

Red Words

Red words are irregular words that require different instruction. If a student sounds or taps it out, it will be wrong. However, it is important to still give explicit instruction so that a child can master reading and spelling these words.

The lists we provide are suggested tier 1 (on grade level) words for each grade level. However, if a student does not know words from a previous list, those should also be taught. A pre-assessment will allow you know to where to begin on the red word lists.

It is important to note that students with dyslexia and other reading deficits often struggle with rote memorization. Red words can be a source of frustration. Continue to work on these words, but offering a reference list is an acceptable accommodation.

Spend time mapping out red words. Just because the entire word cannot be determined by tapping out sounds, show what part of the word can. We call the irregular part the part that doesn't play fair. Place a heart above it as a visual cue.

said
● ● ●

been
● ● ●

else
● ● ●

The key to red words is lots of practice and repetition. Here is a list of our favorite ways to practice red words!

Red Word Practice Activities

Red words can not be tapped or sounded out. Instead, they must be memorized. The focus needs to be placed on the letters, not sounds. The multi-sensory methods for practicing red words are endless. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Red Crayons and screens – write red word with a crayon and screen under the paper. Trace it. Trace it with your finger. Turn paper over and write again. Use in a complete sentence.
- Carpet writing – write your red word with two fingers on the carpet.
- Sky Writing – write your red word with two fingers in the air.
- Invisible Beach ball – Put an invisible beach ball in front of you. Tap front left to right saying each letter.
- Back writing – write your red word on your friend's back. Make a red word friend train.
- Stomp – stomp out each letter as you say it - throw up arm and say the whole word
- Give Me Three – say the word three times in different silly voices (whisper shout, pirate, monster, say each letter louder and louder, rap, southern accent, Donald Duck,)
- Body Spell- spell the word with your elbow/big toe – left to right slide with the whole word
- Pop – start in a squat and slowly rise up with each letter you say then, jump up and say the whole word
- Mix and Make - make the word with letter tiles/magnets/letter cards
- Missing Letter – spell the word with letter cards and then have teacher or partner take one letter away/guess the missing letter
- Write/Recall – write the new word three times and then recall and write a previously taught red word three times (student recalls a previous red word) Use red crayon.
- Build red words with playdough or clay. Say the letters aloud and read.
- Cross symmetry- lean against a wall with legs bent at a 90-degree angle from the floor. Say the red word and then spell it tapping wall with the opposite arm saying each letter.
- Koosh ball toss. Pass around the koosh ball while each person says one letter of the word. The first and last person says the whole word. Any ball can be used.
- Water painting- go outside and paint the red words on the sidewalk with water and a paintbrush

Recommended Kindergarten Grade Red Words

the	see				
is	do				
a	put				
and	you				
of	so				
to	go				
for	no				
I	was				
be	saw				
he					
me					
she					
we					
her					
his					

*Remember, some words are red words until the phonetic pattern is taught. Then they become green words.

Recommended 1st Grade Red Words

like	some	new	full	hold	
my	come	any	says	told	
I	you	many	both	find	
see	your	gone	much	kind	
of	is	none	such	mind	
was	are	give	door	grind	
too	have	live	floor	host	
said	put	done	has	most	
where	want	little	again	post	
there	get	could	four	two	
who	they	would	blue		
what	from	should	mild		
does	only	one	wild		
goes	saw	once	child		
for	but	pull	old		

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Recommended 2nd Grade Red Words

but	little	sew	wild	post	
new	could	eye	cold	good	
whose	would	egg	fold	which	
does	should	door	gold	bear	
only	pretty	floor	hold	wear	
shoe	animal	pour	mold	tear	
saw	because	pint	sold	pear	
whom	pull	both	kind	Tuesday	
any	full	has	mind	Wednes- day	
many	rich	pretty	bind		
done	much	new	wind		
give	such	now	blind		
live	yellow	friend	grind		
gone	they	from	host		
none	shall	mild	most		

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Recommended 3rd Grade Red Words

who	carry	hurry	merry	been	special
whose	very	walk	during	guess	beauty
whom	every	talk	anyone	guest	beautiful
were	woman	chalk	minute	blood	February
where	women	color	people	flood	often
here	odd	heart	sure	half	machine
hear	add	hero	sugar	ocean	answer
about	upon	study	lose	fourth	today
also	true	worse	loose	enough	tomorrow
always	truly	around	change	tough	hour
other	truth	guy	arrange	rough	laugh
father	almost	buy	listen	toward	build
mother	else	bury	ocean	watch	built
brother	above	berry	busy	country	city
wash	false	marry	already	through	police

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Recommended 4th Grade Red Words

never	clothes	calm	touch	necessary	triple
America	owe	palm	wonder	terrible	coarse
warm	own	library	boulder	horrible	course
altogether	length	board	cough	almighty	copy
alike	strength	million	court	spirit	isle
among	laugh	billion	wore	soul	island
pint	height	trillion	swore	although	straight
ninth	certain	imagine	bye	journey	view
half	young	engine	eye	company	sugar
halves	material	probably	forward	region	prove
calf	guy	capital	toward	scissors	honest
calves	guard	folk	century	recipe	honor
wolf	guide	yolk	squirrel	cereal	usual
wolves	against	debt	view	cough	couple
laugh	juice	doubt	flood	iron	prove

Recommended 5th Grade Red Words

disease	skiing	cruise			
medicine	thorough	bruise			
vacuum	Celsius	mosquito			
decision	Fahrenheit	soldier			
business	anxious	spaghetti			
chocolate	anxiety	possess			
stomach	leisure	career			
suppose	foreign	various			
route	pupil	columns			
especially	senior	seize			
necessary	ache	apparent			
restaurant	onion	campaign			
guarantee	aisle	vague			
measure	courteous	orchestra			
treasure	cousin	legion			