

# **Joplin Schools**



# **No Excuse Words Manual**

# Why Learn High Frequency Words?

High frequency words (sight words) are words that students encounter frequently in reading and writing. It is critical that readers and writers develop automaticity (automatic recognition), a skill that leads to fluency. "Students need to be able to read the first 300 Instant Words "instantly" without a moment's hesitation, because these 300 words make up 65% of all written material" (Fry). Comprehension begins to break down when students are focused on trying to decode or sound out the words.

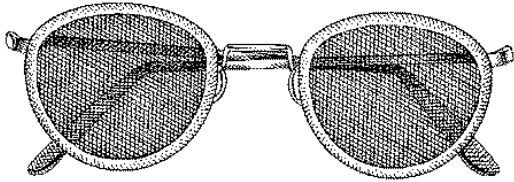
Some high frequency words do not follow regular phonetic rules. They do not follow easy spelling patterns (example: cave, Dave, save, wave, gave, *have*) As a result, these words are more difficult for students to master. Asking children to "sound it out" is pointless and generally causes increased frustration for most struggling readers. Beginning readers need to recognize these words as "sight words". "In order for students to retain a difficult word, they need many opportunities to experience and manipulate it (Throop).

Much of our language has been adapted from other languages during its development. One sixth of the words survived from old English and almost all of those words are high frequency words.

A prime example of the importance of high frequency words in a piece of text can be seen in counting the number of sight words appearing in a simple version of The Three Bears. Another reality check is looking for high frequency words in the story problems in your daily math lessons.

## No Excuse?

What exactly are no excuse words? The idea of no excuse words is that students are responsible for knowing how to read and write the assigned grade level list as well as the list that precedes their current grade.



# Sight Words

This term refers to

- a) Non-phonetic words - those needing to be recognized by sight because they can't be sounded out (e.g., was, through).
- b) Frequently occurring words - those needing to be recognized easily because they occur so often.
- c) High-interest words - those recognized by sight because they have special interest and/or emotional overtones for child (e.g., mom, dad, love, birthday, Christmas, dinosaur, etc.)

## Connections

***Sight words and context clues:*** students need to know enough words by sight in order to have enough context to help identify other words:

The \_\_\_ went to the \_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and had a \_\_\_\_\_.

For the above sentence, it is more difficult to predict the words than in the following:

The child went to the \_\_\_\_\_ to play and he had a \_\_\_\_\_.

***Sight words and prior knowledge*** - already knowing the pronunciation and meaning of spoken words makes it easier to recognize and remember written words.

## Importance of sight words for independent reading

- ◆ Enables use of context clues.
- ◆ Increases fluency and ease of reading
- ◆ Children can read greater amounts and for longer periods.
- ◆ Focus can be more on comprehension than on decoding.

## Follow these tips for successful high-frequency word instruction:

- Make sure students read text containing high-frequency words every day. Almost all text contains these words, but the most rewarding reading will come from books students can read easily. High-frequency word books, decodables, or leveled books with patterned text will provide students with exposure to these words.
- Create a word wall of high-frequency words. Add new words to the wall as they are introduced. Each day, students can chant or cheer the high-frequency words posted on the wall.
- 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.*).
- Allow students to write the words as often as possible. They may practice individual words or write high-frequency word sentences such as "I like to \_\_\_\_\_," or "We go by the \_\_\_\_\_."
- Use everyday text, including textbooks, storybooks, poetry, articles, worksheets, and posters, to identify high-frequency words. Keep highlighters handy to practice while doing other lessons.

# Instructional Implications for Teaching High Frequency Words

Learning is the key to knowing how to write these words. Children need to see the words, make the words with plastic letters, and write the words many, many times before they will know them. To encourage their learning, you may consider some of the following activities.

- **Use plastic letters.** Make the word, read the word, and break the word. Later, encourage them to make the word, read the word, cover the word, write the word, check the word, read the word. (Children may peek at the word if necessary while they are learning to write it correctly.)
- **Use dry erase boards or magic slates.** Write the word over and over until it is learned, erasing each time. This is a writing task, not a copying task. If the child is using paper and pencil, fold the paper over each time or use another paper or card to cover the previous word. If the child needs a model to start with, provide it. Then cover it and allow the child to peek if necessary. Then remove it altogether. Encourage the children to make sure the words are in their heads.
- **Keep a list of high-frequency words** in the back of each child's writing journal for reference. Each time the child writes the word correctly, the more habituated it becomes.
- **I Have, Who Has?**  
Make cards for this game to practice sight words: I have "the," who has "from?"
- **Making and Breaking (Reading Recovery)**  
Going from the known to the unknown using onset & rime:  
i.e., from at to cat and sat using magnetic letters  
(also useful for prefix/suffix, medial vowel changes)  
  
Familiar words:  
Break the word apart and make it say "the" again  
Check it with your finger.
- **Flexible Practice/Taking high frequency words to fluency:**

Write several times on the practice page

Rainbow writing

Magnetic letters

Write on the white board

Write in the air, on the carpet

Write on a Magna Doodle

Write on a chalkboard

Write words with a wet sponge or brushes on a chalkboard

- Provide a guided reading creative response that requires the children to write the word in a meaningful context. Give the children a sentence starter to copy and complete. For example:

I like the part when \_\_\_\_\_.

My best character was \_\_\_\_\_.

Make sure the children copy the sentence starter because in this way they are practicing the high-frequency word

- Commercial Games/Activities: any games with cards to read or letters to manipulate:

Scrabble

Go Fish

Bingo

Boggle

Clusters

Lotto

Chunks

Word Search

Hang Man

- Vocabulary Cards or Word Banks

Words on rings or in a box: word on one side, use in a sentence on the other, underline the high frequency word, illustrate.

- Can You Find and Frame?

After a child reads a passage, ask him/her to frame one or two high frequency words.

- Word Wall Activities

Read the word wall quickly. Read it backwards from z to a. (All go at the same speed!)

Pick one letter list. Read it fast. Read it faster. Read it faster.

Chants

What's My Rule

Guess the Rule: 4 clues, 4 guesses

Teacher or student gives a word clue (i.e., I'm thinking of a word that starts with b) from the word wall. Students write their first guess on their individual white boards. Provide a second clue (It's a noun.)

Students write their second guess. Continue with clues/guesses

(examples: It ends with a silent e. It has two syllables. It rhymes with,

etc.). By the fourth clue, everyone should have the correct word. You will need to model this activity.

Timed by whole group

### **I'm Thinking of a Word**

This is a good activity for developing scanning skills. However, be sure to build in success for all. You need to have many words on the word wall for it to be effective.

I'm thinking of a word. It rhymes with, means the same thing as, is the opposite of, we use this word when, etc. When you know it, raise your hand. Kids can provide the clues later.

### ➤ **Flash Card Activities** to engage all readers (including expert readers)

**Whisper/Shout:** teacher/parent directed using cards

As you go through the stack of cards, students read words in a whispering voice. After several words, "Say it louder." Students gradually move up to a gentle shout for the last few words.

### **Funny Voices:**

As you go through the stack of cards, ask the children to read in the following voices:

baby      robot (monotone)      goofy      scary      mad      old

### **Making Sentences:**

This is a good activity to use once a week for the whole class or in a small reading/skills group. Start by giving each student 2 cards face down. Each child thinks of a sentence that uses those two words.

When a student recites his/her sentence, ask the class, "Can we guess what the two words are?" Students may look at the word wall for help. Gradually move up to more words.

### **ABC Order:**

Each child gets four or five cards to put in ABC order on the floor in front of them. They check with a partner, combine cards and put in ABC order. Add another pair, etc.

### **Slap**

Each group sits in a circle on the floor. The leader of each group has a stack of high frequency word cards. He/she lays the cards on the floor as students say the words. The leader starts the game by giving a clue such as "I'm thinking of a word that starts with . . ." Students put their fingers on their shoulders before the clue is given by the

leader (otherwise they hover over the word cards). Whoever touches the correct card first gives the next clue. Rotate card stacks through the groups for practice with all the current words.

**Note:** Model this activity in small groups before attempting it with your entire class. Slapping the floor is much quieter than slapping the table!

- **High Frequency Words and Daily News:** Encourage the children to spell the high-frequency words for you to write in the Daily News story or your specific writing demonstration. Have children come and write the high-frequency words directly into the news story for you.
- **Swat!:** Write a list of words on the board. Divide the class into two teams. Give a flyswatter to the first child in each team. Say a sentence that includes one of the words. The first person to touch the correct word earns a point for his/her team. Ten points is a winner!
- **High Frequency Word Sentence Building**  
Choose a paragraph from a content area text or from a recent story. Write each sentence on sentence strips, using a different colored marker for each sentence. Cut up each sentence and give small groups time to reconstruct the sentences. (Keep the punctuation with the sentence.) Read the reconstructed sentences together and sequence in a pocket chart. (This is a good way to model and practice paragraph formation with main idea, detail sentences, and concluding sentence.)
- **Highlight high frequency words:** Have children go through the poem of the week, worksheets, math homework, etc. and highlight the sight words of the week.
- **Circle, Circle, Underline:** Circle the prefix, circle the suffix, and underline the vowels in the root word. This makes multi-syllabic words more manageable, breaking them into chunks of meaning.
- **Visual Reinforcement cards:** Provide lists for the children to use. Ensure that in the early stages words that look alike are not on the same card. Number the back or color code the cards in order of difficulty. You may want to demonstrate to the class how to use the cards and then place them in the reading center for students to use independently.



**Using the Visual Reinforcement Cards**  
Introduce the first card to the children  
Tell the children the words on the card.  
Explain the steps for learning the words.

### **Steps for Learning the Words**

- Say the word. Ask someone if you don't know it.
- Look at the word.
- Say the word.
- Trace the word with your finger, saying the word as you trace it.
- Copy the word, read it, copy it again, read it.
- Place your hand over the word and see if you can write it. Peek if you need to.
- Check the word you have written.
- Read what you have written.
- Keep writing the word without coping until you know it.
- Say the word each time you write it.
- Take a picture of the word with your invisible camera and put it in your head.
- Shut your eyes and see if you can see it.
- Write it again.
- When you think you know all the words on the card, ask a friend to check you. Your friend says the word, and you write it. Your friend will let you peek if you need to.
- When you can write all the words on the card without peeking, come and show the teacher how clever you are.
- After the teacher has checked, he or she will give you the next card.

**Note on a master list which words each child has mastered. Expect to see evidence of this correct spelling in the children's writing. If you do not, insist that the children correct these misspellings for themselves.**

# Beyond the Word Bank

Once words are taken from a meaningful context and are displayed on a chart, word bank cards can be made. Individual, paired or small group interactive learning games may include:

- Match cards whose word begins with the same letter or syllable.
- Match cards whose word ends with the same letter or syllable.
- Match cards whose word is the same.
- Match cards whose words rhyme.
- Arrange cards according to alphabetical order.
- Arrange cards according to the number of syllables in each word.
- Make up sentences using the words on the cards.
- Make up a story using all the words on the cards.
- Find synonyms, antonyms or homonyms.
- Find cards whose words have the same root or base word.
- Find cards whose words have prefixes or suffixes.
- Find cards with compound or derived words.
- Arrange cards by the stress on the words.
- Make up a story or poem using all or most of the words on the cards.

# Recommended Reading/Resources

Fry, Edward, *1000 Instant Words*, Laguna Beach Educational Books.

Throop, Sara (1999) *Success with Sight Words: Multisensory Ways to Teach High Frequency Words*, Creative Teaching Press.

Behr, Donald, et al, *Words Their Way*

<https://sites.google.com/site/mrsfullenkamp/fry-words>

# Testing Protocol

## 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter\*:

Test students on all words, untimed and mark which ones they can read.

Test students for 1 min. on word list to see how many they can accurately read within a minute. Record # read correct/errors.

Students can chart their progress and set goals based on their results.

If a student masters their current grades list, move them on to the next grade levels list.

*\*Kindergarten students are not tested in the first quarter.*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter\*:

Test students for 1 min. on word list to see how many they can accurately read within a minute. Record # read correct/errors.

Students can chart their progress and set goals based on their results.

If a student masters their current grades list, move them on to the next grade levels list.

*\*Kindergarten students should be given a pre-assessment at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.*

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter:

Test students for 1 min. on word list to see how many they can accurately read within a minute. Record # read correct/errors.

Students can chart their progress and set goals based on their results.

If a student masters their current grades list, move them on to the next grade levels list.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter:

Test students on all words, untimed and mark which ones they can read accurately.

Test students for 1 min. on word list to see how many they can accurately read within a minute. Record # read correct/errors.

Students can chart their progress and set goals based on their results.

If a student masters their current grades list, move them on to the next grade levels list.

**\*Student Data Sheets have been provided with six columns for teachers who want to record results more than three times a year.**

**\*Spelling will be addressed through the Joplin Writing Model and students everyday writing.**

# KINDERGARTEN & FIRST GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS RESOURCES

In addition to the resources on the next pages, free flashcards and word lists can be found at:

<http://www.uniqueteachingresources.com/Fry-1000-Instant-Words.html>

Once you are on the website, you will need to scroll toward the bottom of the page to find the links to the words and flashcards.

**KINDERGARTEN NO EXCUSE WORDS**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
the						
of						
and						
a						
to						
in						
is						
you						
it						
he						
on						
I						
at						
be						
or						
had						
by						
but						
not						
we						
can						
an						
do						
she						
if						
up						
will						
so						
like						
him						
into						
has						
look						
go						
see						
no						
my						
its						
now						
find						
down						
day						
did						
get						
may						
for						
his						
as						
way						
her						

**FIRST GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
that						
was						
are						
they						
with						
this						
have						
from						
one						
words						
what						
were						
when						
your						
said						
there						
use						
each						
which						
how						
their						
other						
about						
out						
many						
then						
come						
them						
these						
some						
would						
make						
time						
two						
more						
write						
number						
could						
people						
than						
first						
water						
been						
called						
who						
all						
long						
made						
part						
am						



# SECOND GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS RESOURCES

In addition to the resources on the next pages, free flashcards and word lists can be found at:

<http://www.uniqueteachingresources.com/Fry-1000-Instant-Words.html>

Once you are on the website, you will need to scroll toward the bottom of the page to find the links to the words and flashcards.

**SECOND GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
over						
new						
sound						
take						
only						
little						
work						
know						
place						
years						
live						
me						
back						
give						
most						
very						
after						
thing						
our						
just						
name						
good						
sentence						
man						
think						
say						
great						
where						
help						
through						
much						
before						
line						
right						
too						
means						
old						
any						
same						
tell						
boy						
following						
came						
want						
show						
also						
around						
form						
three						
small						

**SECOND GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS (CONTINUED)**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
set						
put						
end						
does						
another						
well						
large						
must						
big						
even						
such						
because						
turn						
here						
why						
asked						
went						
men						
read						
need						
land						
different						
home						
us						
move						
try						
kind						
hand						
picture						
again						
change						
off						
play						
spell						
air						
away						
animals						
house						
point						
page						
letters						
mother						
answer						
found						
study						
still						
learn						
should						
America						
world						

# THIRD GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS RESOURCES

In addition to the resources on the next pages, free flashcards and word lists can be found at:

<http://www.uniqueteachingresources.com/Fry-1000-Instant-Words.html>

Once you are on the website, you will need to scroll toward the bottom of the page to find the links to the words and flashcards.

**THIRD GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
high						
every						
near						
add						
food						
between						
own						
below						
country						
plants						
last						
school						
father						
keep						
trees						
never						
started						
city						
earth						
eyes						
light						
thought						
head						
under						
story						
saw						
left						
don't						
few						
while						
along						
might						
close						
something						
seemed						
next						
hard						
open						
example						
beginning						
life						
always						
those						
both						
paper						
together						
got						
group						
often						
run						

**THIRD GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS (CONTINUED)**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
important						
until						
children						
side						
feet						
car						
miles						
night						
walked						
white						
sea						
began						
grow						
took						
river						
four						
carry						
state						
once						
book						
hear						
stop						
without						
second						
later						
miss						
idea						
enough						
eat						
face						
watch						
far						
Indians						
really						
almost						
let						
above						
girl						
sometimes						
mountains						
cut						
young						
talk						
soon						
list						
song						
being						
leave						
family						
it's						

# FOURTH GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS RESOURCES

In addition to the resources on the next pages, free flashcards and word lists can be found at:

<http://www.uniqueteachingresources.com/Fry-1000-Instant-Words.html>

Once you are on the website, you will need to scroll toward the bottom of the page to find the links to the words and flashcards.

**FOURTH GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS (CONTINUED)**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
body						
music						
color						
stand						
sun						
questions						
fish						
area						
mark						
dog						
horse						
birds						
problem						
complete						
room						
knew						
since						
ever						
piece						
told						
usually						
didn't						
friends						
easy						
heard						
order						
red						
door						
sure						
become						
top						
ship						
across						
today						
during						
short						
better						
best						
however						
low						
hours						
black						
products						
happened						
whole						
measure						
remember						
early						
waves						
reached						



**FOURTH GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS (CONTINUED)**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
listen						
wind						
rock						
space						
covered						
fast						
several						
hold						
himself						
toward						
five						
step						
morning						
passed						
vowel						
true						
hundred						
against						
pattern						
numeral						
table						
north						
slowly						
money						
map						
busy						
pulled						
draw						
voice						
seen						
cold						
cried						
plan						
notice						
south						
sing						
war						
ground						
fall						
king						
town						
I'll						
unit						
figure						
certain						
field						
travel						
wood						
fire						
upon						

# FIFTH GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS RESOURCES

In addition to the resources on the next pages, free flashcards and word lists can be found at:

<http://www.uniqueteachingresources.com/Fry-1000-Instant-Words.html>

Once you are on the website, you will need to scroll toward the bottom of the page to find the links to the words and flashcards.

**FIFTH GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
done						
English						
road						
half						
ten						
fly						
gave						
box						
finally						
wait						
correct						
oh						
quickly						
person						
became						
shown						
minutes						
strong						
verb						
stars						
front						
feel						
fact						
inches						
street						
decided						
contain						
course						
surface						
produce						
building						
ocean						
class						
note						
nothing						
rest						
carefully						
scientists						
inside						
wheels						
stay						
green						
known						
island						
week						
less						
machine						
base						
ago						
stood						

**FIFTH GRADE NO EXCUSE WORDS (CONTINUED)**

Test Date/% Correct	/	/	/	/	/	/
plane						
system						
behind						
ran						
round						
boat						
game						
force						
brought						
understand						
warm						
common						
bring						
explain						
dry						
though						
language						
shape						
deep						
thousands						
yes						
clear						
equation						
yet						
government						
filled						
heat						
full						
hot						
check						
object						
bread						
rule						
among						
noun						
power						
cannot						
able						
six						
size						
dark						
ball						
material						
special						
heavy						
fine						
pair						
circle						
include						
built						