Ayres Spelling Scale

from the 1957 *Writing Road to Reading*

For Word Reading and Word Spelling Fluency Practice

By Donald L. Potter

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Odessa, TX
Ayres List from the 1957 *Writing Road to Reading*

For Word Reading Fluency Practice

Words in Sections A to G – 89 Words (5340/sec. = wpm)

me    do    and    go    at    on
a     it     is     she     can     see
run   the    in     so     no     now
man   ten    bed    top    he     you
will  we     an     my     up     last
not   us     am     good    little    ago
old   bad    red    of     be     but
this  all    your   you     out    time
may   into   him    today   look    did
like  lice   six    boy     book    by
have  are    had    over    must    make
school street say    come    hand    ring
live (i-e) live (-i-) kill    late    let    big
mother three land    cold    hot    hat
child ice    play    sea    see
Section H – 55 Words (3300/sec. = wpm)

day  eat  sit  lot  box
belong  door  floor  yes  low
soft  stand  yard  bring  tell
ball  law  ask  just  gust
way  get  home  much  call
long  love  then  house  year
to  I  as  send  one
has  some  if  how  her
them  other  baby  well  about
men  man  for  ran  run
was  that  his  led  lay

Section I – 69 Words (5760/sec.=wpm)
nice  face  miss  ride  tree  sick
got  north  white  spent  foot  blow
block  spring  river  plant  cut  song
sing  sang  sung  winter  stone  lake
lace  page  nice  end  fall  feet
went  back  away  paper  put  each
soon  came  Sunday  show  Monday  moon
yet  find  give  new  letter  take
Mr.  Mister  after  thing  what  than
its  it’s  very  or  thank  dear
west  sold  told  best  form  far
gave  alike  add
seven forger happy noon think
sister cast card south deep
inside blue post town stay
grand outside dark band game
boat rest east son sun
help hard race cover fire
wire tire age gold read\(^{(-e-)}\)
read\(^{(ee)}\) red fine cannot May
may line left ship train
saw pa large near down
why bill want girl part
still place report never found
side kind life here car
word every under most made
said say work our more
when from form wind\(^{(-i-)}\) wind\(^{(i-e)}\)
print air fill along lost
name room hope same glad
with mine
Section L - 109 Words (6540/sec.=wpm)

catch  black  warm  unless  clothing
clothe  began  begin  begun  able
gone   go     done   do    suit
track  watch  dash  fell   fight
buy    by     stop   walk  talk
balk   grant  soap   news  new
small  war    summer above express
turn   lesson half  father anything
table  high  talk   June  right
write  wrote  road   rote  ride
March  march  next   indeed four
herself power wish  because world
country meet  meat  another trip
list   people ever  held  church
once   one    own   before know
no_____ were where there  here
dead   leave  early close close
flower four  nothing ground lead
led    lead   such  many  morning
however mind  shall alone order
third  push  point within done
do    gone  go     body

(This is the point of minimum accomplishment for a second grade)
By now Rules 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 26 should be understood. They will no longer be noted.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
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<th>Word</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trust</td>
<td>extra</td>
<td>dress</td>
<td>beside</td>
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<td>teach</td>
<td>happen</td>
<td>begun</td>
<td>collect</td>
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<td>file</td>
<td>provide</td>
<td>sight</td>
<td>stood</td>
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<td>fix</td>
<td>born</td>
<td>goes</td>
<td>go</td>
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<td>does</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>hold</td>
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<td>drill</td>
<td>army</td>
<td>pretty</td>
<td>stole</td>
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<td>income</td>
<td>bought</td>
<td>paid</td>
<td>pay,</td>
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<td>laid</td>
<td>lay,</td>
<td>said</td>
<td>say</td>
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<td>enter</td>
<td>railroad</td>
<td>unable</td>
<td>ticket</td>
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<td>account</td>
<td>driven</td>
<td>real</td>
<td>recover</td>
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<td>mountain</td>
<td>steamer</td>
<td>speak</td>
<td>past</td>
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<td>might</td>
<td>begin</td>
<td>contact</td>
<td>deal</td>
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<td>almost</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>bought</td>
<td>less</td>
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<td>even</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>true</td>
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<tr>
<td>took</td>
<td>again</td>
<td>inform</td>
<td>both</td>
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<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>month</td>
<td>children</td>
<td>child</td>
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<td>build</td>
<td>built</td>
<td>understand</td>
<td>follow</td>
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<td>charge</td>
<td>days</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>member</td>
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<td>case</td>
<td>while</td>
<td>also</td>
<td>return</td>
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<td>those</td>
<td>these</td>
<td>office</td>
<td>great</td>
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<td>Miss</td>
<td>miss</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>died</td>
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<td>die</td>
<td>change</td>
<td>wire</td>
<td>few</td>
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<td>please</td>
<td>picture</td>
<td>money</td>
<td>ready</td>
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<tr>
<td>omit</td>
<td>anyway</td>
<td>any</td>
<td>way</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Section M - 96 Words – (5760/sec.=wpm)
eight  ate  afraid  uncle
rather comfort elect aboard
jail  shed  retire refuse
district  restrain  royal objection
object  pleasure  measure treasure
navy  fourth four population
proper judge weather whether
worth contain figure sudden
forty four fourth fourteen
instead throw threw personal
everything rate chief perfect
second slide farther duty
intend company quite quit
quiet none knew know
remain direct appear liberty
enough fact board September
station attend between public
music picnic friend during
endure through police until
madam truly true whole
hole address request raise
August Tuesday goes does
struck getting get don’t
Thursday Saturday

(This is the point of minimum accomplishment for third grade)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>spend</th>
<th>enjoy</th>
<th>awful</th>
<th>awe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>usual</td>
<td>complain</td>
<td>auto</td>
<td>vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>beauty</td>
<td>flight</td>
<td>travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rapid</td>
<td>repair</td>
<td>trouble</td>
<td>double</td>
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<tr>
<td>entrance</td>
<td>importance</td>
<td>important</td>
<td>carried</td>
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<td>carry</td>
<td>loss</td>
<td>fortune</td>
<td>empire</td>
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<td>mayor</td>
<td>wait</td>
<td>beg</td>
<td>degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>prison</td>
<td>engine</td>
<td>visit</td>
<td>guest</td>
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<tr>
<td>guess</td>
<td>department</td>
<td>obtain</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animal</td>
<td>favor</td>
<td>Mrs.</td>
<td>Mr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss</td>
<td>husband</td>
<td>amount</td>
<td>human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>view</td>
<td>election</td>
<td>elect</td>
<td>clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>though</td>
<td>o’clock</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>does</td>
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<tr>
<td>goes</td>
<td>regard</td>
<td>escape</td>
<td>since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which</td>
<td>length</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong</td>
<td>destroy</td>
<td>newspaper</td>
<td>daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naughty</td>
<td>caught</td>
<td>taught</td>
<td>answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reply</td>
<td>oblige</td>
<td>sail</td>
<td>sale,</td>
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<tr>
<td>cities</td>
<td>city,</td>
<td>known</td>
<td>know</td>
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<tr>
<td>several</td>
<td>desire</td>
<td>nearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sometimes declare engage final
terrible surprise period addition
employ property select connection
connect firm region religion
convict private command debate
crowd factory publish represent
term section relative relate, prōgress progress entire president
preside measure famous fame
serve estate remember either
effort important importance due
dew include running run
allow position field ledge
claim primary result Saturday
appoint information whom who
arrest themselves self calves
halves half, special especially,
woman women, prēsent present,
action act, justice just,
gentleman gentle, enclose await
suppose wonderful direction forward
backward toward although prompt
attempt whose who, statement
state perhaps their they
imprison written writ arrange

(This is the point of minimum accomplishment for fourth grade.)
forenoon  before  lose
loose    loss    combination
combine  avenue  neighbor
weigh    wear    entertain
salary   visitor  visit
publication machine  engine
toward   success
drown
adopt    secure
honor
promise  wreck
prepare
vessel   busy
prefer
preference, illustrate  illustration
different  differ
provision according
already
attention education
director
direct
purpose
common
diamond
together
convention
increase
manner
feature
article
service
serve,
injure
injury
effect
distribute
general
tomorrow
consider
against
again
gain
complete
search
treasure
popular
Christmas
Christ
interest
often stopped stop
motion theater improvement
improve, century cent
improvement
total mention arrive
century
total improvement
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examination examine particular
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affair course coarse
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cary
guess, guest, circular
circle, argument, argue
volume, organize, summon
official, officer, office
victim, estimate, accident
invitation, invite, accept
impossible, concern, associate
automobile, various, vary
very, entitle, politician
national, nation, recent
business, busy, refer
minute (size), minute (time), ought
absence, absent, conference
confer, Wednesday, really
real, celebration, folks

(This is the minimum accomplishment for a fifth grade.)
meant  mean,  earliest
early  whether  distinguish
consideration colonies  colony
colonial,  assure  sure
relief  occupy  probably
probable  foreign  expense
responsible  response,  beginning
begin,  application  apply,
difficulty  difficult,  scene
science  scissors  descend
descent,  finally  final
develop  circumstance  circumference
circle,  issue  tissue
material  suggest  mere
senate  senator  senatorial
receive  respectfully  respectful
respect,  agreement  agree
unfortunate  majority  major
elaborate  citizen  city, 
necessary  necessity  divide
Section V – 17 Words (1020/sec.=wpm)

principal principle testimony
discussion discuss, arrangement
arrange, reference refer
evidence experience session
secretary association career
height weight

Section W – 16 Words (960/sec.=wpm)

organization organize emergency
appreciate sincerely sincere
athletic athlete extreme
practical proceed cordially
cordial separate February
library

Section XYZ – 19 words (1140/sec.=wpm)

immediate convenient receipt
preliminary disappoint especially
special annual committee
employee coffee decision
decide principle judgment
judge recommend allege
allegiance

The sixth-grade work should continue with and complete all of the Buckingham Extension to the Ayres Spelling Scale.
The Ayres list is primarily one of base words and may be expanded by adding prefixes and endings. It is interesting to note that we recently had two second-grade classes, each of more than fifty pupils, who completed the Ayres list through the fourth-grade words. More than half made sixth-grade Metropolitan test scores and not one of the 108 scored below fourth grade. Thus children taught by this method do require supplemental words lists beyond Ayres list for grades beyond the second. (WRTR 1957, p. 211)

After each word is written a child should read it and give a sentence containing the word. This latter may well be postponed until all the words in the day’s lesson are written.

Almost all of this list of 1000 words are in the spoken or “understanding” vocabulary of normal six-year old children. Teachers should of course introduce and teach no words far beyond the easy understanding of the child in their age group. It seems silly to mention this but critics of phonics seem to assume that if the sounds of a language are taught the meaning of individual words and sentences is overlooked. Experience with our phonics is quite the reverse and such criticism is quite unfounded. (WRTR 1957, 131)

Note concerning Spaldling’s Ayres list: “Some words are bracketed together. In such cases the first word is in the Ayres list. The others have been added to show (1) the base word, or (2) several words in the same peculiarity in spelling, or (3) how some words are said alike but use different phonograms in spelling, or (4) contrast in the sounds of two words that might easily be confused. (WRTR 1957, 130)

At the end of Section J we read, “At this point we should discuss base words and derivatives. Many words are derived from “base” words and it is always important for word meaning, grammar and a grasp of how the language is formed that the base word be taught with each derived word. For example, please is the base word for pleasant, pleasure, displease, etc. It is important also important that children learn that, although many words contain the spellings of shorter words which are not related in meaning – this fact is a mere coincidence which they should ignore. The phonics teaching now being used in schools classifies rhyming words like ill, will, bill, fill, kill, mill, etc., as word families. This is wrong. They are not families but completely unrelated words. (p. 152)

The Ayres list and above information was taken from the 1957 edition of Romalda and Walter Spalding’s The Writing Road to Reading by Donald L. Potter - in the interest of understanding the history and pedagogy of the method.

Note: This is a Fluency Drill Version of Spalding’s 1957 Ayres’ Spelling Scale is to be use along with my Phonovisual Remedial Program. I believe students who master the Phonovisual Charts and can spell and read my Phonovisual words will be able read and spell most if not all of the Ayres Spelling Scale Words. The Fluency Drills also serve to round out their reading and spelling ability. Work with the Ayres Spelling Fluency List should not be started until after the students have finished the Phonovisual work. 11/13/2015. I would caution against using the Ayres Spelling Scale as a sight-word memorization program, my purpose here is quite the opposite.