

# The Truth about the Dolch Sight Word List

The Dolch Sight Word List was developed in 1936 by educator Edward Dolch, and it contains 220 of the most common words in children’s literature at that time.

## Pre-primer

a, and, away, big, blue, can, come, down, find, for, funny, go, help, here, I, in, is, it, jump, little, look, make, me, my, not, one, play, red, run, said, see, the, three, to, two, up, we, where, yellow, you

## Primer

all, am, are, at, ate, be, black, brown, but, came, did, do, eat, four, get, good, have, he, into, like, must, new, no, now, on, our, out, please, pretty, ran, ride, saw, say, she, so, soon, that, there, they, this, too, under, want, was, well, went, what, white, who, will, with, yes

## First Grade

after, again, an, any, as, ask, by, could, every, fly, from, give, giving, had, has, her, him, his, how, just, know, let, live, may, of, old, once, open, over, put, round, some, stop, take, thank, them, then, think, walk, were, when

## Second Grade

always, around, because, been, before, best, both, buy, call, cold, does, don’t, fast, first, five, found, gave, goes, green, its, made, many, off, or, pull, read, right, sing, sit, sleep, tell, their, these, those, upon, us, use, very, wash, which, why, wish, work, would, write, your

## Third Grade

about, better, bring, carry, clean, cut, done, draw, drink, eight, fall, far, full, got, grow, hold, hot, hurt, if, keep, kind, laugh, light, long, much, myself, never, only, own, pick, seven, shall, show, six, small, start, ten, today, together, try, warm

Edward Dolch believed that these words were best learned as “sight words” and should be memorized rather than sounded out. Many educators mistakenly believe that these words are not phonetic.

But here's the truth! The vast majority of these words can be spelled using a basic knowledge of phonetic structure and spelling rules (which your student can learn in *All About Spelling* and *All About Reading*).

<b>Short A</b>	can, am, at, ran, ad, had
<b>Short I</b>	big, in, it, did, will, him, its, sit, if, six
<b>Short O</b>	not, on, off, got, hot
<b>Short U</b>	run, up, but, us, cut
<b>Short E</b>	red, get, well, yes, let, tell, ten
<b>Second sound of S</b>	is, as, his, has
<b>Consonant teams SH, TH, and CH</b>	that, this, with, them, then, wish, shall, much
<b>Final blends</b>	and, help, jump, must, went, ask, just, best, fast
<b>Initial blends</b>	stop
<b>Consonant teams CK and NG</b>	black, pick, sing, bring, long
<b>The blend of NK</b>	thank, think, drink
<b>Open syllables</b>	go, I, me, we, be, he, no, she, so
<b>Y can say long I</b>	my, by, fly, try
<b>First job of Silent E</b>	here, make, ate, came, like, ride, take, five, gave, made, these, those, use
<b>These multisyllabic words can be decoded with basic syllable division rules</b>	giving, open, before, myself, seven, into, upon
<b>Consonant team WH</b>	white, when, which, why
<b>I and O are often long before two consonants</b>	find, old, cold, hold, kind, don't, both
<b>R-controlled vowels (such as OR, ER, IR)</b>	for, under, after, her, over, first, or, work, better, far, hurt, never, start, warm
<b>2nd and 3rd sounds of single vowels</b>	funny, to, all, do, want, who, every, from, put, call, pull, wash, carry, fall, full, only, small, together
<b>Other jobs of Silent E</b>	blue, come, are, have, live, some, were, done, give
<b>These words have common vowel teams (such as OW, OO, and AY)</b>	down, look, play, see, three, yellow, you, brown, eat, four, good, new, now, our, out, please, saw, say, soon, they, too, how, know, may, round, always, because, found, goes, green, read, right, sleep, their, your, clean, draw, eight, grow, keep, light, own, show, today
<b>Begin with A in an unaccented syllable</b>	away, again, around, about
<b>Consonant-L-E syllable type</b>	little
<b>Consonant team WR</b>	write
<b>/air/ can be spelled ER</b>	very

After eliminating all the words that fit neatly into a phonetic category, there are just 22 words left on the list of words that must be memorized rather than sounded out. Here's the Dolch list now:

### Pre-primer

**A**, and, away, big, blue, can, come, down, find, for, funny, go, help, here, I, in, is, it, jump, little, look, make, me, my, not, **ONE**, play, red, run, **SAID**, see, **THE**, three, to, **TWO**, up, we, **WHERE**, yellow, you

### Primer

all, am, are, at, ate, be, black, brown, but, came, did, do, eat, four, get, good, have, he, into, like, must, new, no, now, on, our, out, please, **PRETTY**, ran, ride, saw, say, she, so, soon, that, **THERE**, they, this, too, under, want, **WAS**, well, went, **WHAT**, white, who, will, with, yes

### First Grade

after, again, an, **ANY**, as, ask, by, **COULD**, every, fly, from, give, giving, had, has, her, him, his, how, just, know, let, live, may, **OF**, old, **ONCE**, open, over, put, round, some, stop, take, thank, them, then, think, **WALK**, were, when

### Second Grade

always, around, because, **BEEN**, before, best, both, **BUY**, call, cold, **DOES**, don't, fast, first, five, found, gave, goes, green, its, made, **MANY**, off, or, pull, read, right, sing, sit, sleep, tell, their, these, those, upon, us, use, very, wash, which, why, wish, work, **WOULD**, write, your

### Third Grade

about, better, bring, carry, clean, cut, done, draw, drink, eight, fall, far, full, got, grow, hold, hot, hurt, if, keep, kind, **LAUGH**, light, long, much, myself, never, only, own, pick, seven, shall, show, six, small, start, ten, today, together, try, warm

How many words do you think *your* child would rather memorize—220 or 22?

If you'd like to teach your child the phonics rules that will help him learn to decode 90% of the sight words on the Dolch list, check out [All About Spelling](#) and [All About Reading](#).