

# A Critical Study of the Dolch List

## Basic Sight Vocabulary

In which we will prove that it is totally unnecessary and highly undesirable to teach any sight-words with whole-word memorization techniques to beginning reading students

by

comparing the Dolch Vocabulary  
with the Phonics Reading Vocabulary in the  
*From Sounds to Letters Literacy System:  
A Long-Vowel First Phonics Program*

# The Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary: Alphabetical Order

## COLOR KEY

Words in **red** are taught directly in *From Sounds to Letters*.

Words in **boxes** are “Outlaw Words” in *From Sounds to Letters*

Words in **green** are decodable words used in the Storybooks, Fables, or poems, but are not taught directly with the Word Lines.

Words in **blue** are not taught or used in *From Sounds to Letters*.

a about after **again** **all** always am an and **any** **are** around as ask at ate away  
be because **been** before best better big black blue both bring brown but buy  
by **call** came can carry clean cold come **could** cut did do **does** done don't  
down draw drink eat **eight** **every** fall far fast find first five fly for found **four**  
from full funny gave get **give** go goes going good got green grow had has  
have he help her here him his hold hot **how** hurt I if in **into** is it its jump just  
keep kind know laugh let light like little live long look made make **many**  
may me much must my myself never new no not now **of** **off** old on once **one**  
only open or our out over own pick play please pretty pull put ran read red  
ride right round run **said** saw say see seven shall she show sing sit six sleep  
small so some soon start stop take tell ten thank that the their them then  
**there** these **they** think this those three **to** today together too try **two** under up  
upon us use **very** walk want warm was wash we well went were what when  
**where** which white who why will wish with **work** would write yellow yes  
**you** **your**

(Notes: **Likes** is taught directly, but not **like**. *Funny* and *pretty*, are phonetically regular. The “Outlaw Words,” although containing some irregularities, are taught in a logical manner with words of similar acoustic or graphemic elements. A student who masters *From Sounds to Spelling* will **not** need to memorize the Dolch List words by whole-word memorization since they will master all of the skills necessary to identify the words by virtue of successfully completing the program.)

# From Sounds to Letters Long Vowel First Literacy System

## A Comprehensive List of all Words Taught by Direct Instruction Dolch List Basic Vocabulary Word in **Red**

### From Sounds to Letters: Phase I - Lessons 1 – 24 – Long-Vowels Only

#### **Level 1 (Lessons 1-6): Storybooks 1 & 2: *Eat* and *We Feed a Deer***

a, deer, deer's, ear, ears, **eat**, eats, fear, fears, feast, feed, feeds, feel, feels, feet, free, freeze, **he**, he'll, heal, heals, hear, heat, heats, heel, heels, **here**, here's, lead, leads, leaf, least, Lee, **me**, meal, meat, meet, **read**, real, rear, sea, seal, seals, seat, **see**, seeds, sees, teeth, **the**, **these**, **three**, treat, treats, tree, **we**, we'll, weed, weeds

#### **Level 2 (Lessons 7-9): Storybook 3: *The Wee Light***

die, dry, fight, fire, flea, flies, flight, **fly**, free, fried, fries, fright, fry, he'll, hide, hides, high, **I**, I'll, lie, lies, life, **light**, lights, **me**, might, mile, **my**, **ride**, rides, **right**, rise, sea, seaside, seaweed, side, sigh, sight, size, sly, smile, smiled, smiles, tie, ties, tried, tries, **try**, **we**, we'll, weed, wide, wife, wise.

#### **Level 3 (Lesson 10): Storybooks 4, 5, & 6: *A Fie Meal*, *The Free Meal*, *A Tight Line***

dime, dine, fight, **find**, fine, fire, lean, leans, freeze, line, mean, means, mind, mine, **my**, Neal, near, neat, need, needs, night, nine, sneeze, steam, stream, street, team, tight, tighten.

#### **Level 4 (Lessons 11): Storybooks 7 & 8: *Lee Finds Neal*, *Lee Meets a Seal***

a, alive, Eve, even, **five**, hive, I've, leaf, leave, leaves, life, **live**, lives, **seven**, Steven, vine, we're, we've, wife, wives.

#### **Level 5 (Lessons 12-14): Storybook 9: *The Train Ride***

a, aim, air, **and**, **ate**, **away**, Dave, dined; dried, dries, dry, easel, **eight**, fair, find, fine, fire, firelight, flame, frighten, frightened, hate, hay, he, he'll, he's, heel, **I**, I'll, I'm, I've, laid, lame, lane, late, lay, lie, lied, lies, **light**, line, lined, **made**, **may**, May, mind, night, nightlight, nine, rain, ray, Ray, safe, sail, sailed, same, save, saved, **say**, **says**, sea, seaweed, shame, **she**, she'll, she's, sheet, sheets, shine, snail, vane, wade, waded, wait, waited, wave, waved, way, **we**, we'll, we've, weed.

**Level 6 (Lessons 15-16): Storybook 10: *Steve's Dream***

able, **be**, beard, beat, beats, bee, beets, behind, below, beneath, beside, besides, between, bite, blame, blaze, blow, bold, **both**, brave, bright, **by**, day, daydream, doe, **does**, **don't**, dream, flow, folded, **four**, **fourth**, **from**, haste, hoe, **hold**, low, most, near, nearby, **no**, **old**, row, **show**, slow, **so**, sold, sow, table, tail, taste, waist, teeth, throw, toe, train, tree, waste, weeded, won't.

**Level 7 (Lesson 17): Storybook 11: *Wires and Tires***

alone, away, **before**, board, boat, bone, bowl, hoes, hole, home, hose, load, mole, **one**, road, roast, robe, rose, **some**, stay, **they**, **those**, toad, won.

**Level 8 (Lesson 18): Storybook 12: *Where's Miles?***

beagle, day, daytime, eagle, Gail, game, gate, **gave**, geese, glided, glow, glowed, glows, **go**, goal, goat, **goes**, gold, golden, glide, grain, grains, gray, **grow**, hold, night, nighttime, **old**, sold, stray, stream, street, time.

**Level 9 (Lesson 19): Storybook 13: *Fair Time***

yo-yo, food, fool, **soon**, moon, noon, room, loose, goose, moose, tooth, zoo, **too**, **to**, **do**, **you**, **today**, tonight, **your**, year, **yes**, **you'll**, **you're**.

**Level 10 (Lesson 20): Storybook 14: *A Golden Zoo*:**

able, beagle, bugle, fuse, hoe, toe, **move**, room, rude, rule, Ruth, **so**, sow, **Sunday**, table, **too**, tool, tube, tune, **use**,

**Level 11 (Lessons 21-22): Storybook 15: *The Three Goats and the Troll***

babies, baby, believe, blew, blown **blue**, brave, bravely, dear, deer, dew, drew, due, duties, duty, fairies, fairy, few, field, flew, **for**, glue, greed, greedy, **green**, greens, grew, hear, here, lady, ladies, navies; navy, **new**, news, **of**, **or**, rain, rainy, rubies, ruby, safe, safely, shade, shady, shine, shiny, stew, store, story, Sue, thief, threw, true, Tuesday, **two**.

**Level 12 (Lessons 23-24): Storybook 16: *Fire! Fire!***

**against**, asleep, deep, easier, easy, fir, **first**, flier, fly, girl, **her**, herd, high, higher, **hurry**, **hurt**, lazier, lazy, leap, low, lower, mother, **own**, owner, paid, paint, paper, pay, **people**, person, plain, **again**, plane, plate, **play**, ponies, pony, return, Saturday, serve, sheep, shirt, sir, **six**, **sleep**, **soup**, speedy, spider, **ten**, third, thirsty, thirty, Thursday, **was**, wasn't, **Wednesday**, **were**, **weren't**, **word**.

## From Sounds to Letters: Phase II – Lessons 25 to 55: Short-Vowels, Etc.

### Level 13 (Lessons 25-27): Storybook 17 & 18: *Here Come the Poodles and Winter & Spring*

**all**, another, **are**, bake, beak, became, **big**, bowl, **break**, **bring**, cake, **call**, **called**, **came**, care, case, close, **come**, picnic, crow, **did**, didn't, dig, dip, **drink**, fiddle, fiddler, file, fill, finger, glitter, hill, **him**, **his**, hit, hitting, **is**, **it**, kick, king, lift, likes, **live**, **merry**, middle, nimble, nothing, oak, other, **pick**, poke, print, **give**, ring, **said**, shine, shining, silver, simple, **sing**, singer, single, sink, sly, snake, soak, something, split, spring, stick, stiff, still, sting, string, stroke, swing, **take**, thick, thing, **think**, **this**, tile, till, tingle, trick, **make**, **will**, win, wing, wink, **wish**, **with**, **work**.

### Level 14 (Lessons 28-33): Storybook 19: *Stolen Rubies*:

accident, age, aim, aiming, **an**, animal, ant, antlers, **are**, **aren't**, **as**, **ask**, **at**, back, bad, badge, bag, bake, baked, baker, bang, bank, bat, bath, beagle, began, **black**, blank, blind, bridge, cage, **can**, can't, candle, candlestick, circle, **clean**, miss, clear, **cold**, come, complain, curl, damp, dampen, dance, dirt, dirtier, dirty, dove, drain, drank, drinking, eagle, face, fair, fan, fancy, **fast**, fast, faster, fat, find, fire, fired, flap, flapped, flat, flatter, for, France, glance, from, germ, giant, ginger, grab, **gym**, hair, happen, happen, happily, happy, hare, **have**, hiss, hissed, hold, hope, hoping, horn, huge, ice, icing, icy, **in**, indeed, **into**, Jack, jacket, jam, Janet, Jim, Joan, job, Joe, joke, joking, June, kick, **kind**, kite, lake, **little**, low, magic, man, mice, milk, mill, mind, missed, more, music, Nancy, nice, **off**, **old**, **or**, oven, pad, page, paint, painter, painting, pass, passed, past, pat, perfect, **pick**, place, placed, placing, **practice**, prance, pray, purr, race, racing, rag, raise, **ran**, rang, rat, reason, rice, roar, safe, safely, safer, safest, safety, scold, **second**, peace, shake, shaken, sick, silence, silk, skip, sill, silly, sink, **sit**, skid, skin, sky, slower, slowest, slowly, snare, **some**, space, stage, stand, stingy, string, swift, swifter, swiftest, swiftly, **that**, than, thinking, **to**, **too**, trap, trapped, trapping, trim, turnip, twig, **two**, vote, voting, wagon, win, wind, **wind**, window, winter, **woman**.

### Level 15 (Lessons 34-38): Storybook 20: *A Pet for Ben*:

ahead, along, angry, **any**, ax, batch, box, bray, breeze, catch, catches, change, chase, cheer, chief, clock, Daddy, decide, decided, doctor, **donkey**, **door**, Dr. drone, drop, dropped, each, edge, egg, **either**, else, end, ever, **every**, **everyone**, except, excite, expect, extra, fell, fix, **flood**, **floor**, fox, freeze, glitter, **got**, hat, hatch, hate, head, heavy, held, **help**, **honey**, hop, horrid, **hot**, **how**, instead, Jack, **key**, ladder, lady, land, lap, last, left, leg, **let**, let's, lion, lock, locks, **long**, lot, lots, **many**, match, merrier, merry, mild, mile, mill, mister, mix, moment, **monkey**, mop, Mr. neck, **neither**, net, **never**, next, nimble, nod, nodded, **not**, **ocean**, **or**, ox, oxen, packs, penny, picks, pile, pill, pleasant, **please**, pop, porridge, pot, reach, ready, **red**, rent, rest, rock, sack, Saint-Ives, sang, sank, sat, sent, set, **seven**, signal, simple, **six**, smiled, sneeze, sock, socks, song, spot, stocking, **stop**, stopped, strong, surprise, surprised, taping, tapping, tax, **tell**, **ten**, tent, test, **then**, top, **toss**, tricks, trot, trotted, **turkey**, **wasp**, wax, web, **well**, west, wet, wild, **wolf**, **wolves**.

**Level 16 (Lessons 39 – 45): Storybook 21: *The Goat Who Liked to Jump*:**

about, air, alley, April, around, bed, been, bell, best, better, blast, branch, brown, bug, bun, bus, but, buzz, buzzed, cent, centipede, champ, chance, chicken, child, children, cloud, considering, crack, crash, crown, cup, cut, distracted, ditch, doll, down, empty, ever, feather, flower, for, forty, found, four, glow, ground, grow, hitch, hound, house, how, howl, in, judge, jump, junk, just, lump, men, mountain, mouse, mouth, much, mud, muddy, must, now, nut, on, or, out, outside, pebble, people, person, pet, pitch, pitcher, plenty, pond, protector, puddle, quack, queen, quick, quickly, quiet, quilt, quit, quite, ran, reed, rich, robin, round, rub, run, runner, running, shelf, shell, shine, shine, shop, show, shower, sixpence, sound, stork, stuck, study, stuff, stuffed, such, suck, summer, sun, sunk, sunny, sunshine, there, thousand, throw, tower, town, tramp, uncle, under, unicorn, unless, until, up, upon, valley, very, water, weather, what, wheat, wheel, when, where, whether, which, while, whip, whisker, whisper, white, who, whoever, whole, whoop, why, women.

**Level 17 (Lessons 46-52): Storybook 22: *Old Snapshots*:**

able, across, act, after, along, apple, ashore, ate, auk, because, belong, bigger, boil, book, born, boss, bought, boy, boys, break, brook, broth, brought, bugle, bull, bush, call, caught, cause, caws, chair, chalk, circle, claw, climb, cloth, comb, cook, cookie, corn, corner, cost, could, crook, crooked, cross, dawn, diner, dinner, dog, draw, early, earn, every, everyone, everything, everywhere, fair, fall, fault, fawn, foot, for, forehead, fought, four, frost, full, give, gnat, gnaw, gnome, gone, gong, good-bye, good, great, greatly, hall, halt, haul, have, head, her, hood, hook, horse, hundred, jackdaw, jaw, join, joined, joy, joyful, knob, knock, knot, know, knows, lamb, lap, lawn, learn, limb, lime, little, live, log, London, long, look, loss, lost, malt, master, Maud, middle, morning, move, Nat, naughty, no, nod, noise, noisy, nose, not, off, offer, office, often, or, ought, pair, wear, Paul, pause, paw, paws, pea, peacock, point, pointer, pour, pull, push, pussycat, put, rap, raw, riddle, right, ripple, salt, sauce, saw, sea, shook, shore, short, should, slaughter, small, soft, soil, some, someone, something, somewhere, song, spare, spoil, sponge, sponges, stair, stairs, stall, stare, stared, stile, stood, straw, strong, table, talk, tall, taught, their, there, they, they're, thought, thumb, tiger, tip, took, toss, tossed, toy, walk, wall, want, war, warm, warmth, warn, wash, wasp, watch, water, where, wood, wooden, would, wrap, wrapped, wrapper, wreck, wring, write, wrong, wrote, wrung, yawn.

**Level 18 (Lessons 53 – 55): *The Christmas Treasure***

above, ache, add, addition, alphabet, attention, autograph, choice, Christmas, come, crumb, divide, division, **done**, dove, dumb, echo, elephant, glove, graph, gum, John, knee, kneel, knew, know, knife, knight, knives, love, **make**, aching, measure, might, musician, music, nation, **new**, none, patience, patient, Philip, photo, photograph, physician, physics, pleasure, poor, bad, question, Ralph, school, schoolroom, **some**, special, station, stomach, subtract, subtraction, **take**, telegraph, phone, telephone, television, thumb, treasure, **use**, usual, usually, voice, woman, women, word, **work**, worked, worker, workshop, world, worm, worry, worse, worst, worth.

## Note from Internet Publisher: Donald L. Potter

May 28, 2011

For many years I have been troubled that the elementary schools in my district insist that the teachers drill all their kindergarten, first- and second-grade students on the *Dolch List Basic Sight Vocabulary*. I am convinced that this practice generates, in many students, a debilitating condition I call artificially induced whole-word dyslexia, which makes it difficult for children to learn to read with phonics. This is not inherited dyslexia, but rather a common condition, which exists **because of** the practice of drilling students in sight-words using whole word memorization techniques.

My friends Samuel L. Blumenfeld and the late Edward Miller have written extensively on this issue. I have published Mr. Blumenfeld's essays and Mr. Miller's test (*The Miller Word Identification Assessment Levels 1 & 2*) for artificially induced whole-word dyslexia. I have also published some of Mr. Miller's research. Miss Geraldine Rodgers has also written extensively on the same subject in her books and essays. The late Charlie Richardson of Long Island gave the MWIA to the thousands of delinquents who came to him for help with reading, and published widely the statistical results of his investigation. Information on this issue can be read for free on my website, [www.donpotter.net](http://www.donpotter.net). I have also published some YouTube videos where I discuss this condition.

The essence of the theory is that two fundamentally different methods of teaching reading produce two fundamentally different types of readers: **Subjective Readers** who read from the meaning of the words with little regard for the sounds represented by the letters on the page, and **Objective Readers** who read from the sounds represented by the letters, with great regard for accuracy. Subjective Readers have been taught to prefer syntactic and semantics clues to word identification over orthographic (spelling) clues.

Subjective Readers often will misread a word by substituting another word with a similar shape or meaning that will fit the context. Listening to their oral reading will reveal these problems quickly. Unfortunately, today's teachers tend to overlook or discount guessing since they have been taught that reading is a "psycholinguistic guessing game."

The *Miller Word Identification Assessment* is a unique tool for determining if a student has artificially induced whole-word dyslexia caused by whole-word memorization. The test measures students' reading speed and accuracy on two lists of words, sight-words and phonics words. Comparing the speed and accuracy on these two lists will reveal if the students were taught to read with sight-words and extent of the damage done.

It is likely that the whole-word method creates a reflex on the right side of the brain which **conflicts** with learning to read with phonics using the left side of the brain. I have been amazed at how rapidly students are able to overcome their whole-word guessing with just a few hours of phonics instruction. I remediate students who have this man-made reading disability by following Rudolf Flesch's 1955 recommendation, "to remove students from their whole-word guessing environment and teach nothing but phonics until they are able to overcome their guessing habit." My *From Sounds to Letters* is the fastest and most successful method I have found for curing artificially induced whole-word dyslexia.

It is a shame that school districts insist that their primary teachers continue the harmful practice of drilling young students on the *Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary List*.