

Word of the Day Program

A Critical Supplement to Every Reading Program

Ever noticed how children can learn some reading words easily, yet other words that are just as common will have them scratching their heads for months on end? In a Reading Vocabulary Test I gave to ninety 1st Grade Children at the end of the 1998 school year, I discovered an interesting pattern. While many words were read correctly by 80-90% of all students (such as – “can” – “did” – “in” – and even “take”), other words just as common as these were far more difficult



for the children. For example, less than 20% of the children were able to correctly read the words "want" "were" and "does." In other words, 80% of 1st grade children could not read these words!

Why are Some Words More Difficult to Learn

While most of the common words in our language are basically consistent with their letter/sound patterns, thereby making them easy for the child to “figure-out” (decode), there are many common words in our language that do not follow the phonetic decoding rules, and therefore, can be quite difficult to master. The lack of phonics clues is not the only reason some words are harder to remember. Compounding the problem are words that are visually similar to each other. For example, 1st Grade students often confuse the word - "said" with the word "sad." The word "her" was frequently read as "here."

As you can imagine, failing to learn any of these basic sight words (common in National Reading Tests) would seriously lower a child's reading test score since they are essential for achieving comprehension of a test question or paragraph. Practically every test question begins with the words – What are – How much – Can they – Who was - What did – Why are – Where were – etc.

Dangerous Diagnosis

Time and time again a child's reading problem is mis-diagnosed as being a "comprehension difficulty," when in actuality, the only problem is the child does not have an adequate reading vocabulary. **It certainly should make sense that for a child to understand the meaning of a sentence that he/she must first be able to read the words in the sentence correctly.**

To go one step further - being able to read words correctly is still only part of the puzzle. To achieve maximum comprehension when reading a sentence or paragraph – the student must be able to read the words fluently (defined as reading a word without hesitating (about ½ to 1 second per word). Hesitating 1½ or 2 seconds seriously disrupts fluency and results in the student having a far more difficult time in remembering what has just been read.

While the Tamplead's ReadingKEY Program is one of the few programs that specifically teaches fluency along with the essential grade level reading vocabulary that your student will need to know for his/her grade, it is important to realize that some words require for more time to learn than others. This occurs because some words are either visually similar to other words (were/where) or have unusual spelling patterns that are inconsistent with the phonics rules (who/how). By identifying these words and teaching them separately, we can greatly improve the learning/memorization process. Our ReadingKEY Program has special cards and activities to insure these words are mastered by your student(s). Below are the words we've identified as being in this "difficult to learn" category and have been put into a group called the "WORD OF THE DAY."

The Difficult Sounds and "Words of the Day"

Sound of "h"	goes	put	given
Sound of "w"	two	they're	again
Sound of "y"	some	where	cold
Sound of "ch"	come	four	could
Sound of "sh"	orange	does	would
Sound of "th"	color	doesn't	would
Sound of "wh"	says	wasn't	been
the	they	done	friend
said	you	gone	old
was	yours	their	told
from	very	because	try
have	want	father	buy
give	pretty	laugh	child
saw	giving	seven	kind
there	walk	eight	hold
what	small	both	won't
one	push	myself	most
by	pull	once	son
my	move	who	

HOW TO TEACH THE “WORD OF THE DAY”

One of my daily rituals at Seminole Elementary was to help set up the "WORD OF THE DAY" on the school's daily televised "Morning Show". We would have one or two 4th and 5th grade students teach the word on camera for about 1 minute using full size 8x11 inch letters (like the ones in the photograph). For example, if the Word of the Day was “her” – our student would say –

**“Good morning Seminole – Today’s word of the day is “her” – h – e – r - spells “her” – Hey, wake up out there and listen to me – it is not the word “here” – “here” is spelled with an “e” at the end – see look – here is the “e” at the end of the word “here” (another student would run up and hand hold the letter “e” at the end of the word “her” to make the word “here.”) OK everybody – don’t forget – “here” is spelled h – e - r – e and “her” is spelled h – e – r...
Bye..... Have a nice day.**

To outline it for you – this is the sequence we used for teaching the word

- 1) Say - “Good Morning (school name)”...
- 2) Say - “Today’s word of the day is.....”
- 3) Say – “It is spelled.....”
- 4) Do something fun or unusual with the word or compare it to another similar word
- 5) Remind everyone not to forget and - say it – spell it – say it
- 6) Say “Good-bye” – Have a nice day.....

The above 45-60 second skit plants the thought in everybody’s mind. Then later when I would go into the different 1st grade classes for a reading lesson – I would put the word in front of the class (still using the full-size letters on the mailbox stand as seen in the picture). and say – “OK EVERYBODY – HERE IS THE WORD OF THE DAY – DOES ANYONE REMEMBER WHAT IT IS? If the word was “don’t” – I would say – “CAN ANYONE RAISE THEIR HAND AND TELL ME THE WORD - I DON’T THINK ANYBODY CAN REMEMBER THIS WORD?” The children would think this was quite funny that I would actually say the word when asking what it is. Of course, all hands would go up and I’d call on someone and have them come to the front of the class. They would tell me the word – and I would then ask them to spell it with their hands covering their eyes.

But what if you’re a teacher (or parent) who doesn’t have a Morning Television show or Reading Resource person to come in and teach the word? The next page shows several things you can do to create your own “Word of the Day” strategy.

OTHER WAYS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS (OR PARENTS) TO TEACH THE “WORD OF THE DAY”

1) TEACHING PHASE

Teach the word for 30 seconds in the morning stressing whatever phonics sounds are consistent in the word (remember these words are “Words of the Day” because the often have irregularities in the word/sound patterns.) I've found even telling the students - "THIS LOOKS LIKE THE WORD _____ (actually saying what it appears to be phonetically, and then saying - "But it isn't that word - it really is _____ (saying the actual word). Honestly folks, this doesn't confuse the kids and seems to work very well. Use any creative way you can think of to help memorize the word. (I have even taped the word over my tie – written it on my shoes and worn a word hat).

2) PRACTICE (MEMORIZATION PHASE)

After teaching the word – Have the kids write the word on a large piece of paper using crayons – different colors – etc. This is not only fun – but helps them concentrate on the word (and gives the teacher another 5 minutes of time to get the morning duties completed!)

3) DELAYED MEMORY STRATEGY – PART 1

This is where we use a highly effective memorizing technique which simply allows for a period of time to pass before teaching the information again. In this case we intentionally wait another hour and then ask again – “Can someone tell me the Word of the Day?” You’ll notice far fewer hands go up this time – you’ll be lucky if half the kids remember it. However, when the children who don’t remember hear it said – they’ll say to themselves – “OH YEAH, that’s what it was.....” and at that second the word is memorized a little bit further.

4) DELAYED MEMORY STRATEGY –PART 2 – LUNCH LINE UP

It’s probably getting close to lunch time. Line the class up for lunch and hold up in your hand the smaller Word of the Day card (also inclosed in this file). Once everyone is quiet you can ask – Does anyone still remember the Word of the Day? Watch the line get quiet and the hands go up.

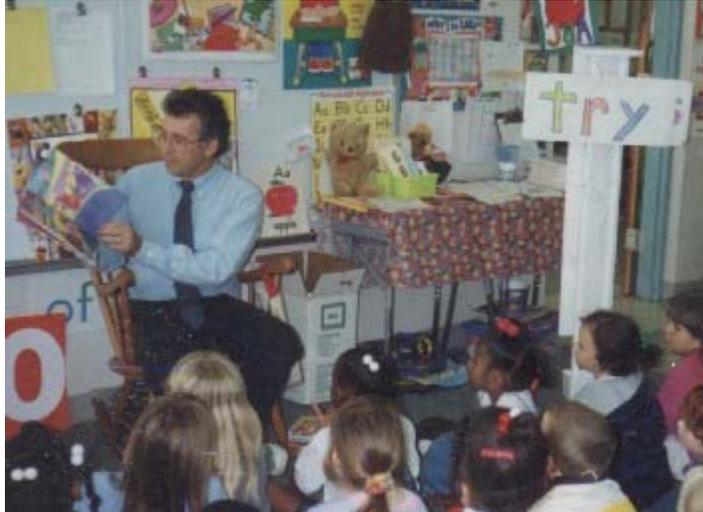
5) DELAYED MEMORY STRATEGY PART 3 – DISMISSAL

Here is a ritual you need to have your students learn. Before dismissal, whenever your students hear you say - “*Word of the Day!*” – they need to learn that this is a cue for everyone to become immediately quiet and that in 30 seconds you will call on the quietest student whose desk is clean and floor neat – to tell you the “Word of the Day.”. If the student says the word correctly, you can reward them with a “treat” – a “point” or just the words “Good Job” and a pat on the back..

How to Set Up Your Own “Word of the Day”

In the accompanying Word of the Day file are all letters of the alphabet which can be used to make the “Words of the Day”– each letter fits on a single 8x11 paper. Using large letters such as these makes a memorable visual imprint, increasing retention.

MAKE A Word of the Day Stand



The word of the day stand can be seen in the right side of the picture displaying the word “try.”
The white vertical strip behind it is actually one level from our Reading Wall
Column lists which I attached on the backside of the stand.

Materials needed to make a Word of the Day stand:

- 1) A mailbox stand - \$15 from Scotty’s – Lowe’s – Home Depot
- 2) A Yardstick (fastened by paper clips to the stand to act as a straight edge)
- 3) 2 large paperclips (to fasten the yardstick to the stand)
- 4) 6 plastic (vinyl) cover sheets (to hold the letters – available at office supply stores)

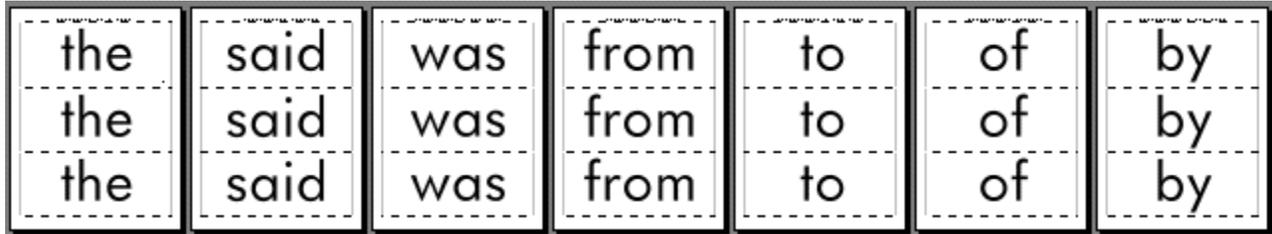
Assembly Directions:

- 1) Take the mailbox stand out of the box and set it up in the room.
- 2) There will be 2 holes in the plate at the very top of the mailbox stand (the top plate is what actually holds the mail box) – Measure the distance between the holes.
- 3) Using a phillips screw driver like a drill - make two holes in the yardstick which are the same distance apart as the holes you just measured on the stand. However, make sure the center of the space between both holes meets with the center of the yardstick.
- 4) Open the paper clips half way so they look like the letter “S” – hook them into the two holes in the yardstick and bend the paper clip so it holds tightly onto the yardstick.
- 5) Place the yardstick on the floor and layout 5 of the plastic paper covers evenly across the yardstick – use flat thumbtacks to secure the plastic paper covers in place.
- 6) Pick up the yardstick by the paperclips and slip the ends into the holes on the metal stand –
- 7) Now put your Word Of the Day Letters into the plastic slip covers and you’re all set to go!!

WORD OF THE DAY WORDS

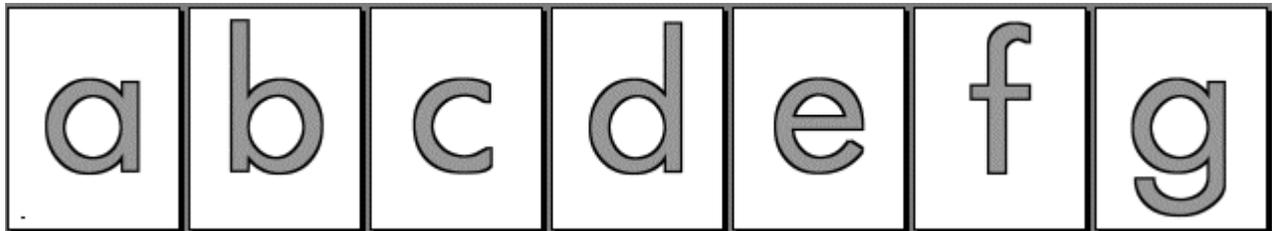
The accompanying "WORD OF THE DAY" files give you the words and letters you'll use in your Word of the Day Program. This includes letters you can use in the display stand and copies of smaller WORDS OF THE DAY which can be placed around the room or school.

WOTD - Small Words - 3 words on one paper



WOTD – File #1 - The first Word of the Day file is called "WOTD-smallwords". Each of the 96 "Word of the Day" words are printed 3 times each on one page. Get your scissors and cut along the dotted lines to have 3 examples of the word. Use these smaller "WORD OF THE DAY" cards (which look like the sample above) to place around the room (or on your hat) so that you can reinforce the word throughout the day.

WOTD – Big Letters – 1 letter on 1 page



WOTD – File #2 – The second Word of the Day file is called "WOTD-bigletters". Because of their size, the letters make a strong impact when put together to spell a Word of the Day. The file contains 26 single alphabet letters (like the image above) and each letter completely fills one 8x11 paper. Print out all letters and place them in a file folder to make it easy to retrieve for spelling the words. Of the 96 total words in our "Word of the Day" arsenal – duplicate letters appear only in a few words such as "color" – "didn't" – "all" – "call" – "fall" – "there" – "and" – "been." So make sure you have printed out at least one of every letter and then two copies of the letters – "o" – "e" – "l" – and "d." That should do it – if you have any questions please email or call me at tampareads.

Got Get em!

Richard Pressinger TampaReads/ReadingKEY Inc.
(352) 465-8658 or email richard@tampareads.com