



The Meadows Center  
FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
The College of EDUCATION



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# WORD RECOGNITION AND FLUENCY

EFFECTIVE UPPER-ELEMENTARY  
INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS  
WITH READING DIFFICULTIES

by Jeanne Wanzek, Anita Harbor, and Sharon Vaughn

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Blackline masters of lesson materials are available on the accompanying CD.



# WORD RECOGNITION AND FLUENCY

## LESSON PLANS



# INTRODUCTION

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## LESSON PROGRESSION

This resource book presents lessons that teach word recognition skills and strategies in a systematic and cumulative way. Students build knowledge as lessons progress from easy to difficult skills. Previously learned skills are reviewed, linked to newly presented content, and included in the new lesson's practice activities. The example words in practice activities were selected to be useful in students' school and home lives. As lessons progress, students learn the skills and strategies to read an increasing number and variety of words—thus allowing students to read more sentences and longer texts. A lesson structure is also presented for teaching irregular words. This lesson structure can be used daily from the beginning to teach new irregular words for student reading.

Lessons 1–9 are for students who have not yet mastered basic sounds and using these sounds to blend words. These lessons are structured around one-syllable words. The first lesson template begins with a review of consonant sounds and moves on to introducing short vowel sounds. The lesson template can be used on different days to introduce each of the short vowel sounds, according to student needs. In subsequent lessons, students learn to blend sounds to form consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as *mat*, *sip*, and *let*. Next are lessons that introduce the more advanced sounds of consonant digraphs, consonant blends, and *r*-controlled sounds. Long vowel sounds are introduced with the vowel-consonant-*e* (VCe) syllable. Then, two more syllable types with long vowel sounds are introduced: letter combinations (*key*, *grown*, *main*) and open syllables (*hi*, *re-*, *flu*). In each of these lessons, students build on their understanding of blending sounds in one-syllable words. Again, the lessons often provide a structure for introducing multiple sounds that will be used over several days or weeks, according to the number of sounds that need to be introduced and student needs.

Lessons 10–17 teach skills and strategies for reading multisyllabic words, beginning with compound words, proceeding to words with affixes, and then moving to a multisyllabic word reading strategy for decoding long words. Advanced concepts are taught next, including the consonant-*le* syllable (*candle*, *table*), soft *g* and *c* (*gem*, *cent*), and base words that change when a suffix is added (*plan-planning*; *happy-happiness*, *make-making*).

It is not necessary or realistic for every group of students to begin with Lesson 1 and proceed through one lesson each day. You will find that students move quickly through certain lessons and that students will require more time and practice before mastering the material in other lessons. Some lessons are used several times to introduce different, related sounds. For example, the lesson for letter combinations is used when introducing any of the 18 letter combinations. When the same lesson is used more than once, multiple guided practice and independent activities are provided to allow for varied practice. Use a pace that best meets your students' needs. Finally, remember that the lessons are cumulative, building upon previous lessons, so it is optimal to teach them in the order in which they are presented.

## LESSONS OVERVIEW

The lessons teach skills explicitly and in a consistent format. Each lesson consists of lesson objectives, a list of necessary materials, lesson tips, a review activity, activities that provide scaffolded instruction, ideas for monitoring learning, and information about generalization.

- **Objectives.** What the student will be able to do as a result of instruction.
- **Materials.** A list of the materials necessary for each lesson. Blackline masters of many materials, including student worksheets, letter cards, word cards, templates, and game boards, are found on the accompanying CD.
- **Tips.** Ideas and information to enhance instruction.
- **Daily Review.** A quick review of the previous lesson.
- **Opening.** A brief description of what students will learn, why it is important, and how it connects to, or is different from, previously taught content.
- **Lesson Activities.** Introduce students to skills and strategies through three levels of scaffolded instruction:
  - **Model and Teach.** The teacher explicitly explains, teaches, demonstrates, and models the new skill or strategy.
  - **Guided Practice.** Once students are familiar with the skill or strategy, the teacher provides guidance as students practice applying it to reading words.
  - **Independent Practice.** As students gain proficiency, they apply the skill to reading words and connected text independently while the teacher provides assistance.



Within each level of instruction, teachers should monitor students' understanding and be prepared to reteach or provide additional modeling or practice before moving on to the next level.

Decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) activities are included for each level of instruction. When introducing a new sound, skill, or strategy, use all the decoding and encoding activities in the model and teach level. When practicing the sound, skill, or strategy, choose at least one decoding and one encoding activity from the guided practice and independent practice levels. A variety of guided practice and independent practice activities provide options when the same lesson structure is used to teach new sounds or when reteaching is necessary. These activities incorporate hands-on worksheets, games, and manipulatives that provide meaningful, relevant opportunities to practice and apply the sound, skill, or strategy. Each activity begins with a description of the task, followed by a sample dialogue. The dialogue is an example of the type of wording to use while teaching, but it is not a script. It is important to teach the lessons using your unique style.

Tips and adaptations follow certain activities, including ideas for error correction, common trouble spots, scaffolding tips, and suggestions on different ways to implement the activity.

- **Monitor Learning.** Provides lesson-specific areas to check students' understanding.
- **Generalization.** A description of how the knowledge learned applies to other areas at school and at home.
- **Lesson Materials.** Thumbnail images of lesson materials follow each lesson. Electronic files of these materials are found on the accompanying CD.



# IRREGULAR WORDS

## LESSON PLAN

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### OBJECTIVE

Students will read and spell words with irregular sound-spelling patterns.

### RATIONALE

Irregular words do not fit the typical letter-sound correspondence that students have learned. Put another way, they are “rule-breakers”. Certain high-frequency words, such as *said*, *was*, *do*, *to*, *what*, and *they*, are irregular. Words that include exceptions to syllable-type conventions are also considered to be irregular. For example, the *a* in *have* makes its short vowel sound, rather than the long vowel sound that is typical of vowel-consonant-*e* syllables.

Some irregular words should be memorized, becoming what is known as “sight words”—words that are instantly recognized as a whole. Some words may be considered irregular because a student has not yet learned the sound of a particular letter pattern. *Little* would be an irregular word for students who have not yet learned about consonant-*le* syllables.

Choose irregular words that appear frequently in students’ reading and writing. Such words are more useful to students. If a student can already read an irregular word, it is not necessary to explicitly teach it.

### TEACHING NEW WORDS

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Make an index card for each word you introduce. These cards can be used for review, reteaching, or a word wall. Present the first card and say the word. Have students say the word, spell it, and then say the word again.

**Teacher:** This word is *where*. What is the word?

**Students:** *where*

**Teacher:** Spell *where*.

*[Point to each letter as students spell the word.]*

**Students:**     *w-h-e-r-e*

**Teacher:**     Say the word again.

**Students:**     *where*

Introduce one to seven words at a time, depending on student mastery. Provide students with multiple opportunities to read each word as it is introduced. Do not introduce a new word if students have not mastered previously introduced words.

## REVIEWING WORDS

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After new words have been introduced, review five to seven previously learned words in random order. Provide multiple opportunities for students to read previously taught words—particularly those with which students struggle.

Present the word cards and have students say the words. Correct errors by saying the word and then having the student say the word, spell the word, and say the word again. Put the cards for words that students read incorrectly in a separate pile for reteaching during the next lesson.

**Teacher:**     Let's review some words. When I show you a word card, say the word.

*[Show the first word: **earth**.]*

**Students:**     *earth*

*[Show the next word: **chief**.]*

**Students:**     /chīf/

**Teacher:**     The word is *chief*. What word?

**Students:**     *chief*

**Teacher:**     Say it, spell it, say it.

**Students:**     *Chief, c-h-i-e-f, chief.*

*[Present the next words.]*

## MONITOR LEARNING

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Reteach words that were misread, providing additional opportunities for students to read the words.

