

Handout 3.3F: Guidelines for Teaching Irregular Words

- Introduce frequently occurring irregular words that are found in many stories and expository texts.
- Teach new irregular words before students encounter them in stories.
- Limit the number of irregular words introduced in a single lesson.
- Introduce visually similar irregular words, such as *where* and *were* and *was* and *saw*, in separate lessons to avoid confusion.
- Review irregular words that have been previously taught.

Sample Lesson

- Write an irregular word on the board: *said*.
- With students, sound out each letter using its most common sound, and blend these sounds to read the word as you point to each letter.
- Using this “sounding-out” strategy to read irregular words helps students, especially struggling readers, consistently apply a familiar strategy to read a word. Using this strategy confirms what students know because some of the sounds in these words are regular.
- Help students discover the parts of the word that do not represent their most common sound(s).
- Circle the irregular part: *ai* in *said*.
- Compare this part to what is said by writing the pronunciation in parentheses: (s-e-d).
- Say the word slowly: /s-e-d/.
- Write the word on a card.
- Review previously introduced irregular words before introducing a new irregular word.

Adapted from Carreker, 1999