

## HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS

### WHAT ARE HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS?

High-frequency words are words appearing most commonly in books and print. Some examples are: *the, can, in, on, off, and, big, and saw*. Some of these words are decodable (can be sounded out) and some of them can't. One of a teacher's goals is to have their students recognize and say these words "on sight", or within 1-2 seconds, while they are reading.

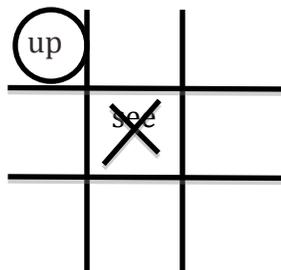
### WHY IS KNOWING HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS IMPORTANT?

Recognizing and saying high-frequency words quickly assists children as they begin reading books. These words appear often in children's books. Children who know high-frequency words can read more fluently (smoothly and automatically) than children who struggle over every word.

### ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD RECOGNITION SKILLS

As with other activities involving a set of letters or words a child doesn't know, it is important not to work on too many unknown high-frequency words at once. A good rule of thumb is to work on only two unknown high-frequency words at a time mixed in with words your child already knows. Your child's teacher can help you choose words to work on.

**Tic-Tac-Toe** Help children learn how to read and write sight words by playing this fun game! This game works best if your child has a friend to play it with, but a parent can also substitute as a "friend". Select 7 words that your child already knows and 2 he is working on. Write them on a piece of paper. Draw some Tic-Tac-Toe grids on the paper, too. Point to one and have your child read it. If he does so correctly, he can write the word in one of his Tic-Tac-Toe boxes and put an "X" or "O" over the word. Then the friend (or parent) can have a turn. Fill in the tic-tac-toe board with words, "Xs", and "Os". The first person to have 3-in-a-row wins!



**Climb the Stairs** Put a flashcard with a word written on it on each step. The child says each word as they climb the stairs (You can flashcards on the floor if there are no stairs in your home). Say the word for your child first or put the same word on

each step until child has mastered a few. Add a few at a time.

**Hide and Go Seek** Hide word cards around the room when your child is busy elsewhere. When your child returns, have him find the word cards one at a time and tell you what the words are. It's fun if the words you hide make a sentence. For example, hide a card with your child's name on it, along with word cards for "sees", "a", "big", and "cat". See if your child can correctly arrange the word card to make the sentence.

**Concentration** Make 2 sets of word. Choose several pairs of matching words and spread them out face down on a table/floor. As your child turns over each word, he must read them. If they match, s/he wins the cards; if not, they are turned back over. Continue until all the pairs are matched.

**What's Missing?** Your child places 3-4 words on the table, identifies the words, and then closes his eyes while you remove one word. Have your child try to identify the missing word. Then you can close your eyes, and let your child remove a word. Take turns with different sets of words.

**Writing Words** Paint words with water on the sidewalk or driveway, or write words with colorful chalk.

**Making Words** Make words out of pretzels, Twizzlers, gummy worms, sour snakes, and other long skinny candies.

**Rhyming with Words** Play rhyming games such as "I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with "cat" and begins with /b/. (bat) Have your child write the words after he thinks of them.

**Rotten Apple Sight Word Game** You can find this game at:  
<http://www.readingresource.net/support-files/rottenapplegamesample.pdf>

Find out from your child's teacher which words your child should be working on. This game works best if your child has a friend to play with, but a parent can substitute for a friend. Place cut-out word cards in a basket and have players take turn drawing cards out. If the child pulls out an "apple" word card and reads the word correctly, he gets to keep the word. When a child pulls out the "basket" card, he gets another turn. When a "worm" card is pulled out, he must put all of his cards back. The person with the most cards at the end is the winner.

Explanations for these and other great games can be found at:  
<http://www.readingresource.net/sightwords.html>