

The Basic Spelling Vocabulary List

By: Steven Graham, Karen R. Harris, and Connie Loynachan (2008)

This list was devised to help educators know which spelling words should be taught to children. The list contains 850 words that account for 80 percent of the words children use in their writing; the ones they need to be able to spell correctly.

Mastering this relatively small corpus of words yields a high rate of return. For example, the most common 1,000 words are used 13 times more frequently than the next most common 1,000 words. It also provides teachers flexibility in planning spelling instruction, providing an opportunity to give children the "basics" while supplementing with other spelling words germane to classroom activities.

Grade level for each word was determined based upon difficulty, pattern of occurrence in children's writing across grades, and grade placement on current vocabulary lists and spelling materials. Words that children have difficulty spelling correctly are marked with an asterisk.

Grade 1			
a	fat	like*	sat
all	for	look	see
am*	fun*	man	she
and*	get*	may	sit
at	go	me*	six
ball	good*	mom	so
be	got*	my*	stop
bed	had*	no*	sun
big	hat	not	ten
book	he*	of	the*
box	hen	oh	this
boy*	here	old	to*
but	him*	on*	top
came*	his*	one*	toy
can*	home*	out*	two*
car	hot	pan	up
cat	I*	pet	us
come*	if	pig	was*
cow	in*	play*	we*
dad	into*	ran	will*
day*	is	rat	yes
did	it*	red	you*
do	its*	ride	
dog*	let	run	

Grade 2

about*	father*	lives	set
add	feed	long	seven
after	feel	looking	sheep
ago	feet	lost	ship
an*	fell*	lot	shoe
any	find	love	show*
apple	fine*	mad	sick
are*	fire	made*	side
as	first*	make*	sing
ask	fish	many*	sky
ate	five	meat	sleep
away	fix	men	small
baby*	flag	met	snow
back	floor	mile	some*
bad	fly	milk	soon*
bag	food	mine	spell
base	foot	miss	start
bat	four	moon	stay
bee	fox	more	still
been*	from*	most	store*
before*	full	mother*	story
being	funny	move	take
best	game	much*	talk
bike	gas	must	tall
bill	gave	myself*	teach
bird	girl	nail	tell
black	give	name*	than*
blue	glad	need	thank
boat	goat	new*	that
both	goes*	next	them*
bring	going*	nice*	then*
brother*	gold	night	there*
brown	gone	nine	they*
bus	grade*	north	thing
buy*	grass	now*	think*
by	green	nut	three
cake	grow	off*	time*
call	hand	only	today*
candy	happy	open	told
change	hard	or*	too*
child	has*	other	took
city	have*	our	train*
clean	hear*	outside*	tree
club	help	over	truck
coat	here*	page	try
cold	hill	park	use
coming*	hit	part	very*
corn	hold	pay	walk
could	hole	pick	want*
cry	hop	plant	warm
cup	hope*	playing	wash
cut	horse	pony	way
daddy*	house*	post	week
dear	how*	pull	well*
deep	ice	put	went*
deer	inch	rabbit	were*

doing
doll
door
down*
dress
drive
drop
dry
duck
each
eat
eating
egg
end
fall
far
farm
fast

inside*
job
jump
just*
keep
king
know*
lake
land
last
late
lay
left
leg
light
line
little*
live

rain
read
rest
riding
road
rock
room
said*
same
sang
saw*
say
school*
sea
seat
seem
seen
send*

wet
what
when*
while*
white
who
why
wind
wish
with*
woke
wood
work
yellow
yet
your
zoo

Grade 3

able	even	mind	spelling
above	ever	money*	spent
afraid	every*	month	sport
afternoon*	everyone*	morning*	spring
again*	everything*	mouse	stairs
age	eyes	mouth	stand
air	face	Mr.*	state
airplane	family*	Mrs.*	step
almost	feeling	Ms.	stick
alone	felt	music	stood
along*	few	near	stopped*
already*	fight	nearly	stove
also	fishing	never	street
always*	flower	news	strong
animal	flying	noise	study
another*	follow	nothing	such
anything*	forest	number	sugar
around*	forgot	o'clock*	summer*
art	form	often	Sunday*
aunt*	found*	oil	supper
balloon*	fourth	once*	table
bark	free	orange	taken
barn	Friday	order	taking
basket	friend*	own	talking
beach	front	pair	teacher*
bear	getting*	paint	team
because*	given	paper	teeth
become	grandmother	party*	tenth
began	great	pass	that's*
begin	grew	past	their
behind	ground	penny	these*
believe*	guess*	people*	thinking
below	hair	person	third
belt	half	picture	those
better	having*	place	thought*
birthday*	head	plan	throw
body	heard*	plane	tonight*
bones	he's*	please*	trade
born	heat	pocket	trick
bought*	hello*	point	trip
bread	high	poor	trying
bright	himself	race	turn
broke	hour	reach	twelve
brought*	hundred	reading	twenty
busy	hurry	ready	uncle
cabin	hurt*	real	under
cage	I'd*	rich	upon*
camp	I'll*	right*	wagon
can't*	I'm*	river	wait
care	inches	rocket	walking
carry	isn't	rode	wasn't
catch	it's*	round	watch
cattle	I've*	rule	water
cave	kept	running*	weather*
children*	kids	salt	we're*
class	kind	says	west

close*	kitten	sending	wheat
cloth	knew*	sent*	where*
coal	knife	seventh	which
color	lady	sew	wife
corner	large	shall	wild
cotton	largest	short	win
cover	later	shot	window
dark	learn	should	winter
desert	leave	sight	without
didn't*	let's*	sister	woman*
dinner	letter*	sitting	won
dishes	life	sixth	won't*
does	list	sled	wool
done	living	smoke	word
don't*	lovely	soap	working
dragon	loving*	someone*	world*
draw	lunch	something*	would*
dream	mail	sometime*	write*
drink	making	song	wrong
early	maybe*	sorry	yard
earth	mean	sound	year
east	merry	south	yesterday
eight	might*	space	you're*

Grade 4

across	during	mountain	sure*
against	eighth*	ninth	swimming*
answer*	else	ocean	though
awhile*	enjoy	office	threw*
between	enough	parent	tired
board	everybody*	peanut	together*
bottom	example	pencil	tomorrow*
breakfast	except	picnic	toward
broken	excuse	police	tried*
build	field*	pretty*	trouble
building	fifth	prize	truly*
built	finish	quite*	turtle
captain*	following	radio	until*
carried	good-by*	raise	village
caught*	group	really*	visit
charge*	happened*	reason	wear
chicken	harden	remember*	we'll
circus	haven't*	return	whole*
cities	heavy	Saturday*	whose
clothes*	held	scare	women
company	hospital*	second	wouldn't*
couldn't*	idea	since	writing*
country	instead*	slowly	written
discover	known	stories	wrote
doctor*	laugh	student	yell
doesn't	middle	sudden	young
dollar	minute	suit	

Grade 5

although	different*	Planet	suddenly
America	evening	present	suppose*
among	favorite	president	surely*
arrive	finally*	principal*	surprise*
attention	future	probably*	they're*
beautiful*	happiest	problem	through
countries	happiness	receive*	usually
course*	important	sentence	
cousin*	interest	several	
decide	piece	special	

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