	31	but	51	out	71	no	91	long		
12	*for	32	what	52	them	72	make	92	little		
13	*was	33	all	53	then	73	than	93	very		
14	on	34	were	54	she	74	first	94	after		
15	are	35	when	55	many	75	been	95	words		
16	as	36	we	56	some	76	its	96	called		
17	with	37	there	57	so	77	who	97	just		
18	his	38	can	58	these	78	now	98	where		
19	they	39	an	59	would	79	people	99	most		
20	at	40	your	60	other	80	my	100	know		

These 109 words comprise 50% of the words found in children's texts.

*Words 1–13 make up 25% of the words in children's texts.

Blank lined area for notes or activities.

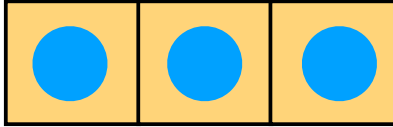
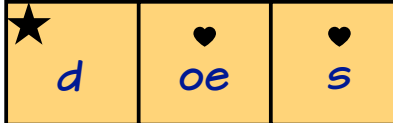
The process of orthographic mapping

To really learn any new word you have to get in and do some phonemic analysis, comparing the word's sound structure to its spelling. This sound-to-spelling work, known as **orthographic mapping**, is essential, whether the word is very easily decodable (*at*) or irregularly spelled (*should*).

Taking the spoken word and the written word apart and then matching up the two – phonemes to graphemes – is how the spelling of a word gets locked into long-term memory. This locking in is the magic of orthographic mapping, and it is **speech-to-print work**, as opposed to the print-to-speech work of decoding.

Orthographic Mapping & Irregular HFWs

Let's explore an orthographic mapping routine for the word **does**

sound boxes	
transfer to spelling	

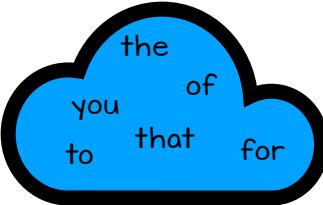
Reading outcomes are stronger when phonemic awareness is taught with print.

–Nathan H. Clemens et al

High-Frequency Words

Prioritize which high-frequency words you explicitly teach...

	Low Frequency	High Frequency
Regular	quake	went
Irregular	choir	was

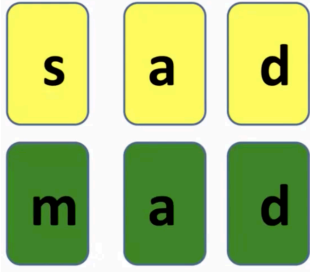


Word Building / Word Chains

Word Awareness Focus

Teacher Language

(Begin with sad.) Change sad to mad.



Skill

encoding

decoding

This is sophisticated phonemic awareness work: Students are substituting, deleting, and adding sounds (encoding). And then they're using their knowledge of spelling to create the new word, and then read (decode) the new word to make sure it's correct.

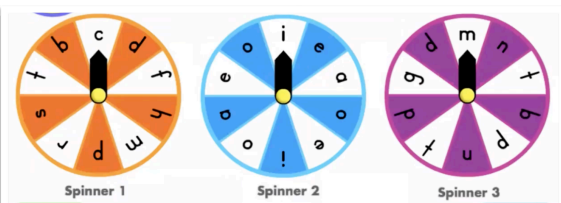
A Phonics Centre Activity - Letter Bank

Word Awareness

A grid of five rows, each with a number and an illustration. Row 1: 1, girl, l, e, g. Row 2: 2, bed. Row 3: 3, net. Row 4: 4, pen. Row 5: 5, sled. To the right is a 'Letter Bank' box containing: b d d e, e e, e, l n n, p s t.

A Phonics Centre Activity - Spin It

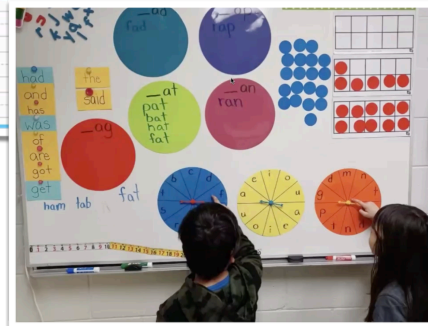
Word Awareness



TEAM 1

Organize list by spelling pattern

TEAM 2



A Phonics Lesson

★Blending ★Dictation ★Word Awareness Activities

The same letter/sound focus through each lesson part...



REVIEW IT
➔ Review High Frequency Words
➔ Name letters and sounds



HEAR IT
➔ Phonemic Awareness



TEACH IT
➔ Name new skill/sound



DECODE IT
➔ Decode words with target sound



SPELL IT
➔ Spell words with target sound



READ IT
➔ Read word lists, sentences or decodable books

*These last two steps should be approximately 50% of your lesson time. Blevins states "students progress at a much faster rate in phonics when the bulk of instructional time is spent on applying the skill to authentic reading and writing experiences" (2017).

Adapted from – Letter Lessons & First Words: Mesmer

POPEY

Revisiting characteristics of strong phonics instruction

- ✓ **Readiness Skills** phonemic awareness & alphabet recognition
- ✓ **Scope and sequence** build from simple to complex; build on previous learning
- ✓ **Blending** teaching students to sound out words
- ✓ **Dictation** transfer students' growing phonics skills to writing
- ✓ **Word Awareness Activities** word bldg/sorts are key to increase word awareness
- ✓ **Teaching High-Frequency Words** spend more time on the most common words
- ✓ **Reading Connected Text** accountable texts to apply their growing phonic skills

Active * Social * Reflective

Phonics From A to Z: A Practical Guide – Blevins

POPEY



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Sources

Books & Presentations

- A Fresh Look at Phonics, Grade K-2 – Blevins
- Phonics From A-Z – Blevins
- Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates
- Units of Study – Calkins, The Reading and Writing Project
- The Fountas & Pinnell Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study System – Fountas & Pinnell
- Wiley Blevins – ILA webinar: Adding Encoding to Phonics Lessons, Oct. 2023

Digital Resources

- [ILA Article: Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction](#)
- [The Big Five: Phonics-Orthographic Mapping – Wooldridge](#)
- [They Say You Can Do Phonemic Awareness Instruction 'In the Dark' But Should You?](#)
- [Carroll, Davies, & Richman – Suffixes & Prefixes](#)
- [Ehri – Movement into Reading](#)

POPEY

A rectangular box containing 15 horizontal lines for writing.

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