

Phonics Shed

High Frequency Word Lists

Phonics Shed does not ask children to learn lists of High Frequency Words (HFWs) 'by sight', but we do include lists of HFWs, including partially decodable Common Exception Words (CEWs) to ensure that these commonly used words are included at the correct level to ensure the children have access to the widest possible range of words at each stage of their phonics progression.

Studying HFWs is important, as research shows that 13 words account for 25% of all the words in common reading material, and a list of up to 200 HFWs will account for 50% of all words in school texts (Johns and Lenski, 2019). Eight of the 13 most common words identified are taught in Chapter 2: 'a', 'and', 'in', 'is', 'it', 'of', '**the**', 'and' and 'to', and the other five are covered in Chapter 3: 'for', 'he', 'that', 'was' and 'you'.

This research is reinforced by the Oxford English Corpus research, which found that just ten base words accounted for 25% of all written language. Seven of these are taught in Chapter 2: '**the**', 'to', 'of', 'and', 'a', 'in', and 'I'; two in Chapter 3: 'be' and 'that'; and one in Chapter 4a: 'have' (this includes other derivatives, such as 'had' and 'has' which are taught in Chapter 2).



Based on this, we can assume that if children know the 200 most common words, they will be able to read up to 50% of all words they encounter without having to fully decode them. This will give them invaluable context to enable them to learn the other new words and comprehend what they are reading. We have included the top 100 HFWs as word cards and specific teaching points in lessons and have also sorted the next 200 most common words on the second pages of the chapter-specific word lists so that they may be accessed regularly as part of phonics-based activities.

Each HFW is linked to a set and/or a specific sound to ensure that as many of the High Frequency Words (HFWs) as possible can be decoded and those that cannot yet be decoded can at least be partially decoded. Some GPCs do not have any HFWs assigned to them. Lists of these can be found below.

Words with **bold** letters are partially decodable Common Exception Words (CEWs) that cannot yet be fully decoded, using blending and segmenting, at this level. The letters in bold being unknown GPCs. These words are linked to sets based on the frequency of their appearance – for example '**the**' is linked to Chapter 2 Set 1 – or they contain a letter that is being covered which represents a different sound – e.g., when 'o' is introduced, 'do', 'to', 'no', 'go' and 'so' follow on. Children should be taught to read and spell these 'at-a-glance' by noting the part that is an exception (the GPC in **bold**) to what they have been taught so far. This is in line with the DfE Reading Framework (2021). On the word cards, these are also denoted by a small lock symbol in the bottom right-hand corner. This lock symbolises how they are currently not fully decodable but will often become fully decodable further on in the scheme.

HOW TO TEACH COMMON EXCEPTION WORDS

You will find any High Frequency Words (HFWs) that are linked to specific GPCs listed as the final point in the Whole Group section of the daily planning, as well as on the separate HFW lists. Some will include small extension activities such as word explanations, writing the words or using them in a sentence.

Common Exception Words (CEWs) will have any non-decodable GPCs in **bold** and often an explanation next to them of how to explain that they are partially decodable.

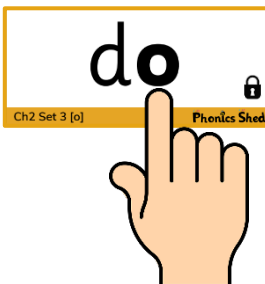
The matching flashcards will be listed as part of the lesson resources. CEWs have a lock symbol in the bottom right-hand corner as well as some **bold** letters.

When showing the children a flashcard of a CEW, model pointing to each sound as you say it, like you would a fully decodable word, but as you get to a bold GPC, explain that this makes “a different sound to the one we already know” and tell the children the individual sound for that currently non-decodable GPC.

Repeat, saying each sound without pausing to explain again, but emphasising the unusual GPC as you point to each sound. This will allow the children to use their blending skills (sound it, squash it, say it) to read the word. Now ask the children to try themselves.

For example: ‘do’ [point to each sound as it is said (all three times)]

“/d//oo/. This sound here makes a different sound to the one we already know. We know this as /o/ but here it makes an /oo/ sound”



“/d//oo/” “do”

“Now you try”



High Frequency Words do not need to be known by sight. Children can use their decoding skills to read them. But frequent exposure to these common words will allow children to become more fluent or faster at decoding when they come across them: reading them ‘at-a-glance’. This can give them faster access to more texts and improve comprehension and fluency.

Chapter 2 High Frequency Words

(including Common Exception Words with non-decodable GPCs in bold)

Set 1

a

a

t

at

the

Set 2

i

I

it

it's

n

an

in

d

and

dad

Set 3

o

on

got

not

do

to

into

c

can

Set 4

no

go

so

e

get

u

up

put*

mum

Set 5

h

had

him

b

back

big

but

f

if

from

of

l

help

Set 6

j

just

w

went

want

Set 7/Voiced 's'

as

is

his

Set 8 (doubles)

ff

off

ll

will

* hard /u/ sound, fully decodable in some accents, please see note on 'u' (Ugbie the bug) planning.

Chapter 3 High Frequency Words

(including Common Exception Words with non-decodable GPCs in bold)

Set 1

ch

children

th [voiced]

they

then

them

this

that

with

Set 2

ee

see

he

she

we

me

be

igh

my

Set 3

was

ue

you

ow

now

down

oo

too

oo [regional]

look

Set 4

ar

are

or

for

all

er

her

Set 5

said

little

'a'/ar/

can't

Ch4a High Frequency Words

(including Common Exception Words with non-decodable GPCs in bold)

Set 1

ay
day

wh

when
what

i_e

like
time

Set 3

aw
saw

Set 5

a_e
made
came
make
have

o_e

come
one
some

Set 4

ou
house
out
about

e_e

here*
were
there

* This can have a pronunciation closer to /ear/ in some accents but can usually be decoded as /ee/ /r/ and adjusted, if needed, when blended.

Ch4b High Frequency Words

(including Common Exception Words with non-decodable GPCs in bold)

Set 2

i [igh]
I'm

oh

Set 5
looked
called
asked

Set 6

ou [oo]
your

Set 3

Mr
Mrs

ou [u]
could

Set 4

o [oa]
old
don't

y [igh]
by

Set 7

their
people

y [ee]
very