

# EA Literacy Service

## Supporting a child with literacy difficulties at home

### Homework guidance for parents and carers



*This document has been developed by the EA Literacy Service (Northern Ireland). It is intended for parents/carers who may be supporting a child or young person with literacy difficulties at home. Parents/carers may find some of these ideas useful. This is not a specific programme to be followed verbatim nor is it a prescriptive list of what should be done. It is a range of good practice ideas and activities you may decide to use based on the needs of the child. We hope you and your child find at least some of the content helpful and enjoyable.*

*Please note, parents/carers should use the links referenced in this document at their own discretion. Individual websites may contain pop-ups and marketing materials from the organisations providing these services and resources. The inclusion of these links does not imply endorsement of any material on these websites, or any association with their operators. The EA Literacy Service cannot guarantee the security of these sites, the operation of the links or that they will be virus-free.*

The EA Literacy Service Team  
October 2022

## Homework Purpose and Preparation

### **Follow your school's homework policy.**

Understanding the purpose of their homework can help your child plan the best way to do it.

### **Here are the main purposes:**

- ❖ Demonstrating what they have learned
- ❖ Practising a new skill
- ❖ Finishing a piece of work started in class
- ❖ Revising for a test
- ❖ Researching a class topic

### **The three biggest problems with homework:**

1. Getting started
2. Knowing what to do
3. Completing on time

### **Before starting, make sure everything is to hand:**

- ✓ Check the details in the homework diary
- ✓ Sort out the books that will be needed
- ✓ Arrange pens, pencils rubbers etc
- ✓ Read the questions carefully
- ✓ Underline the keywords
- ✓ Think about the purpose of the homework

## Tips for Completing Homework

### If your child gets stuck:

- ❖ Reassure them and encourage them not to panic
- ❖ Tell them to read the Instructions again or help with the reading
- ❖ Ask them to explain the task to you
  
- ✓ Get your child to proofread all written work. Use the COPS method. Sometimes it can help to read it aloud
  
- ✓ If your child has been revising, test their knowledge. Praise all good attempts at giving the correct answer
  
- ✓ When looking for spelling mistakes try starting at the right hand side of the page so that you are only thinking about the spelling and not the meaning
  
- ✓ If your child is finding homework difficult or stressful, talk to the class teacher and see how they can help. Agree an appropriate amount of homework content and set a realistic time limit



## Helping with Phonics

Your child may be learning spellings using a phonic method. The approach being used by many schools at present teaches the children the 44 sounds of the English language rather than just the names of the letters of the alphabet.

### You may hear the following terms being used:

- ❖ **Grapheme** - this is the written representation of sounds. Some graphemes contain more than one letter
- ❖ **Phoneme** - the smallest unit of speech (sounds)
- ❖ **Variations** - the various ways sounds can be represented in writing e.g. snow / boat / toe
- ❖ **Overlap** - different sounds represented by the same grapheme e.g. cow / blow

Some parents feel unsure about the correct sound to make. To help you support your child to use this method there are various YouTube videos which give an overview of the sounds and their graphemes and include word samples to help you pronounce them correctly. For example – Pure sound phonics (Oxford Owl), Nessy Phonics and Mr Thorne’s Phonics (suitable for older children). You may also wish to visit [Oxford Owl for additional phonics related videos](#).

## High Frequency Words

### What are High Frequency Words?

High frequency words, sometimes referred to as sight words, are the words that appear most often in text.

### Why are High Frequency Words important?

It is important to learn High Frequency Words in order to become a fluent reader. Reading fluency is composed of speed, accuracy, and expression. If a child needs to sound out each word when reading, they will lose comprehension. Therefore, by learning to recognise and read these commonly used words in text instantly, readers will increase their speed, accuracy and comprehension.

### Strategies for teaching sight words

Write the words in colour, using paints or pens, and in the context of a sentence. Use paper, whiteboards, sand trays and water pistols or play games like snap or pairs to make it fun.

Below is a table of the first 300 High Frequency Words adapted from McNally, J., & Murray, W. (1962). *Key words to literacy: a basic word list for developing early reading and writing skills* (No. 3). The Schoolmaster.

## High Frequency Words: First 100

the	that	not	don't	put
and	with	then	come	could
a	all	were	will	house
to	we	go	looked	old
said	can	little	into	too
in	are	as	back	by
he	up	no	from	day
I	had	mum	children	made
of	my	dad	him	time
it	her	them	Mr	I'm
was	what	do	get	if
you	there	me	just	help
they	out	down	now	Mrs
on	this	one	came	called
she	have	big	oh	here
is	went	when	about	off
for	be	it's	got	asked
at	like	see	their	saw
his	some	look	people	make
but	so	very	your	an

"To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be."

Education Authority – Literacy Service

## High Frequency Words: Second 100

<b>mother</b>	<b>bed</b>	<b>find</b>	<b>blue</b>	<b>say</b>
<b>away</b>	<b>where</b>	<b>men</b>	<b>boy</b>	<b>soon</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>again</b>	<b>round</b>	<b>open</b>	<b>white</b>
<b>father</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>last</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>ran</b>
<b>has</b>	<b>long</b>	<b>tree</b>	<b>next</b>	<b>walk</b>
<b>how</b>	<b>things</b>	<b>under</b>	<b>girl</b>	<b>should</b>
<b>began</b>	<b>took</b>	<b>room</b>	<b>word</b>	<b>sing</b>
<b>man</b>	<b>after</b>	<b>another</b>	<b>more</b>	<b>three</b>
<b>going</b>	<b>ask</b>	<b>jump</b>	<b>let</b>	<b>head</b>
<b>did</b>	<b>eat</b>	<b>year</b>	<b>must</b>	<b>five</b>
<b>would</b>	<b>sat</b>	<b>bird</b>	<b>read</b>	<b>than</b>
<b>any</b>	<b>am</b>	<b>always</b>	<b>green</b>	<b>why</b>
<b>want</b>	<b>two</b>	<b>four</b>	<b>gave</b>	<b>around</b>
<b>school</b>	<b>give</b>	<b>stop</b>	<b>been</b>	<b>every</b>
<b>think</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>bad</b>	<b>fly</b>	<b>keep</b>
<b>home</b>	<b>play</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>which</b>	<b>fast</b>
<b>new</b>	<b>take</b>	<b>sit</b>	<b>may</b>	<b>once</b>
<b>over</b>	<b>I've</b>	<b>best</b>	<b>fell</b>	<b>many</b>
<b>run</b>	<b>dog</b>	<b>left</b>	<b>found</b>	<b>woman</b>
<b>know</b>	<b>tell</b>	<b>these</b>	<b>live</b>	<b>us</b>

“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”

Education Authority – Literacy Service

## High Frequency Words: Third 100

night	funny	food	near	animals
suddenly	place	getting	sunny	lucky
told	first	snow	across	horse
our	boat	air	gone	having
great	window	fox	hard	lots
who	sleep	through	brother	coming
cries	feet	tea	really	garden
laugh	morning	top	wind	river
before	queen	eyes	sea	liked
everyone	sister	small	eggs	giant
water	book	friends	much	each
laughed	king	box	please	use
even	wanted	dark	thing	along
didn't	different	grandad	stopped	town
bear	because	couldn't	ever	playing
gran	thought	looking	miss	pulled
clothes	well	end	most	where
can't	inside	thank	cold	need
key	magic	door	park	grow
kept	shouted	better	lived	baby

"To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be."

Education Authority – Literacy Service