

Games and activities to help pupils learn the high frequency words

Games to help children read the words;

Pairs

You need 2 sets of word cards. Pick out the word cards that the child already knows for the first few times you play the game so that they enjoy it and succeed. Then, gradually take out some of the word cards they know and replace them with a number of words they don't know. Place the 2 sets of word cards you have chosen face down. Turn one card over and say the word, turn another card over and say the word. If they match and you have made a pair you can keep the pair and you have another go. If they did not match it is the next person's turn. Keep going until all the words have been paired.

Snap

You need 2 sets of word cards. Each person has a pile of cards they keep face down. Each person turns a card over in turn and says the word they turn over. If they match you have to shout the word (and not snap). The first person to shout the word that matches is the winner of the cards on the table. Keep going until all the cards have been won.

Silly sentence

Use one set of word cards. Spread the word cards out face down. Pick 3 cards and turn them face up, say the words as they are turned up. Now try and make up a silly sentence that includes all 3 words on the cards.

Shout out loud

Use one set of word cards. Spread the word cards out face down. Take it in turns to turn over one card at a time. The first person to shout the word out loud wins the card. Keep going until all the cards have been won. You can play this with silly voices. Before you turn over a card you have to decide what sort of voice you have to use to say the word e.g. whisper the word, say it like a gorilla, roar it like a lion, squeak it like a mouse.

Hunt the words

Use one set of word cards. Hide a number of them around a room. The child has to find the cards and bring them back to you saying the words they find as they find them.

Stepping stones

Use one set of word cards. Spread a number of cards over the floor. Ask the children to jump from one word to another as if they are jumping from stepping stone to stepping stone. As they jump they have to say what word they are going to jump to next. Make sure they say the word before they jump! An alternative way of playing this game is to write the words on paper plates and stick them on the wall. Using a bean bag or soft ball the child or the teacher says the word and the child has to try and hit that particular word.

Slap the word

Use one set of word cards. Spread a number of cards out on a table or the floor. Ask someone to say one of the words. Whoever is first to slap the word with their hand (or the back of a spoon) wins the word.

Cognition and Learning

I'm thinking of a word

Use one set of word cards. Spread a number of cards out. You pick a word but don't tell the child which word you are thinking of. Say "I'm thinking of a word, the word begins with....." The child has to guess what the word might be from the ones spread out. If they guess correctly they can keep the card. If they can't guess then give them another clue "I'm thinking of a word that hassounds" or ".....ends with....." or "...has the word ant in it." Keep giving clues until they guess the word. Let the child pick a word and they give clues about it.

Flash card activities

Select a few words from the word cards. Go through each card together first. If it is a word that can be sounded then show them how to do this. If it is a word that can't be sounded easily tell them the word if they don't know and help them think of ways to remember it e.g. there is a hen in when 'cluck, cluck'. Look for word within words like the word 'ant' in the word 'want' draw some little legs on the ant part to help the child remember. Then use them as flash cards. Hold up the word, if the child can read it they take the card. If they can't put it to the back of the pile so they can come back to it at the end. If at the end they still can't get it tell them the word. Remind them of the things you talked about to help them remember the word when you started the activity. With words children are becoming more familiar with set them a speed challenge. How quickly can they say all the words as you show them each card in turn? Remember to muddle up the words regularly so that they don't just remember the sequence of words you are showing them. Use the flash cards in the same way but choose silly voices for each word.

Go Fish

Copy a number of sets of flash cards according to how many children there are playing. Shuffle and deal 5 cards to each player and put the remaining cards face down in the centre. Players pick up their cards not letting the others see the words. Players place matching pairs in front of them. The dealer then asks any other player if they have a card that matches one in their hand. For example, "Do you have 'look'?" if yes the card must be handed over so the questioner can make a pair. The pair is placed down and the questioner asks again. If the player does not have the card they say 'Go Fish' and the questioner picks from the centre pile. If they make a pair they ask again, if not the next player has a turn. The game continues until there are no cards left. The winner is the player with the most pairs.

Kim's Game

Lay a small number of words on the table in front of a group of children or one child. Let them have a look for a while before asking them to turn around and close their eyes. Remove a card and ask the group if they can tell you which card you removed.

High Frequency Bingo

Choose between 20 – 30 HFW you have been working with and either prepare grids with words on or you could ask the children to choose 6 words to write on a small whiteboard. Using flashcards read out words and the children cross them out until one child has crossed all their words out and are the winner.

Tracking Activities

Have a prepared text or photocopy a page from a reading book. Ask the child to track for a particular word using a felt tip pen. Remember to keep the pen on the paper for each line underlining the text then ringing only the word they are tracking for. Each time they ring the word they have to say it out loud too.

Cognition and Learning

Games to help children write the words

Some useful steps in learning to spell words

1. Select a number of cards (not too many at a time). Say the word out loud
2. Look at the word trace over the letters with your finger
3. Copy the word and say the letters or sounds as you write it. Copy it again.
4. Cover the word and try and write the word saying it as you write –peep if you need to!
5. Check the word you have written matches the word on the card and say it again as you check.
7. Keep writing the word until you can write it without having to peep.
8. For words that are tricky and that it is not as easy to learn take an imaginary picture of the word with your imaginary camera – imagine the word is big, coloured red, lit up by fireworks, has spiders crawling on it. Shut your eyes and try and picture the word. Try and write it down imagining the picture of the word you see in your head.

Snap

Play the game in the same way that you would to help the child read the words but this time have a large piece of paper and a pen in the middle of the table. When the words match rather than saying the word to win the cards you have to grab the pen and write the word to win the cards.

Pairs

Play the game in the same way that you would to help the child read the words but this time have a large piece of paper and a pen in the middle of the table. If you find a pair you can only keep the pair if you can write the word. Give time to look at the word and talk through ways to remember it and then write the word to keep the pair. If they/you get it wrong (and sometimes it is a good idea if you get it wrong – they love correcting you) give another chance making sure you help as much as you can as they are trying to remember the word and as they write.

Silly sentence

Play the game in the same way that you would to help the child read the words but this time say the sentence and then you can write the silly sentence with gaps for the word card words which the child can fill in.

Hunt the word

Play the game in the same way that you would to help the child read the words but this time when they find a word they bring it to you, say the word and then write the word for you.

Spell-a-ma-doodle

Ask the child to draw a squiggle or doodle. Select a word that you are going to learn to spell. Write the word over and over again around the doodle.

Musical words

Ask the child to choose a favourite song. Give them a short list of words they are learning to spell. Spend some time looking at the words first and thinking of ways to remember how to spell them then put on the music. How many times can they write the list of words during the song? Can they improve on the number of times they have written the words the next day they do the same activity?

Minute words

Cognition and Learning

This works in the same way as 'Musical words' but rather than a song the child has one minute to write one word as many times as they can.

Using the sentence maker

- 1) Dictate a sentence and the child makes it using the word cards. (display some words which they don't need) You can use the dictation activities on the sheet for the 45 HFW remember to include punctuation marks.
- 2) Give the child the word cards and ask them to reorder them to make a sentence. To make this easier start off with only a few words and give the child the first word in the sentence.