



## The Fastest Way for Students to Catch Up When They Don't Know All Letter Names, Letter Sounds, or High Frequency Words

Presented at:

### Power of Reading Conference

Virtual Presentation

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Presented by:  
Linda Farrell  
Linda@Readsters.com  
703-535-7355

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## Objectives

To provide you with:

1. A targeted and practical way to help students who are missing letter names, letter sounds, or high frequency words
2. Concrete suggestions for learning missing letter names, letter sounds, or high frequency words
3. Resources for small group practice



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## Two Notes about the Presentation

1. **This presentation is about how to teach struggling readers who do not know letter names, letter sound, or high frequency words in small groups**
  - Struggling readers are students who do not learn as easily or quickly as typically developing readers
2. **Struggling readers include any students who do not know letter names, letter sounds, or high frequency words, no matter their age**
  - Struggling readers are students who do not learn as easily or quickly as typically developing readers



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## Resources Available from this Presentation

These files will be available from the Power of Reading conference

1. Presentation Slide Handout
  - The slides are created to be notes for you to review after that presentation
2. Letter Song Chart
3. Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker
4. Practice Grids for groups of 1-4 students



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## What We Usually See during Small Group Instruction

## Typical Small-Group Practice for Letter Names and Sounds

### Choral Review

- Students review **letter names** with *flash cards or using a smart board* chorally
- Students review **letter names and sounds** *flash cards or using a smart board* chorally

### Individual Review

- Individual students review **all letters (names sounds, or both)** on *flash cards*

### Games

- Students play games to learn letter names and sounds

## Revisiting Typical Practice Choral Practice

- Choral practice
  - Choral practice teaches some students the “nano second lag”.
  - These students echo what other students say and do not concentrate on the letters they need to learn.
  - It is difficult for the teacher to identify which students who have not learned specific letter names or sounds.

## Revisiting Typical Practice Reviewing All Letters with All Students

- Reviewing all the letters with all students in the group
  - Reviewing all the letter names or sounds, either chorally or individually, assumes the students who do not know all the letters will learn those they don’t know through exposure.
  - They won’t. They need pinpointed teaching.

### *Revisiting Typical Practice*

## Learning and Practicing Letter Name and Sound at the Same Time

- Learning the letter name and letter sound at the same time
  - Learning two things at once is overload for many struggling readers.
  - Some students don't understand the difference between letter names and sounds for reading, even though they can recite the letter name and sound.

## Consider Teaching Unknown Letter Names before Concentrating on Letter Sounds

- Most letter names include the letter sound, which can serve as an anchor for the letter sound.
  - Exceptions are:
    - short vowel sounds
    - c, g, h, w, y (and qu if taught as /kw/)
- Teaching letter names can be accomplished with a song, while letter sounds do not lend themselves to being sung.

## Strong Recommendation

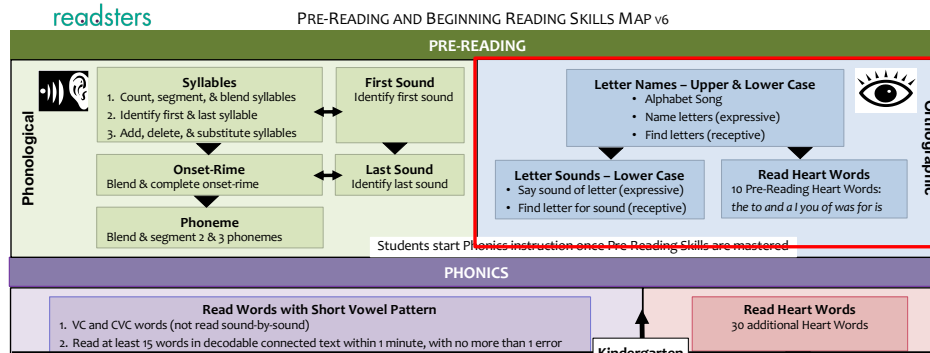
- For each student in intervention to learn letter names, letter sounds, or high frequency words
  - Introduce one new/unknown letter name, letter sound, or high frequency word at a time.
  - Practice that one new item to mastery before introducing and practicing another item.

This presentation is about how to do this.

## The Big Picture for Word Recognition Instruction

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## Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker for Letter Names, Letter Sounds, and 10 High Frequency Words



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## Required Pre-Reading Orthographic Skills for Students Who Struggle

- When students are struggling with learning letters, they need to solidify these skills before they are reading to learn to read (not necessarily in this order).
  - Sing the Alphabet Song
    - Pointing to letters
    - From memory, without looking at letters
  - Name the 5 Vowel Letters
    - Pointing to letters
    - From memory, without looking at letters
  - Name the Letters in Random Order
    - Upper Case
    - Lower Case
  - Name the Letter Sounds in Random Order
    - 21 consonant letter sounds
    - 5 short vowel sounds
  - Read 7-10 Common High Frequency Words Not Decodable at the CVC Level
- This applies to new readers of any age, and to EL students.

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## Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker

Pre-Reading Orthographic Skills Tracker

Draft v1 2.11.25

	1. Sing Alphabet Song & Touch Letters	2. Sing Alphabet Song Not Looking at Letters	3. Name Vowel Letters Touching Letters	4. Name Vowel Letters Not Touching Letters	5. Name 26 Upper Case Letters in Random Order	6. Name 26 Lower Case Letters in Random Order	7. Name 21 Consonant Letter Sounds in Random Order	8. Name 5 Short Vowel Letter Sounds in Random Order	9. Read at Least 7 of 10 High Frequency Words
Name									

1. Sing Alphabet Song while Touching Letter

Name	A B C D	E F G	H I J K L	M N O P	Q R S	T U V	W X	Y Z

2. Sing Alphabet Song Not Looking at Letters

Name	A B C D	E F G	H I J K L	M N O P	Q R S	T U V	W X	Y Z

Page 1 of 3

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## Tracking Individual Progress Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker: Page 1

Top of page tracks when the student masters each of the necessary pre-reading orthographic skills

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Name	1. Sing Alphabet Song & Touch Letters	2. Sing Alphabet Song Not Looking at Letters	3. Name Vowel Letters Touching Letters	4. Name Vowel Letters Not Touching Letters	5. Name 26 Upper Case Letters in Random Order	6. Name 26 Lower Case Letters in Random Order	7. Name 21 Consonant Letter Sounds in Random Order	8. Name 5 Short Vowel Letter Sounds in Random Order	9. Read at Least 7 of 10 High Frequency Words

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Name	1. Sing Alphabet Song & Touch Letters	2. Sing Alphabet Song Not Looking at Letters	3. Name Vowel Letters Touching Letters	4. Name Vowel Letters Not Touching Letters

## Letter Song Chart

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## Letter Song Chart

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	
H	I	J	K
L	M	N	O P
Q	R	S	
T	U	V	
W	X		
Y	Z		

a	b	c	d
e	f	g	
h	i	j	k
l	m	n	o p
q	r	s	
t	u	v	
w	x		
y	z		

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## Tracking Individual Progress Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker: Page 1

Middle of page tracks when the student masters singing the alphabet song (or naming the letters)

Name	ABCD	EFG	HIJKL	LMNOP	QRS	TUV	WX	YZ

Name	ABCD	EFG	HIJKL	LMNOP	QRS	TUV	WX	YZ

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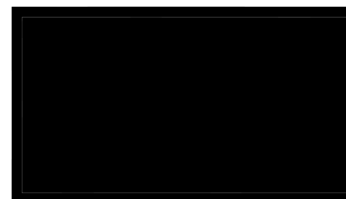
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## Why Learn the Alphabet Song or to Recite the Letter Names in Alphabetical Order?

- Learning the song or how to recite the letter names cements the letter names in the student's long-term memory
  - These students can pull out the letter name when they learn to look at letters in random order and name them.
- Learning the song touching while touching the letters is a first step to learning to recite the alphabet from memory
  - Singing the song while touching the letters helps the students (1) recognize the letters and (2) slow down to name each letter distinctly

## A Readsters' Observation

- Students who have difficulty learning letter names often do not say those letter names correctly when singing or reciting the song.
- Listen for Reese not saying "v" (b) and "w" (slurs) correctly



Clip from video on  
Reading Rockets website:  
Looking at Reading Interventions

## Beginning Letter Naming Practice With the Letter Chart

- The letters are arranged so that lines break to match the cadence of the alphabet song
- Students can learn the song, one line at a time
- If any line is difficult, the student can sing or recite the letter names for that line only
- Singing the song or reciting letter names allows the teacher to correct inaccurate naming of letters

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	
H	I	J	K
L	M	N	O P
Q	R	S	
T	U	V	
W	X		
Y	Z		

a	b	c	d
e	f	g	
h	i	j	k
l	m	n	o p
q	r	s	
t	u	v	
w	x		
y	z		

## Some Students Can Recite Letter Names with and without the Letter Chart

- Many students will be able to:
  - Name the letter names pointing to the letters
  - Name the letters in alphabetical order from memory
- These students do not need to practice these skills
- You can learn this from a letter naming diagnostic assessment

## Learning the Vowel Letters

## Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker: Page 2

Draft v1 2.11.25

**3 & 4. Name All 5 Vowel Letters**

Name	3. Looking at Letter Chart	4. Without Looking at Chart

**5. Name 26 Upper Case Letters in Random Order**

Name	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

**6. Name 26 Lower Case Letters in Random Order**  
(letters in red have same shape as upper case letter)

Name	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

## Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker: Page 2 Top of Page

**3 & 4. Name All 5 Vowel Letters**

Name	3. Looking at Letter Chart	4. Without Looking at Chart

## Use the Letter Song Chart To Teach the Vowel Letters

- 5 vowel letters are in red
- After students can say each letter and point to them, teach the students that the red letters are the vowel letters
- Ask each student to point to the vowel letters and name them
- Eventually, ask the student to name the 5 vowel letters without looking at the chart
- Optional to teach that the rest of the letters are called consonants (the word can be hard to pronounce)

Alphabet Song Chart

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	
H	I	J	K
L	M	N	O
P	Q	R	S
T	U	V	
W	X		
Y	Z		

Alphabet Song Chart

a	b	c	d
e	f	g	
h	i	j	k
l	m	n	o
p	q	r	s
t	u	v	
w	x		
y	z		

## Why Teach the Vowel Letters?

- A vowel letter is in almost all syllables
- Understanding the difference between vowels and consonants can help students with the “language of literacy”
  - This will take away confusion during phonics instruction

6. Name 26 Lower Case Letters in Random Order	7. Name 21 Consonant Letter Sounds in Random Order
---	--

## Naming Letters and Letter Sounds in Random Order

## Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker: Page 2 Middle and Bottom of Page

### 5. Name 26 Upper Case Letters in Random Order

Name	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

### 6. Name 26 Lower Case Letters in Random Order (letters in red have same shape as upper case letter)

Name	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

## Pinpointed Practice

- Teach each student one new letter at a time
- Use two types of practice:
  - Flashcards
  - Practice pages



## Pinpointed Practice with Flash Cards

## Flashcards

- Prepare a separate deck of 12 flashcards for each student
  - 4 cards with letters the student knows
  - 2 cards with letters the student just learned
  - 6 cards with the new letter the student is learning
- Students can practice upper- or lower-case letters, or a combination.

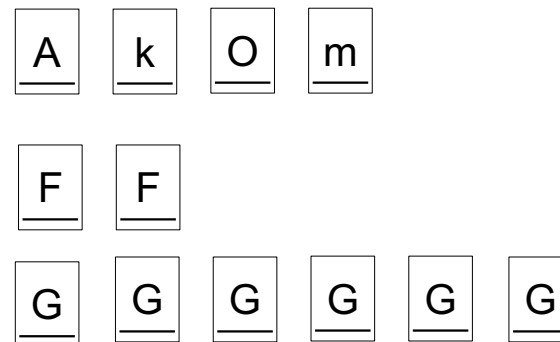
## Assembling Flashcards

- The student knows the letters A, D, K, L, M, O, P, S, T, X, Z, a, k, m, o, p, z
- The student just learned the letter F
- The student is learning the letter G

### Preparing the Flashcard Deck

- 4 cards, each with a different letter the student knows:
  - A, k, O, m
- 2 cards with letters the student just learned
  - F
- 6 cards with the new letter the student is learning
  - G

## Flashcards Deck



## Using the Flash Cards (Part One of Mastery)

- Each student has their own deck
- Each student takes a turn to name the letters in their deck three or more times during an intervention lesson (depending on time)

## Pinpointed Practice with Practice Grids

## Practice Grid for Letter Names, Letter Sounds, or HF Words (Part Two of Mastery)

Henry											
Letter Names											How many correct?
1	e	o	h	e	e	c	o	e	m	e	
2	t	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	o	e	
3	o	e	h	e	o	e	t	e	H	m	
4	e	o	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	h	
5	H	e	m	e	o	h	e	t	o	e	

## What is Henry practicing?

Henry											
Letter Names											How many correct?
1	e	o	h	e	e	c	o	e	m	e	
2	t	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	o	e	
3	o	e	h	e	o	e	t	e	H	m	
4	e	o	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	h	
5	H	e	m	e	o	h	e	t	o	e	

What letter is Henry learning?

Henry											
Letter Names										How many correct?	
1	e	o	h	e	e	c	o	e	m	e	
2	t	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	o	e	
3	o	e	h	e	o	e	t	e	H	m	
4	e	o	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	h	
5	H	e	m	e	o	h	e	t	o	e	

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What letter did Henry learn most recently?

Henry											
Letter Names										How many correct?	
1	e	o	h	e	e	c	o	e	m	e	
2	t	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	o	e	
3	o	e	h	e	o	e	t	e	H	m	
4	e	o	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	h	
5	H	e	m	e	o	h	e	t	o	e	

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What is Ettie practicing?

Ettie											
Letter Sounds										How many correct?	
1	f	y	f	y	f	o	f	a	f	c	
2	f	m	f	o	f	f	y	a	y	f	
3	y	f	c	f	y	f	m	f	o	x	
4	o	f	x	f	c	y	f	m	y	f	
5	f	x	a	f	y	f	y	f	c	f	

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Using the Practice Pages













- Each student gets practice pages for all students in the group
- Each student takes a turn to name the letters, sounds, or hf words on his/her grid
- A student practices until he/she names all the letters correctly (without self-corrections) on three lines each day. The three correctly read lines do not need to be in a row.
- Self corrections are not counted as correct.

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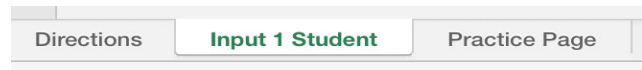
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## Preparing the Practice Grids: A Spreadsheet

## Four Spreadsheets

-  Practice Grid 1 student v6 lf 2.15.25.xlsx  
-  Practice Grid 2 students v6 lf 2.15.25.xlsx  
-  Practice Grid 3 students v6 lf 2.15.25.xlsx  
-  Practice Grid 4 students v6 lf 2.15.25.xlsx  

## Three Tabs on Each Spreadsheet



### Input:

- Student Name
- Type of Practice
- 5 letters the student already knows. (These can be different than the ones in the flashcard deck.)
- Input the most recent letter learned.
- Input the new letter to learn.

**Directions for filling in letters or HF words to practice:**  
 1. Fill in the yellow cells.  
 2. The letters will automatically populate the practice grids in the Practice Page tab.  
 3. Print the Practice Page

Student #1 Name

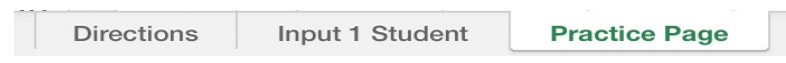
Type of Practice (Letter Names, Letter Sounds, High Frequency Words)

5 known letters or HF words (repeat letters if 5 are not known)

Most recently learned letter or HF word

New letter or HF word to learn

## Three Tabs on Each Spreadsheet



The Practice Pages automatically populate with practice for each student.

Practice for Letter Names, Letter Sounds, or High Frequency Words  
 For 4 Students

Practice Page 1  
 DRAFT v4 2.11.25

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Henry

Letter Names	How many correct?
1 e o h e e c o e m e	
2 t e o e H e c e o e	
3 o e h e o e t e H m	
4 e o e o e H e c e h	
5 H e m e o h e t o e	

## Recording Student Performance on the Practice Grid Practice Page

Practice for Letter Names, Letter Sounds, or High Frequency Words  
For 4 Students

Practice Page 1  
DRAFT v4 2.11.25

Date: 2-24-22

Henry

Letter Names	How many correct?
1 e o h e e s c o a s/c m e	8
2 t e o e H e c e o e	10
3 o e h a s/c o e t e H m	9
4 e o e o e H e c e h	10
5 H e m e o h e t o e	10

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## What Is Mastery for Learning a New Letter or Letter Sound?

Mastery occurs when the student can:

- (1) **Practice Grid:** Name the letters or sounds on the Practice Grid and in the first three lines attempted 2-3 days in a row
- AND
- (2) **Flash Cards:** Name all the letters in the flash cards the first three times attempted 2-3 days in a row.

Self-corrections do not count as correct.

## What Is Mastery for All 26 Letter Names/Sounds?

1. Name 26 Upper-Case Letters in Random Order
2. Name 26 Lower-Case Letters in Random Order
3. Name 21 Consonant Letter Sounds in Random Order

Mastery occurs when students can name all letter names or sounds in random order 2-3 days in a row the first time they try.

5. Name 26 Upper Case Letters in Random Order	6. Name 26 Lower Case Letters in Random Order	7. Name 21 Consonant Letter Sounds in Random Order

## Spreadsheet for 4 Students in a Group

DirectionsInput 4 StudentsPractice Page

Practice for Letter Names, Letter Sounds, or High Frequency Words  
4 Students

Input Page 1  
DRAFT v4 2.11.25

Input Sheet - 4 Students

Directions for filling in letters or HF words to practice:  
1. Fill in the yellow cells.  
2. The letters will automatically populate the practice grids in the Practice Page tab.  
3. Print the Practice Page

Student #1 Name Henry

Type of Practice (Letter Names, Letter Sounds, High Frequency Words)  
Letter Names

5 known letters or HF words (repeat letters if 5 are not known)  
o h m H t

Most recently learned letter or HF word  
o

New letter or HF word to learn  
e

Student #2 Name Ette

Type of Practice (Letter Names, Letter Sounds, High Frequency Words)  
Letter Sounds

5 known letters or HF words (repeat letters if 5 are not known)  
a c x o m

Most recently learned letter or HF word  
r

New letter or HF word to learn  
z

Practice for Letter Names, Letter Sounds, or High Frequency Words  
4 Students

Input Page 2  
DRAFT v4 2.11.25

Student #3 Name Beckett

Type of Practice (Letter Names, Letter Sounds, High Frequency Words)  
Letter Names

5 known letters or HF words (repeat letters if 5 are not known)  
C H M O X

Most recently learned letter or HF word  
T

New letter or HF word to learn  
W

Student #4 Name Shep

Type of Practice (Letter Names, Letter Sounds, High Frequency Words)  
High Frequency Words

5 known letters or HF words (repeat letters if 5 are not known)  
in the I te on

Most recently learned letter or HF word  
was

New letter or HF word to learn  
of

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## Beware of Teaching Too Many High Frequency Words

- Students who are struggling to learn letter names and/or letter sounds are unlikely to be able to learn words consisting of strings of letters they struggle to remember.
- It is a good rule of thumb not to teach any new HF words that the students don't already know until they have learned all their letter names and most of their sounds.

## Pre-Reading Orthographic Tracker

Bottom of Page 3

### 9. Read at Least 7 of 10 High Frequency Words

(students should be able to say first sound in words in red)

Name	the	a	and	I	to	was	for	you	is	of

- Before students struggling with orthographic skills are ready to read, they need to know 7-10 High Frequency words. Decodable sentences require a few high frequency words.

## Flashcards & Practice Pages

- Use the same procedures to create a flashcard deck and practice pages for students practicing letter names and letter sounds.

## Input HF Words

Input 5 HF words the student already knows. (These can be different than the ones in the flashcard deck.)

Input the most recent HF word learned.

Input the new HF word to learn.

Student #4 Name

Type of Practice (Letter Names, Letter Sounds, High Frequency Words)

5 known letters or HF words (repeat letters if 5 are not known)

Most recently learned letter or HF word

New letter or HF word to learn

## Practice Grid Practice Page

Page 3 – bottom of page

The Practice Pages automatically populate with practice for each student.

Shep										
High Frequency Words										
How many correct?										
1	of	was	of	in	of	the	of	was	of	I
2	to	of	I	of	in	was	an	of	was	of
3	of	an	the	was	of	to	of	was	of	of
4	the	was	of	in	of	an	was	of	I	of
5	an	of	was	of	to	of	in	of	the	was

## Practice Grid Practice Pages for 4 Students

Practicing Different Skills

Page 3

Practice for Letter Names, Letter Sounds, or High Frequency Words For 4 Students										
Practice Page 1 DRAFT v4 2.11.25										
Date: _____										
<b>Henry</b> Letter Names How many correct?										
1	e	o	h	e	e	c	o	e	m	e
2	t	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	o	e
3	o	e	h	e	o	e	t	e	H	m
4	e	o	e	o	e	H	e	c	e	h
5	H	e	m	e	o	h	e	t	o	e
<b>Ettie</b> Letter Sounds How many correct?										
1	f	y	f	y	f	o	f	a	f	c
2	f	m	f	o	f	f	y	a	y	f
3	y	f	c	f	y	f	m	f	o	x
4	o	f	x	f	c	y	f	m	y	f
5	f	x	a	f	y	f	y	f	c	f
<b>Beckett</b> Letter Names How many correct?										
1	H	T	W	O	W	X	M	W	W	T
2	T	W	C	W	H	T	M	W	W	X
3	W	O	W	T	W	C	W	T	M	W
4	W	C	W	W	M	W	X	W	T	O
5	O	W	X	W	T	C	W	H	W	W
<b>Shep</b> High Frequency Words How many correct?										
1	of	was	of	in	of	the	of	was	of	I
2	to	of	I	of	in	was	an	of	was	of
3	of	an	the	was	of	to	of	was	of	of
4	the	was	of	in	of	an	was	of	I	of
5	an	of	was	of	to	of	in	of	the	was

## What Is Mastery?

7. Read at Least 7 of 10 HF Words

Mastery occurs when the student can perform the task (reading hf words) the first time he/she attempts it 2-3 days in a row on BOTH letter grid and flash cards. Self-corrections do not count as correct.

2.11.25	
9.	Read at Least 7 of 10 High Frequency Words

## Thank you

To contact me with questions:  
Linda@Readsters.com



