

MAKING SENSE OF SIGHT WORDS

SUPPORTING FAMILIES & GROWING READERS



Have you ever heard the term “sight word”? This phrase is commonly used to describe words that appear frequently in text. But what **are** sight words and how can we help children recognize words by “sight”?

There are several types of words that children will come across when beginning to read.

all words are either

regular OR **irregular**

- A **regular word** follows common, expected letter and sound “rules”– meaning the sounds in the word are spelled predictably.
- Regular words can be read using letter and sound combinations that a child is familiar with, and can also be called “decodable”.
- An **irregular word** does not follow common, expected letter and sound “rules”.
- Irregularly spelled words are often called “**Heart Words**” because some part of the word is “learned by heart”.
- The good news is that most common irregular words have only one or two letters which don’t follow the expected spelling rules.

words that **appear very frequently** in text are called **HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS** and can be **regular** (had, get) OR **irregular** (said, one)

any word **stored in a reader’s memory** can be called a **SIGHT WORD** and can be **regular** OR **irregular**

FOR EXAMPLE

The word **said** has three sounds, /s/ /ě/ /d/.

The first sound, /s/ is spelled with an **s**.

The second sound /ě/ is spelled with **ai**, (not **e** like we would expect). That is the part we must know **by heart**.

The last sound, /d/ is spelled with **d**.



Note: Letters written between two backslashes should be read as a sound, rather than the letter name. Letters in **bold** are read as the letter name, and a “heart part” or sound with irregular spelling is shown with a heart.

TEACHING AN IRREGULAR "HEART" WORD

from
♡

Say

Do

<p>This is the word from. From rhymes with some and hum.</p>	<p>Show the word from.</p>
<p>The word from has four sounds, /f/ /r/ /ŭ/ /m/.</p>	<p>Count on fingers while saying sounds.</p>
<p>The first sound I hear in from is /f/. We know that /f/ is spelled with the letter f.</p>	<p>Point to the f in the word from.</p>
<p>The second sound I hear in from is /r/. We know that /r/ is spelled with the letter r.</p>	<p>Point to the r in the word from.</p>
<p>The last sound I hear in from is /m/. We know that /m/ is spelled with the letter m.</p>	<p>Point to the m in the word from.</p>
<p>Now let's take a look at the letter that is spelling /ŭ/. It is not a u that is spelling /ŭ/; it is o. That is the part we must know by heart.</p>	<p>Point to the o in the word from.</p>
<p>Review: Let's say each sound together while you practice writing this word.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will start by drawing a line for each sound. How many sounds are in the word from? (4) 2. What is the first sound? What letter spells /f/? 3. What is the second sound? What letter spells /r/? 4. At the end of the word from, we hear /m/. What letter spells /m/? 5. What sound did we hear after /r/? Yes. Remember, the sound /ŭ/ in the word from is not spelled with the letter u. What is the letter that spells /ŭ/ in from? That is the tricky part that we have to learn by heart. Draw a heart under the letter o as a reminder. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child draws four lines to show the sounds in the word from. 2. Point to the letter f, and indicate to your child to write that letter first. 3. Child writes the letter r 4. Child leaves a space, writing m last. 5. Child writes an o and draws a heart under that letter. <div data-bbox="972 1671 1276 1839" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>f r o m — — — — ♡</p> </div>

"Sounding out" (decoding) **regular words** and practicing unexpected spelling in **irregular words** *helps children to recognize and remember words by sight.*