

Reception High Frequency Words

In Reception, your child will be given around 45 high frequency words to learn over the year - the aim is for them to be able to recognise these words and to be able to read them. Children learn these words as part of their phonics lessons and may also bring high frequency words home to read.

I	the	and	no	cat
go	of	they	yes	get
come	we	my	for	said
went	this	see	a	to
up	dog	on	dad	in
you	me	away	can	
day	like	mum	he	
was	going	it	am	
look	big	at	all	
are	she	play	is	

High frequency words are common words, words that appear very often in written texts. They are a mixture of decodable words (words that can be sounded out) and tricky / exception words (words in which the English spelling code works in an unusual or uncommon way, which means the words have to be learned and recognised by sight).

It is really important that children learn how to read these words as they will make up a large proportion of the words they will be reading in everyday texts. They also need to learn to spell these words as they will find they will need to use them a great deal in their writing. (Research has shown that just 16 words, such as 'and', 'he', 'I' and 'in', but also the more phonetically-difficult 'the', 'to', 'you', 'said', 'are', 'she' and 'was', make up a quarter of the words in a piece of writing, whether it's for adults or children.)

How should my child be practising these words?

- "Make it fun and don't overdo it," advises Ian McNeilly, director of the National Association for the Teaching of English. For example, why not try:
- Flashcards - but don't use drawings alongside or your child may simply stick to looking at the drawing, not the letters. "A child's ability to concentrate depends on their individual personality," says Ian. "Five minutes could be enough for some, while others could do more." You can download free high frequency words flashcards from TheSchoolRun for Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Cut out high frequency word lists and stick them on a prominent place (the fridge, the back of their cereal packet, etc.), so your child has a visible reminder while they're learning them.
- Magnetic letters - good for helping children with tricky words. Leave some up on the fridge so your child becomes more familiar with the word every time they get a drink.
- Memory games - place flashcards downwards for a game of pairs.
- Ask your child to look out for high frequency words on signs or advertisements when you're on a journey or a shopping trip.

- Choose three or four of the words and help your child make a silly sentence containing as many of them as possible.
- Make sure your child sees you reading. "You are their best role model so show them you enjoy reading," says Ian, "and make sure books in the house are easily available, not tidied away."