

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT NON-PHONETIC WORDS

Non-phonetic words in our language are those words that are not spelled according to the sounds the letters represent. The best example is the word **was**. If you try to spell this word by listening to the sounds, you would write w-u-z.

Only approximately 15% of our English language is composed of these non-phonetic words. The rest of our words can be spelled correctly using sounds, rules and patterns.

Non-phonetic words need to be taught DIFFERENTLY than other words because children must create a "bank" of these memorized words. We do not want the bank to become overloaded with tons of words that can be spelled with sounds, rules or patterns. Because these words are special, we call them "RED WORDS". The color "red" symbolizes stop and in this way, students know that they should STOP when spelling a red word and say letter names when spelling. The instructions below show a specific way in which to teach these words.

Here is how my instruction takes place:

1. Show the student the designated word, written in red.

"This is a RED word. You cannot sound it out. It says **was**. **w-a-s**, was."

2. Have the student say the letters of the word while writing the letters in the palm of their hand with their index finger of their writing hand. Have them underline the word and read it. Repeat.

"w-a-s, was. w-a-s, was."

3. With a red marker, have the student write the word on paper while saying the letters as they write. Repeat three times.

4. Have the student write the word in a short sentence that you create.

*** Red words are very easy for some students and yet very difficult for others. They often need to be reviewed on a consistent basis for them to be mastered by the student.*

Parent follow-through:

1. Have the student read the words they bring home. Your child will bring home 2 or 3 new words each week.
2. Keep these words in a stack and have them read the entire pack.
3. Have them write **ONLY** the new words three times each (with a red pen) while saying the letter names.
4. The student should underline the word and read it back after each time.
5. The student should write one sentence with each new word in it.

These activities should take place on 4 different days of the week. This should take no more than 5-7 minutes. It is the repetition and spelling of the words aloud by letter name that allows the student to master these words.

After five weeks, begin taking out the two oldest words so the deck remains around 10 cards.

Third Grade Red Word List

| | | | |
|---------|-------|--------|---------|
| there | rich | among | people |
| their | such | anyone | month |
| they're | much | answer | build |
| again | which | until | half |
| against | front | hour | calf |
| friend | glove | money | wolf |
| sure | above | honey | Monday |
| move | cover | minute | because |
| prove | | | |