

## High-Frequency Words

A high-frequency word appears often and repetitively in connected text. The words SEE, THE, and WAS are considered high-frequency words. The reader identifies these words quickly and automatically when reading. These words are sometimes called “sight words” ( Barr, Blachowicz, Buhle, Chaney, Ivy, and Suarez-Silva, 2004).

### Factoids

- Some 300 words account for 65% of the words in text. Rapid recognition of these words in the primary grades forms the foundation of fluent reading (Hiebert, Pearson, Taylor, Richardson, and Paris, 1998).
- The basic sight words comprise some 60% of the words used in beginning reading materials and over 50% of the words in upper grade material (Johns, 1976).

### What Can a Teacher Do?

- Develop word, phrase, sentence cards, and short stories using the high-frequency words that students can read and reread, so the words become automatic when reading text. The cards can be part of a activity center or placed on card rings and taken home to practice. As an alternative have older students prepare materials for the younger students.

### Examples

Phrases	Sentences
go fast	It is cold today.
by the man	I see him.
over there	Can we go play?
green light	It was fun to work.

- Have the students make their own illustrated pattern books using the high-frequency words. Provide the students with a pattern such as I like to \_\_\_\_\_. Have the students complete the sentence. Place the pattern books in the reading corner or at a reading station so students can read them.

### Example

I like to read.

I like to play.

I like to go out.

I like to work.

I like to run.

- Use the high-frequency words as a source for your classroom word wall.

### What instructional activities do you use to insure that students can read the high-frequency words?

#### Sources for High-Frequency Words

See the Appendix for the following lists of high-frequency words.

- Revised Dolch List
- Revised Dolch List by Level (Preprimer through second grade)
- High Frequency Nouns
- 25 High Frequency Words for Kindergarten

#### References

- Barr, R., Blachowicz, C., Buhle, R., Chaney, J., and Ivy, C. (2004). *A Teacher's Guide to the ISEL-K/1*. Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education.
- Hiebert, E., Pearson, D., Taylor, B., Richardson, V., and Paris, S. (1998). *Every Child A Reader*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Learning Achievement.
- Johns, J. (1976). Updating the Dolch basic sight vocabulary. *Reading Horizons, 16*, 104-111.