

# Building a Sure Foundation

According to Leonard Ayres, the 100 most frequently used English words are used in 60% of all that we read and write. Most phonics programs give an inadequate foundation to easily decode even these essential words.

## Inadequacy of typical phonics approaches

CVC (Consonant/Vowel/Consonant) pattern prepares students for:  
only 6 out of the 100: *not, but, his, had, can, him*

The first sound of single letters prepares students for only:  
only 20 out of the 100: *and, at, had, an, can, last, very, send, in, it, will, if, him, its, not, on, from, but, up, just*

Learning only one type of silent final E creates many exceptions:  
7 out of 13 are not the first type: *have, there, some, are, please, were, house*

## What is needed as a foundation to teach just these top 100 words?

### 1. The basic alphabet phonograms

All but three single letters are needed: *g, qu, x*

The two sounds for *s*: *its, is*

All three sounds of *a*: *at, make, all*

All three sounds of *o*: *not, no, do*

Two of three sounds of *u*: *up, tru-ly*

Both sounds of *e, i*

### 2. The rules for making vowels long at the end of a syllable:

*a-bout, the, be, we, he, me, she, by, my, so, go, no, o-ver, tru-ly*

### 3. Multi-letter phonograms

Multi-letter vowels: *ay, ea, ee, ei, ey, igh, oo, ou, ow*

R influenced vowels: *ar, er, ir, or, wor*

Multi-letter consonants: *ng, sh, th, wh, wr*

### 4. Three of the five types of silent final E's

type 1: *make, take, here, time, write, more*

type 2: *have*

type 5: *there, some, are, please, were, house*

### 5. Reasons behind the rare exception part in a few words:

*of, one, would, could, should*

*Spell to Write and Read* students are not kept in the dark or taught tons of exception words. SWR students get the keys to language learning success!

## Ayres top 100 words in order of frequency

the	S	when
and		time
of	(v)	go
to		some
I	(i)	an
a		can
in		what
that		send
you		out
for		them
it		him
was	(z)	more
is	(z)	a-bout
will		no
as	(z)	please (z)
have		week
not		night
with		their
be		oth-er
your		up
at		our
we		good
on		say
he		could
by	(i)	who
but		may
my	(i)	let-ter
this		make
his	(z)	write
which		thing
dear		think
from		should
are		tru-ly
all		now
me		its
so		two
one		take
if		thank
they		do
had		after
has	(z)	than
very		sir
been		last
were		house
would		just
she		o-ver
or		then
there		work
her		day
an		here