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Welcome to **100 Sight Word Mini-Books!**

An experience I had teaching led me to realize the need for a resource that teaches high-frequency words in a visual manner. It happened like this: One day, a first grader asked me to print the word *rain* in his personal dictionary. Just as I was about to write it in, there it was, on the page already! If there had been a picture beside the word, I thought, he would not have asked how to spell *rain* a second time. It made me wonder why children didn't use picture dictionaries more often.

I began studying picture dictionaries, old and new. Most of them were collections of concrete nouns. Some contained a few verbs and adjectives. But rarely did they illustrate challenging words such as *of*, *too*, *why*, *was*, or *who*. Before word walls started to appear, it was a common practice, in classrooms that I visited, for teachers to post lists of words like these.

My research led me to the Dolch list of sight words and several subsequent variations. (There seemed to be more agreement on which words to include on a list than on what to call them: sight words, high-frequency words, primer words, instant words, core words, tricky words, puzzle words.) According to many reading experts, one hundred of these words constitute 50 percent of what children read and write in the early years. Experts also recommend that these abstract words be taught in context. Many have irregular spelling and multiple uses, which make them difficult to learn. They are generally considered "unpicturable." That's why they weren't in the picture dictionaries!

At this point, I enlisted my husband, an illustrator, to help me design a series of worksheets. We started by portraying sight words alphabetically in brief, common phrases and sentences. Then, I thought about composing four-line verses so that children could recite the sight words in a chant, for example, "See that hamster? See that dog? See that fish? See that frog?" The repetition, rhythm and rhyme, together with the pictures, would make the lessons fun and more memorable.

In 1998, I noticed teachers adding word walls to their classrooms. Word walls are valuable tools because they give children exposure to sight words. But some children require more support than letters alone can provide. Like training wheels

on a bike or water wings in a pool, picture cues can help children until they are ready to ride off to, or dive into, literacy. We decided to format the illustrated verses as reproducible booklets. Our goal was to produce a series of one hundred lessons. I took these mini-books into several primary classrooms and got an enthusiastic response. Even children with reading difficulties felt successful because the booklets were only four lines long, highly repetitive, and had close picture-text match.

So, here are our 100 mini-books! You will find instructions for assembling the books below, and on pages 6–11, teaching tips for introducing them to children, as well as activities and ideas to extend learning. May these lessons be the keys your children use to unlock the English language and a lifetime of learning!

Using This Book

Making the Mini-Books:

1. Make a single-sided photocopy of the four-panel mini-book page for each child. (Enlarge the pages, if desired.)
2. Fold each photocopy into a four-page book so that the large focus sight word and write-on lines are on the front cover and the word search is on the back.
3. Also prepare an enlarged version of one of the books to use as a teaching aid when introducing the mini-books to your class. Enlarge each of the mini-book pages by 200%. Use a glue stick to affix the cover and the first page back to back. Repeat with the second page and the back cover. Place the pages together and glue or staple along the left-hand side. Trace or print the focus sight word on the second, third, and fourth lines of the verse.



Mini-Book Tips

- When you introduce the mini-books to your class the first few times, distribute them already folded. At the next stage, try pre-creasing the pages, and then distribute them flat. This will give children a model until they are able to fold the books on their own.
- Let each child make two copies of each book—one for school and the other for home! Give each child a resealable plastic bag or square tissue box for storing their books.

Introducing the Mini-Books:

1. Display the cover of the enlarged book (see Making the Mini-Books page 5), for example, the "are" book on page 38. Say, *Today we are going to talk about the word "are." What letters are in this word? Let's think of some ways we can use this word. How might you use it in a sentence?*



2. Look at and discuss the pictures. Point out how one letter is printed on each dash (a r e). Talk about the directionality of the text (left side, top to bottom, right side, top to bottom). Read the phrases or sentences aloud as children follow along. Then invite a pair of children to read the four lines of the verse aloud.

3. Lead the class in a chant:

Read the word.
(are)

Spell the word.
(a-r-e)

Point to and read the word in each line.
(are . . . are . . . are . . . are)

Read the verse.
(They are worms. They are bugs.
They are butterflies. They are slugs.)

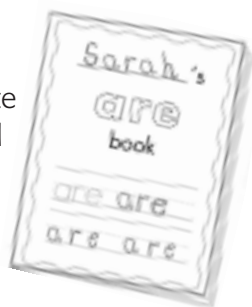
Read the word again.
(ARE!)

4. Invite children to use their finger to "write" the sight word in the air.

5. Tell children to write their name on the cover of their book.

6. Ask them to read aloud with you the large sight word on the cover. Then invite children to color the word creatively or according to a pattern. For example, they might color vowels red and consonants blue, or long vowels red and short vowels yellow. Silent letters might remain uncolored.

7. Direct children to use a pencil to trace the sight word printed near the bottom of the cover. (For extra practice, children might write the word a few times using different-colored pencils, crayons, or thin markers.)



8. Ask children to open their mini-book to the first line of the verse. Invite them to read the sight word printed on the dashed lines. Then direct them to use a pencil to trace the sight word printed on the dashed lines in the second line. Finally, have them print the letters of the sight word on each of the dashed lines in the third and fourth lines of the verse.



9. Read aloud the verse, then invite children to join in as you read it again. Encourage children to use the pictures to help them read the words.

10. Have children turn to the word search on the back cover. Ask them to study the letters carefully. Then say, *How many times can you find the sight word are?* Challenge children to circle the word each time they find it. For Level One and Two words, tell them that they should circle the word only if it is printed left to right and top to bottom. This reinforces directionality of text. Levels Three and Four include words printed on the diagonal, beginning with the word search for "found" on page 67, to give students who are ready an extra challenge.



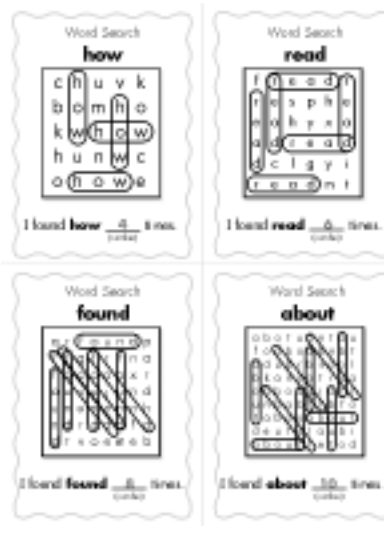
11. Invite children to use colored pencils or thin markers to color the pictures in their mini-book, if they like. Encourage them to reread their mini-books often, at school and at home, to family members and friends.

Teaching Tip

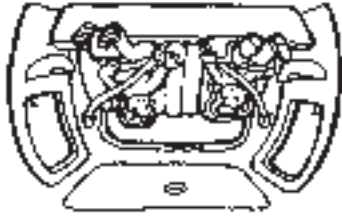
As an extra challenge, tell children to unfold their mini-book to the blank side. Invite them to think of a picture to draw that they can describe using the sight word. Help them write a new phrase or sentence using the word.

About the Word Searches

In each Level One word search, the sight word is hidden four times. It is hidden six times in Level Two, eight times in Level Three, and ten times in Level Four books.



the car



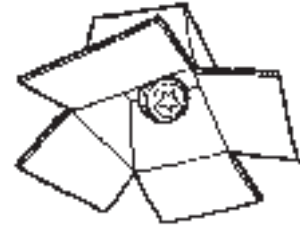
the cup



the jar

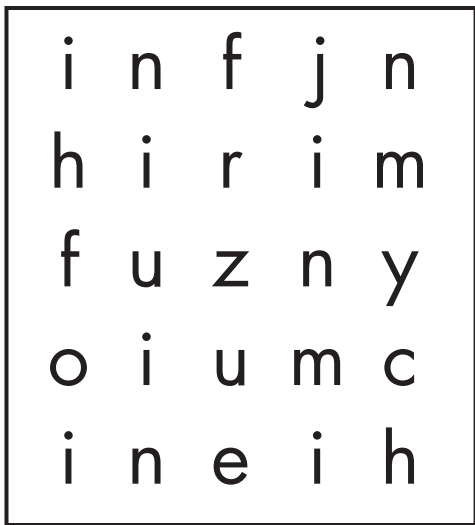


the box



Word Search

in



I found **in** _____ times.
(number)

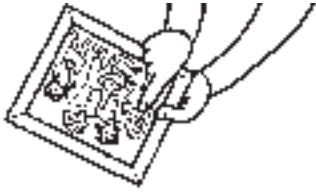
's

in
book

in in

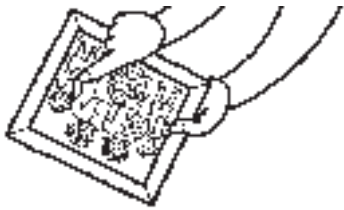
is my brother.

And _____



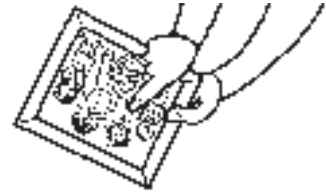
is my sister.

And _____



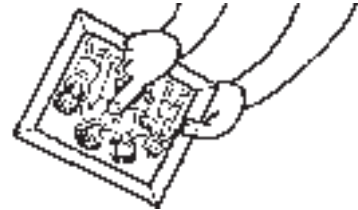
is my mother.

And _____



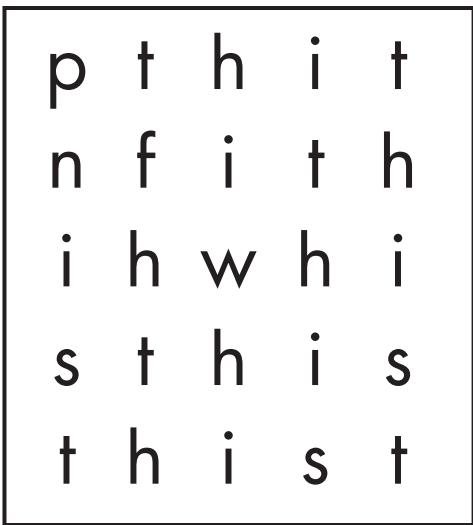
is my father.

See, _____



Word Search

this



I found **this** _____ times.
(number)

's

this

book

this this

dog?

See



snake?

See



frog?

See



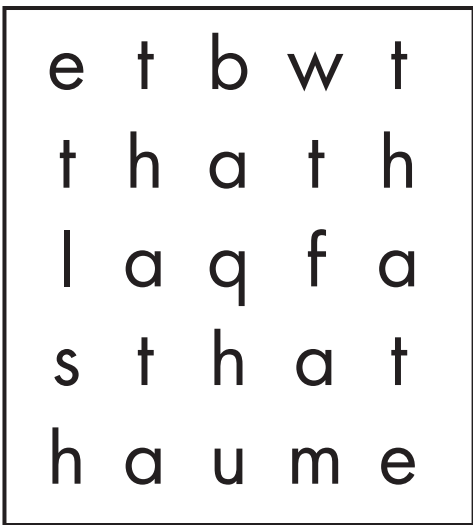
hamster?

See



Word Search

that



I found **that** _____ times.
(number)

's

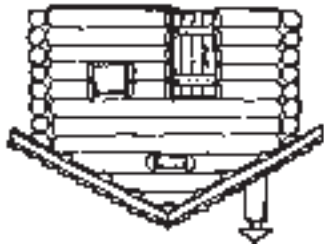
that book

that that

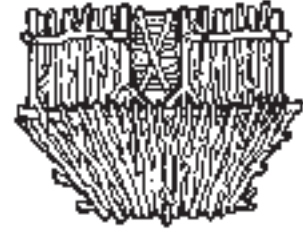
a house _____ bricks



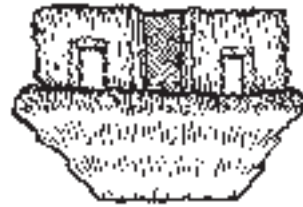
a house _____ logs



a house _____ sticks

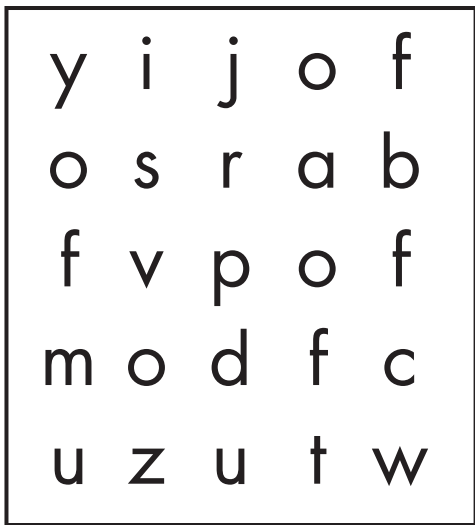


a house _____ straw



Word Search

of



I found **of** _____ times.
(number)

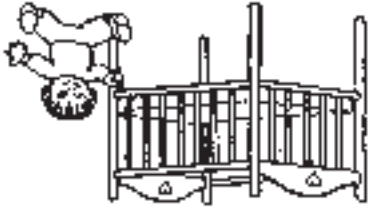
's

of

book



crib



bottle



bib



blanket



Word Search

her



I found **her** _____ times.
(number)

's

her

book



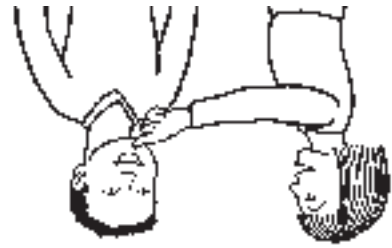
twin



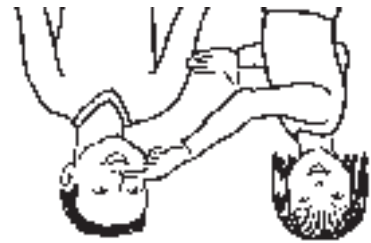
cap



chin

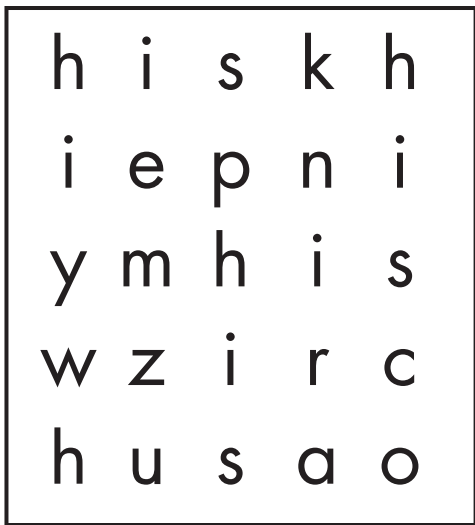


nose



Word Search

his



I found **his** _____ times.
(number)

's

his book

