

High Frequency Words

High frequency words are quite simply those words which occur most frequently in written material, for example, "and", "the", "as" and "it".

They are often words that have little meaning on their own, but they are essential for the sentence to make sense. Some of the high frequency words can be sounded out using basic phonic rules, e.g. "it" is an easy word to read using phonics. However, many of the high frequency words are not phonically regular and are therefore hard to read in the early stages. These words are sometimes called tricky words or sight words.

It is helpful to talk about them to the children as words that "you can't talk/sound out - you just need to learn this word"

Here is a really simple game you can play (which the children love) to help them learn to read these words "in a flash":

- **Flash card conveyor belt.** Make word cards with sight words your child is working on. Start with around 5 words. Words can be repeated in the pile. Include some words your child knows well and some that your child partially knows. Show your child the words and place on the table. Slide each word down the table. If they can read the word before it gets to the bottom edge of the table, it goes in their pile. If not, it goes in your pile. Your child should try to get all the cards.
- **Word snap.** You will need two identical sets of cards with the words that your child is currently learning. Shuffle the cards and split them into two even piles. Play a game of 'snap' however whoever says, 'snap' has to say the word.
- **Pass the parcel.** Wrap a high frequency word like a parcel using newspaper or wrapping paper and Sellotape. Wrap the first parcel again, concealing a second high frequency word inside. Continue until you have wrapped several high frequency words (you can repeat the same word to help your child practice it more). Play pass the parcel! When the music stops, the person unravelling the paper has to read the high frequency word (you can add sweets if you wish!)
- **Kid pong!** Write the high frequency words onto a piece of paper and place inside a paper cup. Your child has to bounce the ball and when it lands into a cup, they get to read the word. Keep playing until they have managed to bounce the ball into every cup.
- **Pairs.** You will need two identical sets of cards with the words that your child is currently learning. Place them face down. Give your child a set time to find as many matching pairs as they can in the set time! Have another go but this time, can they do it faster?