High Frequency Words, Heart Words and Sight Words

PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What is a High Frequency Word?

A high-frequency word is a word that appears most often in written and spoken English. Fry or Dolch Word lists

Words such as:

- of, like, can, he, go, that, is, when, was
- what, the, look, I, and, it, said

The most common words that have phonetic & irregular spellings

What is a Heart Word?

A heart word is a high-frequency word that has an irregular spelling for a sound.

Words such as:

- **of**, like, can, he, go, that, is, when, **was**
- what, **the**, look, I, and, it, **said**

The most common words with irregular spellings

What is a Sight Word?

A sight word is a word that appears often in text that students learn to recognize instantly.

Words such as:

- **and, the, is, I, can, it, see, mom, dad**, and **cat** might be sight words for some children

Any word that is automatically recognized

Best Practices for Teaching High Frequency Words

- **Say a word, spell a word, read it together, write it together, and use it in a sentence**
- **Emphasize orthographic Mapping:** this is a cognitive task in which students store words in their long-term memory
  - **Tap the sounds in words, write the letters for the sounds, notice irregular spellings for sounds, spell and read words aloud**
- **Provide daily short practice** with word sorts, memory games, speed read word lists, build words with tiles or magnet letters, write words in sand, or salt, sky write, play Bingo, or Swat, set up word hunts in books, and read text with the target words