



High Frequency Words & Tricky Words

High frequency words are words that occur most often in written material. Many high frequency words have little concrete meaning but do serve grammatical functions that make sentences understandable (e.g. the, is, of). These common words make up approximately 50% of the words in written material and need to be read automatically. In some educational settings, the term high frequency word is synonymous with 'sight words' because readers should identify these words instantly without having to decode them. A more precise meaning of 'sight word' is any word that a reader recognizes automatically (immediately without hesitation or conscious effort). It is important that beginning readers learn to read high frequency words automatically and spell them to become proficient readers and writers.

High frequency words can present challenges to beginning readers because many of the words have irregular spellings or contain phonic patterns that children haven't yet learned. In Letterland, these are referred to as 'tricky words'. For example, the word *was* has a vowel sound that does not follow any regular pattern in English and so is a tricky word. The word *saw* is a tricky word to a child who has only learned short and long vowel sounds. When the child later learns the *aw* pattern, *saw* becomes decodable. A number of other high frequency words can be decoded but will still be referred to as tricky words until the pattern has been taught in the Letterland sequence.

Letterland has strategies for introducing and teaching tricky words, for both reading and spelling. These are introduced beginning in kindergarten and continue to develop through the primary grades. Letterland provides specific strategies and routines that assist with the learning of these high frequency words. Any time a high frequency word is explicitly taught, students are given opportunities to apply these words in reading and writing rather than learning them as an isolated skill. The Tricky Words chart below shows when specific tricky words are introduced.

Decodable high frequency words: Many of the most frequent words are not irregular (e.g. *and*, *can*, *see*). Children who have successfully completed kindergarten lesson 107 in Letterland (end of Section 2), will be able to decode 15 of the first 25 words on the Fry 100 Most Frequent Word list. Children who learn the full kindergarten program by the end of the year, will find that 65 of the 100 Fry words are decodable.

Partially decodable high frequency words: Most high frequency 'tricky words,' only have one or two letters that are not making the expected sound. For example, in each of these words the 'tricky letters' are underlined: *was*, *said*, *to*. Young learners can 'sound out' the letters that are not 'tricky' leaving only the one or two letters that must be memorized. In Letterland teaching children pronounce the new 'tricky word,' segment it, and identify the tricky parts.

Kindergarten

High Frequency words are first encountered during Section 2, Volume One of the Kindergarten Teacher's Guide and continue into Volume Two (Lessons 19-107). These are words that occur in *My Letterland Booklet*. Teacher's read the sentences to children in this booklet before children attempt them. Many children will not be ready to memorize these words until later. These words and sentences serve as an opportunity to help children develop print concepts and to begin to connect letter sound knowledge with some of the letters in words. In lessons 19-88 (Vol. 1), teachers are prompted to place these high frequency words on classroom word walls as they occur. The Tricky words from *My Reading Booklet* not referenced in Lessons 89-107 (Vol. 2) but are included in the chart below.

Beginning with lesson 107 and various subsequent lessons, many words from *My Reading Booklet* are revisited to explicitly teach them for reading and spelling. Tricky words are taught at this point for both reading and spelling over the course of several lessons. Irregular letter sounds are identified by students and marked with wavy lines for the letters that aren't regular. Word Cards can be printed out to practice these words and to build sentences that include decodable words as well. Practicing these words prepares children to read Take-Home Readers that are available throughout Sections 3-5 for student reading practice. Many students will learn these words at this time; however, some will need additional practice provided with most of the same 'tricky words' in the Grade One curriculum.

By the end of kindergarten with Letterland, children will have been taught 71 of the Fry 100 list either as decodable words or 'tricky' words. Of course, they can read and spell many words beyond the 100 list as well. The chart below shows all the words from the Fry list that are taught either as decodable words or as tricky words.

Words from Fry 100 list taught in Letterland Kindergarten

the	and	a	to	in	is	you	that
that	it	he	was	for	on	are	as
with	his	they	I	at	this	have	from
or	had	by	but	not	what	all	we
can	use	an	each	she	do	if	will
up	your	then	them	these	so	some	her
make	like	him	time	has	more	write	go
so	way	my	than	first	sit	now	long
see	did	get	come	made	may	part	

The teacher guide CD's offer additional resources for teachers to use. Alphabet, Blends & Digraphs and Handwriting Song lyrics are provided on the Kindergarten CD and can also be downloaded in a different format from Letterland.com. Teachers have the option of projecting or writing out the lyrics for children to read along with the teacher. Teachers are encouraged to preview the lyrics through a shared reading before singing. Take Home readers are decodable readers that are part of many lessons and contain many tricky words. These are all great resources for high frequency word exposure and practice.

First Grade and Second Grade

Identified tricky words used in these grades are based on common words that children should know how to read and spell by the end of first and second grade. These are presented roughly in the order of frequency that children are likely to use them in writing. On average, 2-3 tricky words are introduced per Unit, and 3-4 tricky words are reviewed each week. New tricky words are shown on the Student List and included in the new Unit Sentences along with several review tricky words. Tricky words also appear in the Unit Stories and in subsequent Units in Review Sentences. In the lessons, students identify irregular letter sounds that are then marked with wavy lines over the letters that are making their expected sounds. Specific routines for introduction and practice of these words are provided and can be used in both whole group and small group settings.

Teachers have the option of projecting *Blends and Digraphs Songs* or *Handwriting Songs* lyrics or writing them out for children to read and sing. This is another great resource for high frequency word exposure and practice. Teachers are encouraged to preview the lyrics through a shared read before singing.

Tricky Words Taught in Letterland

Kindergarten	
Volume 1	
Lesson 19	This, this, is, cat
Lesson 21	at, am, I
Lesson 26	my, duck, Dad
Lesson 28	man, hat
Lesson 31	milk, like
Lesson 33	ten, in, a, for
Lesson 37	sun, sad, see, the

Grade One	
Unit 1	
Unit 1	is, my, the, on, a
Unit 2	and, I, like
Unit 3	this, to, likes, he
Unit 4	they, went
Unit 5	she, do, we
Unit 6	two, helps
Unit 7	too, me, for

Grade Two	
Unit A	
Unit A	they, are
Unit 1	where, when, what
Unit 2	who, does
Unit 3	their, water, wash
Unit 4	quiet, everyone
Unit 5	ahead, ready
Unit 6	change, word

Kindergarten	
Lesson 43	in, it, is
Lesson 45	like, can, I
Lesson 47	nap, and, to
Lesson 50	get, big, going
Lesson 55	no, go
Lesson 57	play, top
Lesson 63	he, me, she, we
Lesson 66	up, run, going, away
Lesson 68	you
Lesson 73	back, kick
Lesson 74	sing, song
Lesson 75	ship
Lesson 76	chin, much, such
Lesson 77	that, them, thin, then
Lesson 78	see
Lesson 79	let, leg, look
Lesson 81	for, fun
Lesson 83	off
Lesson 84	will, tell
Lesson 85	back, bed, bus
Lesson 87	her, look, for
Volume 2	
Lesson 89	look, up, it's
Lesson 91	away
Lesson 95	went
Lesson 98	her, the
Lesson 100	getting
Lesson 104	yes
Lesson 106	come, and, play
Lesson 107	what, guess
Sections 3-7	
109	is, the
117	I, see, a
118	yes, you
124	this, for
131	to
134	now, was
140	do, like, my
153	what
159	does, have
165	all, give
167	some
169	they, your
174	are, going

Grade One	
Unit 8	many, there, zoo
Unit 9	over, see, cannot
Unit 10	as, have, egg
Unit 11	what, you, down
Unit 12	said, our, now
Unit 13	under, into
Unit 14	about, some
Unit 15	want, along
Unit 16	where, was, very
Unit 17	would, o'clock, your
Unit 18	from, her, little
Unit 19	their, soon
Unit 20	our, listen
Unit 21	saw, give
Unit 22	could, done, are
Unit 23	one, lives
Unit 24	himself, look, wind
Unit 25	how, house, put
Unit 26	story, work, here
Unit 27	of, friend, wash
Unit 28	out, took, before
Unit 29	hello, heard, come
Unit 30	who, words, ever
Unit 31	move, warm
Unit 32	father, water, does
Unit 33	around, eyes, again
Unit 34	through, head
Unit 35	can't, don't, shoes
Unit 36	together, people
Unit 37	near, should, across
Unit 38	won't, guess, sure
Unit 39	ready, were, behind
Unit 40	enough, through
Unit 41	talking, hurry
Unit 42	school, thought, learned
Unit 43	worse, worst
Unit 44	even, goes
Unit 45	walk, care

Grade Two	
Unit 7	heard, young
Unit 8	always, watch, almost
Unit 9	great, because
Unit 10	once, straight
Unit 11	people, climb
Unit 12	animal, picture
Unit 13	thought, around
Unit 14	family, father
Unit 15	laugh, whole, bury
Unit 16	children
Unit 17	shoes, through
Unit 18	enough, care
Unit 19	answer, special
Unit 20	built, build, idea
Unit 21	length, warn
Unit 22	young, water
Unit 23	tough, orange
Unit 24	break
Unit 25	bear, sure
Unit 26	twelve, among
Unit 27	woman, women
Unit 28	extra, question
Unit 29	shall, guess, guest
Unit 30	busy, either
Unit 31	been, hour
Unit 32	brought
Unit 33	upon, guard
Unit 34	usual
Unit 35	minute
Unit 36	neither, group
Unit 37	believe, famous
Unit 38	practice, practicing
Unit 39	yeah, beautiful
Unit 40	ocean, noticed
Unit 41	eight, piece
Unit 42	listen

Words in **bold** above are taught explicitly for reading and spelling in kindergarten. Word Wall words that are included in *My Reading Booklet* are in plain font.

