

TIPS FOR TEACHERS



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DOLCH 220 SIGHT WORDS

SKILL OVERVIEW: Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluent readers recognize words automatically and read aloud effortlessly and with expression. They are able to group words into meaningful phrases and extract meaning from what they have read. They simultaneously relate what they are reading to the entire selection, as well as their own background knowledge. Unless students can read fluently, reading comprehension is hindered.

Fluent reading takes practice, and therefore the skill is honed slowly. Additionally, students do not develop fluency until they have a solid foundation of word analysis skills. Most students who cannot read fluently must put too much effort into decoding. They read slowly, word for word, with unnatural phrase grouping, and this negatively impacts comprehension. Other students recognize words automatically and understand what they are reading, but their reading still lacks expression. These students may need to be taught the phrases and clauses that signal appropriate breaking points in the text.

More than 50 years ago, E.W. Dolch came up with a list of 220 words that he claimed comprised 50 to 75 percent or more of the words in children's reading material. The words in his list contain all parts of speech except nouns. Over the decades, textbook publishers and children's book authors have used the Dolch 220 list as a guide. Obviously students who can recognize most words by sight are better, more fluent readers. Young readers benefit from memorizing these high-frequency words.

INSTRUCTION: Sight word acquisition

As people read, their eyes move in jumps across the lines of print. The length and speed of the jumps are determined by the reader's familiarity with the material. Eyes move more rapidly when the person knows the words and comprehends the text. However, when an unknown word or concept is encountered, the jumps slow down to give the reader time to analyze the passage. When reading orally, unknown words stop readers and cause deterioration in fluency.

The human brain looks for meaningful whole units and patterns. Since words are meaningful units, young readers soon begin to recognize them, regardless of the methods being utilized to teach them to read. During the primary grades, children continue to expand their repertoire of sight words. They are not learned as a result of specific lessons, but mastered over time (Dolch suggests three years).

Step 1 – Make flash cards or word lists

Teachers of beginning readers should come up with a plan to teach or review words that have a high rate of occurrence. The Dolch 220 Resource List on the following page is sorted by frequency of use and shows Dolch's suggested introduction levels, although these levels should be modified to correlate with existing instructional programs. Flash cards are a worthwhile instructional aid.

Step 2 – Integrate sight words with phonics instruction

Amazingly, half of the Dolch 220 words are one-syllable words that follow short and long vowel patterns. Another 14 percent have variant vowels, and 14 percent are words with more than one syllable. That leaves only 48 words, or 22 percent, that are phonetic rule breakers. If sight words are taught in tandem with phonics lessons, children master sight words at a much faster rate. Identify the words that are rule breakers to help students remember them. A resource list sorted by these categories is on page 4.

READING MANIPULATIVES PRODUCT: Dolch Sight Words

CARD FRONT – WORD ONLY	CARD BACK – PHONETIC MARKINGS
please	jūmp
new	g <u>oo</u> d <small>oo as in look</small>
funny	<u>al</u> wāys <small>ō as in all</small>
the	come <small>cūm</small>

SHORT/LONG VOWELS
110 WORDS – 50%
SLV PATTERN FLIP STRIPS

VARIANT VOWELS
30 WORDS – 14%
VARIANT VOWELS

SYLLABLES (2 OR 3)
30 WORDS – 14%
SYLLABLE SORTS

PHONETIC RULE BREAKERS
48 WORDS – 22%



Have you analyzed the characteristics of the 220 Dolch sight words?

Amazingly, exactly half (110) are one-syllable words that follow short/long vowel patterns. Thirty words have common variant vowels and 30 have multiple syllables. That leaves only 48 phonetic rule breakers that must be memorized. This product employs an array of techniques to help students learn these high-frequency words. First, the flash cards are broken by colors into the above 4 categories. One side of the card has the word with vowel sounds and syllables noted. The reverse side has only the word.

The detailed guide gives strategies for teaching these words through an integrated reading/writing/spelling program. Twenty-five spelling lessons group the words by characteristics. Word families are used to shrink or expand the list.

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MAKING MATERIALS: Sight-word flash cards



1. Line off 8.5 x 11 card stock in a landscape orientation into 4 rows (2.125 inches) and 2 columns (5.5 inches), making 8 flash cards per sheet
2. Use 4 different colors, one for each of the categories below; write words according to breakdown in Dolch 220 Resource List – Decoding Categories on p. 4
3. Write the word only on one side and the word with phonetic cues on the other; remember, the back words must be flipped from left to right.

MAKING MATERIALS: Spelling dictionaries containing high-frequency words

Spelling dictionaries are a powerful reading and writing tool for young students. Pages are a compilation of the Dolch 220 list (words in bold) and other high-frequency reading and writing lists. As children write sentences and stories, they should use their dictionaries to find words they need to spell. Many students do not have instant recognition of all words, so they are developing both decoding and encoding skills. Other needed words can be written on the lines.

Each dictionary is comprised of 7 sheets of paper printed printed double-sided. The sheets are then folded to form a 5.5 x 8.5 inch booklet. The 14 masters for the dictionary can be found in the student resources section of the Reading Manipulatives web site.

There are also masters for a double-sided spelling reference list that is suitable for older students.

L l 		M m 	
laid	long	made	must
land	look	make making	my
large	loose	man	myself
last	lose	many	May (month)
late	lost	may	March
laugh	love	me	Monday
learn	lunch	meant	_____
leave	_____	men	_____
left	_____	mess	_____
leg	_____	milk	_____
let	_____	minute	_____
let's (let us)	_____	money	_____
letter	_____	more	_____
light	_____	morning	_____
like	_____	most	_____
little	_____	mother	_____
live	_____	much	_____

RESOURCE LIST **DOLCH 220 – LEVEL & FREQUENCY**

the	PP	1	did	P	45	know	1	89	never	3	133	ate	P	177
to	PP	2	what	P	46	right	2	90	seven	3	134	full	3	178
and	PP	3	so	p	47	put	1	91	eight	3	135	those	2	179
he	P	4	see	PP	48	too	P	92	cold	2	136	done	3	180
a	PP	5	not	PP	49	got	3	93	today	3	137	use	2	181
I	1	6	were	1	50	take	1	94	fly	1	138	fast	2	182
you	PP	7	get	P	51	where	PP	95	myself	3	139	say	P	183
it	PP	8	them	1	52	every	1	96	round	1	140	light	3	184
of	1	9	like	P	53	pretty	P	97	tell	2	141	pick	3	185
in	PP	10	one	PP	54	jump	1	98	much	3	142	hurt	3	186
was	P	11	this	P	55	green	2	99	keep	3	143	pull	2	187
said	PP	12	my	PP	56	four	P	100	give	1	144	cut	3	188
his	1	13	would	2	57	away	PP	101	work	2	145	kind	3	189
that	P	14	me	PP	58	old	1	102	first	2	146	both	2	190
she	P	15	will	P	59	by	1	103	try	3	147	sit	2	191
for	PP	16	yes	P	60	their	2	104	new	P	148	which	2	192
on	P	17	big	PP	61	here	PP	105	must	P	149	fall	3	193
they	P	18	went	P	62	saw	P	106	start	3	150	carry	3	194
but	P	19	are	P	63	call	2	107	black	P	151	small	3	195
had	1	20	come	PP	64	after	1	108	white	P	152	under	P	196
at	P	21	if	3	65	well	P	109	ten	3	153	read	2	197
him	1	22	now	P	66	think	1	110	does	2	154	why	2	198
with	P	23	long	3	67	ran	P	111	bring	3	155	own	3	199
up	PP	24	no	P	68	let	1	112	goes	2	156	found	2	200
all	P	25	came	P	69	help	PP	113	write	2	157	wash	2	201
look	PP	26	ask	1	70	make	PP	114	always	2	158	show	3	202
is	PP	27	very	2	71	going	1	115	drink	3	159	hot	3	203
her	1	28	an	1	72	sleep	2	116	once	1	160	because	2	204
there	P	29	over	1	73	brown	P	117	soon	P	161	far	3	205
some	1	30	your	2	74	yellow	PP	118	made	2	162	live	1	206
out	P	31	its	2	75	five	2	119	run	PP	163	draw	3	207
as	1	32	ride	P	76	six	3	120	gave	2	164	clean	3	208
be	P	33	into	P	77	walk	1	121	open	1	165	grow	3	209
have	P	34	just	1	78	two	PP	122	has	1	166	best	2	210
go	PP	35	blue	PP	79	or	2	123	find	PP	167	upon	2	211
we	PP	36	red	PP	80	before	2	124	only	3	168	these	2	212
am	P	37	from	1	81	eat	P	125	us	2	169	sing	2	213
then	1	38	good	P	82	again	1	126	three	PP	170	together	3	214
little	PP	39	any	1	83	play	PP	127	our	PP	171	please	P	215
down	PP	40	about	3	84	who	P	128	better	3	172	thank	1	216
do	P	41	around	2	85	been	2	129	hold	3	173	wish	2	217
can	PP	42	want	P	86	may	1	130	buy	2	174	many	2	218
could	1	43	don't	2	87	stop	1	131	funny	PP	175	shall	3	219
when	1	44	how	1	88	off	2	132	warm	1	176	laugh	3	220

RESOURCE LIST **DOLCH 220 – DECODING CATEGORIES**

SHORT VOWELS	ran	green	VARIANT VOWELS	SYLLABLES	do
am	red	grow	all	go•ing	does
an	run	he	are	af•ter	done
and	shall	I	brown	al•ways	don't
as	sing	keep	call	bet•ter	eight
ask	sit	know	down	car•ry	find
at	six	like	draw	fun•ny	found
best	stop	made	fall	in•to	from
big	tell	make	far	lit•tle	full
black	ten	may	first	on•ly	give
bring	thank	me	for	pret•ty	have
but	that	my	found	un•der	hold
can	them	no	good	yel•low	kind
cut	then	own	her	a•bout	laugh
did	think	play	here	a•gain	light
drink	this	please	how	a•round	live
fast	up	read	hurt	a•way	of
get	us	ride	look	be•cause	old
got	well	say	new	be•fore	once
had	went	see	now	my•self	one
has	when	she	or	o•pen	pull
help	which	show	our	o•ver	put
him	will	sleep	out	to•day	right
his	wish	so	round	to•geth•er	said
hot	with	take	saw	u•pon	some
if	yes	these	small	an•y	the
in	LONG VOWELS	those	soon	ev•ery	their
is	ate	three	start	man•y	there
it	be	try	too	nev•er	they
its	blue	use	walk	sev•en	to
jump	by	we	warm	ver•y	two
just	came	white	work	RULE BREAKERS	you
let	clean	why		a	want
long	eat	write		been	was
much	five			both	wash
must	fly			buy	were
not	gave			cold	what
off	go			come	where
on	goes			could	who
pick					would