

The class initially studied about 80 words from the first 108 words of the Dolch sight word list. Initially these were divided by phonetic difficulty to match the learning instruction they had been used to, then gradually phonetically irregular words were introduced according to frequency / necessity for reading high frequency sentence patterns. This list shows the order in which the words were introduced.

Group 1

I, a, at, is, it, on, up, am, in

Group 2

and, bed, big, box, but, can, cat, did, dog, egg,
fish, get, leg, not, pig, ran, red, run, sun, top, yes

Group 3

black, brown, blue, yellow, white

Group 4

ate, came, like, make, ride, time,

Group 5

do, are, have, what, where, live, eat, my, you

Group 6

say, away, play, toy,

Group 7

me, she, we, he, go, no, so

Group 8

too, soon, look, good, see, three

The class used simple games and activities to move from phonetic decoding (understanding how to make each phonetic sound – sound group) to quickly recognizing words and their meaning as sight words. The main activities were:

Simple Noughts & Crosses (Tic-tac-toe/Bingo)

The cards were laid out in a simple grid of 9 squares. 2 players then chose squares, said the word on the card and placed coloured coins on the card. The same game was used at each level of phonetic difficulty to ensure familiarity with the game sequence and allow students to focus on the language content.

dog	cat	get
get	and	black
am	fish	time

“Ijwaru Bingo”

This variation of the game saw 3-4 players playing with one game set. Each player could block another player from reaching 3 cards in a row

dog	blue	pig	at
get	and	leg	make
yellow	am	brown	is
time	yes	fish	Car

Dice Challenge

In pairs, the students take turns rolling a dice. They then have to read the number of cards on the dice: cards are sorted by phonetic difficulty in the initial stages of the course, then the whole set is used once each set has been introduced.

Once the students were able to quickly read the words from individual flashcards, the following sentences patterns were introduced to test both decoding ability and understanding.

My name is _____

What is your name?

I am _____

How old are you?

I like eggs and fish.

What food do you like?

I have black hair.

Do you have black hair?

The next stage was to introduce the first short reading passage. The students read through once as a group, then had 5 minutes solo practice time. During this time they were monitored and could ask for assistance with readings and pronunciation.

Once they had completed the practice they did their first timed reading.

①

Hello. My name is Tom. I am from Canada. I am 10.

I like sports a lot. I like soccer and baseball. I like TV too.

I eat eggs and toast for breakfast and I eat hamburgers for lunch.

I am 130cm, and I have black hair.

(47 words)

Following the timed reading the students were given the sheet to take away and practice for homework. In the following lesson they did a second timed reading and checked to see if their time had improved. In all cases the students' reading speed improved.

As a test of understanding the students did line by line translation in pairs.

The style of the translation was as follows.

Student A	Student B
Hello	こんにちは
My name is Tom	私の名前はトムです
I am from Canada	カナダ出身です
I am 10	私は 10 歳です
I like sports a lot	スポーツが大好きです
I like soccer and baseball	サッカーと野球がすきです

For the next reading passage the reading increased from 47 to 59 words, increasing the difficulty level by changing the verbs and adding “every day”, “short” “brown eyes”

②

Hello. My name is Tom. I am from Canada. I am 10.
I like sports a lot. I play soccer and baseball every day.
I like TV too. I like watching cartoons and sports.
I eat eggs and toast for breakfast and I eat hamburgers for lunch.
I am 130cm, and I have short black hair and brown eyes

(59 words)

The homework also included a guided writing passage for reinforcement. In the following lesson there was both a timed reading of the original passage and also a reading of the students own written passage.

Hello. My name is _____. I am from _____. I am _____.
I like _____ a lot. I like _____ and _____. I like _____
too.
I eat _____ and _____ for breakfast and I eat _____ for lunch.
I am _____ cm, and I have _____, _____ hair and _____ eyes.

The third reading of the passage saw an increase to 91 words. The information load was increased to sustain interest, adding family members to "Tom's" profile and increasing the verb and adverb phrases used.

③

Hello. My name is Tom. I am from Canada. I am 10. I have a sister and a brother.

My sister's name is Jane and my brother's name is Jim.

I like sports a lot. I play soccer and baseball every day.

I like TV too. I like watching cartoons and sports.

I get up at 7:00 every day and I go to bed at 10:30.

I eat eggs and toast for breakfast and I eat hamburgers for lunch.

I am 130cm, and I have short black hair and brown eyes.

(91 words)

By this point in the course all students were consistently doing homework readings and significantly improving their reading time to under one minute. Understanding was checked by doing pair translations, team quizzes and individual comprehension questions.

The fourth reading increased the length to 117 words, and also changed some of the information to ensure students were reading as opposed to memorizing the text.

④

Hello. My name is Jim. I am from America. I am 10. I have a sister and a brother.

My sister's name is Jane and my brother's name is Dave. Jane is 16. She's a High School student. Dave is 11. We go to the same school.

My dad's a teacher and my mum's a nurse.

I like sports a lot. I play soccer and basketball every day.

I like TV too. I like watching cartoons and sports.

I get up at 7:30 every day and I go to bed at 10:30.

I eat eggs and toast for breakfast and I eat hamburgers for lunch.

I am 130cm, and I have short brown hair and blue eyes.

(117 words)

The final reading passage was 141 words long, including recently studied job vocabulary and a personalization exercise and interview with one other student.

The 2 lessons following this saw the students practicing a short presentation about themselves, then a short presentation about their friend.

⑤

Hello. My name is Jim. I'm from America. I'm 10. I have a sister and a brother.

My sister's name is Jane and my brother's name is Dave. Jane is 16. She's a High School student. Dave is 11. We go to the same school.

My dad's a teacher and my mum's a nurse.

I like sports a lot. I play soccer and basketball every day.

I like TV too. I like watching cartoons and sports.

I get up at 7:30 every day and I go to bed at 10:30.

I eat eggs and toast for breakfast and I eat hamburgers for lunch.

At school I wear a white shirt, dark blue sweater, black pants and black shoes, but at the weekend I wear jeans, T Shirt and sneakers.

I am 130cm, and I have short brown hair and blue eyes.

(141 words)

	You	Friend
1. Do you have a sister or brother? What's your sister's / brother's name? How old is she / he?		
2. What does your dad do?		
3. What does your mum do?		
4. What sports do you play?		
5. What TV shows do you watch?		
6. What do you wear at school?		