

## Word Recognition

Word recognition is the ability of a reader to recognize written words correctly and virtually effortlessly. It is sometimes referred to as isolated word recognition because it entails a reader's ability to recognize words individually—from a list, for example—without the benefit of surrounding words for contextual help.

We know that a predictor of learning to read for children is rapid recognition of all the letters. "Rapid" is important because fast, accurate performance means that a task has not only been mastered but that the learner has achieved a level of automaticity for that task.

Effortless word recognition is the main component of fluent reading. To that end, teachers help learners acquire, by repeated exposure, a large bank of sight words of the more frequently encountered words and, by word analysis, a bank of the less familiar and more difficult words. If the difficult words are more frequent words in the learner's reading, these too will become sight words.

## Sight Words

Sight words are words that are known so well that they can be read instantaneously. Having a bank of sight words releases a reader's attention needed for comprehension and for figuring out more difficult and less frequent words. Words that should be recognized "on sight" are those that are most useful whether they are regular (those that can be sounded out) or irregular (those that do not follow word analysis rules). Sight words are memorized as whole words even if they can be sounded out.

Methods for teaching sight words as whole units vary. It all boils down to using as many modalities as necessary to help learners remember the forms and recognize these words instantaneously. Flash cards or other ways to have repeated visual exposure to the word, writing the word, using a finger to trace the letter sequence, and visualizing the word are some strategies for learning the words. Saying the word while looking, tracing, or visualizing brings in another sense—hearing—to help impress the word in memory.

~ from the National Institute for Literacy

## Kindergarten High Frequency Word List

The Kindergarten high frequency word list contains 200 high frequency words – the first 50 of which all Kindergarten children should commit to memory and be able to recognize. Please use the ideas listed below to help your child begin to develop or further develop his/her sight vocabulary. Your child will be assessed weekly and his/her progress will be documented. Please keep in mind that it takes numerous encounters with the same word for a child to commit that word to memory. Each week we will introduce one or more of these words through our shared reading and poetry. The high frequency word(s) we will focus on each week will be listed in our weekly newsletter. Happy word working!

## Ideas for Improving High Frequency Word Recognition

- Play Tic-Tac-Toe. You pick a word and have your child pick a word. Instead of writing X's and O's on the board, you each write the word you've chosen. Pick a different word and play again.
- Play "Go Fish" with High Frequency Words cards. (you will need a deck with three of each word) Deal out 7 cards to each player. The rest go in the pile. The first person asks someone to give them all of one of the cards she herself is holding. For example, "all of your cards that say *at*." If the opposing player has the card, the caller gets another turn. If not, the opposing player says, "Go Fish" (for another card in the pile). Players who have groups of three (called a "book") get to lay them down. The player with the most "books" at the end wins.
- Play Memory. (you will need a word card deck with groups of two) Mix the word cards up and lay them in rows. Each player takes a turn to turn over two cards. If they match, that player takes those cards and gets another turn. If they don't, they are turned back over, and players must remember what they saw. Play until all of the cards have been picked up.
- Play Hang Man. Pick a word. Draw the picture and put lines to show how many letters are in the word. Player guesses and sees how quickly they can "get" the word.
- Play My Pile, Your Pile. Words from the list are on cards. Quickly flip over a word and see who can say the word first — that player gets the card.
- Have a Race. Players race to see who can write the word fastest.
- Use an egg timer and see how many times your child can write one of the words. Keep a chart. He should improve each time.
- Get two fly swatters. Use the deck of words and place one face up on the table. See who can slap it first.
- Play Bingo using the words. Make grids. Use candy or popcorn for markers.
- If you can deal, practice high frequency words in pudding, Jell-o, icing or shaving cream.
- Pour salt or dry Jell-o on a cookie sheet. Write the words in the powder.
- Hide the cards around the house. Have a search; reward a child for the ones he can find and read.
- Pick several words. Have a student use a high-liter to find the words in a newspaper or magazine. Set a timer and see how many he can find in one or two minutes.
- Write one of the words on an erase board or piece of paper. Have the child take a good look at it. Erase one letter. Have the child fill it in. Erase two letters, etc. Practice until he can write the word.
- Put a piece of paper over a square of sandpaper. Adult or child writes the word on the paper. When the sandpaper is taken away, the word will feel bumpy. Have the child trace over the word and say the letters as s/he is tracing. Do this several times using different words.
- Rainbow words: write or have the child write one of the words. Have her trace over the word four or five times using a different colored crayon each time. Display the word; have her read it to you several times over the next few days.