

# High-Frequency Sight Words

The *Fry List*, *Instant Words*, *Dolch Words*, and *Word Wall Words*

[FRY HIGH FREQUENCY  
HOME CHECKLIST: 1 - 600](#)



[DOLCH HIGH FREQUENCY  
HOME KIT: 1 - 220](#)



What exactly are "sight words?" These are words that good readers instantly recognize without having to "figure them out." There are two reasons why sight words are an essential component of good reading:

- First of all, many of these words do not sound like their spellings might suggest, so "sounding them out" would be unproductive. (Good examples are the words 'were,' 'have,' and 'some' which do not follow the common pattern. The 'e' at the end of these words, does not make the first vowel say its name, as in 'wire,' 'hate,' and 'same.')
- Second, good readers really can't afford the time to dwell on too many words, or they may lose the speed and fluency necessary for determining the author's message.

"For instructional purposes these are usually referred to as *sight words* or *sight vocabulary* because we would like our students to recognize them in less than a second. Why? Because this enhances their chance of getting to the end of a sentence in time to remember how it began."

(Frank B. May, *Reading as Communication*.)

How should we decide which words to teach as sight words? Studies suggest that learning the most common words in our language, known as "high-frequency words," is the best place to start. Believe it or not, the 100 most common words actually make up about 50% of the material we read! The 25 most common words make up about 33% of our written material (Fry, Kress, and Fountoukidis, 2004).

We can enable our students to greatly increase their reading efficiency when we teach them to read half or more of the words they encounter in a quick and automatic manner. This makes their reading more fluent and increases both their comprehension and enjoyment.

You can probably guess correctly many of the most common words in our written language: *the, a, is, of, to, in, and, I, you, with, and that*. You may also want to refer to lists assembled by Dolch or by Fry, Kress, and Fountoukidis. These home toolkits / lists are provided for you from the links at the beginning of this article... or below:

[The FRY Home Use Checklist](#)

[The Dolch Home Use Word Kit](#)

[Literary Connections webpage](#)

[Activities to Reinforce High-Frequency Words and Sight Words](#)