

PHASE 05 · SIGHT WORD BRIDGE · READER SET

05 The Sight Words

The handful of words too common, and too irregular, to sound out every single time.

TOOL: SIGHT WORD FLASH CARDS (HELD THE LONG WAY)

Sight words get taught badly more often than not, as pure staring-until-it-sticks memorization. The words in this set are different in what they are. They are among the highest-frequency words in early reading, the ones that appear so constantly that knowing them on sight works like a freeway on-ramp, getting your child past them fast and clearing space for the words that actually need decoding. When “the,” “and,” “was,” “said,” and “they” are automatic, that freed-up attention goes where it is needed. These cards exist to patch the cracks that phonics alone cannot reach, not to be memorized for their own sake.

How to run them

The sight word cards are held the long way, horizontally, which quietly signals that something different is happening. They run alongside bolt work, not instead of it. Open a session with eight to twelve cards, some phonics and some sight, then move to the bolt. These words do not need the bolt at all. What they need is the relaxed, repeated exposure that taught your child to know a stop sign on sight long before they could read the word on it.

What the sight words unlock

Everything so far has pointed at decoding, and that remains the foundation. Sight words add a second gear: a child who can both sound a word out and know one on sight reads with a confidence that neither skill gives alone. That confidence is what carries them into the final phase. This is also a good moment to start previewing the Magic-E cards, **a_e**, **e_e**, **i_e**, **o_e**, and **u_e**, each said as its long vowel, the a in **cake**, the i in **bike**. Let the idea settle before it becomes physical, and do not rush toward that phase. While these settle, keep digraph bolt work in the rotation and drop in a plain CVC day now and then to firm up everything underneath.

How many at a time

Hold the pace down. Two or three new sight words a week is plenty, and there is no prize for finishing the deck early. A word is not learned the first time it is recognized, it is learned when it is known instantly, every time, without a beat of thought. So keep the words your child already knows in the rotation even after they feel solid, shuffled in with the new ones, so that quick recognition stays sharp instead of quietly fading. Slow and permanent beats fast and shaky every time.

HOW THESE WERE CHOSEN

The set is built around the highest-frequency words a young reader meets, including “the,” “and,” “was,” “said,” and “they.” A few, like “he” and “we,” your child could actually sound out, and if they try, let them, since both paths land in the same place. Others, like “said” and “was,” do not follow the rules, and must simply be known on sight.

MOVE ON WHEN

As these words become automatic, full sentences stop stalling on the small connecting words, and your child's attention is freed for the parts that carry the meaning.