

The Reading Teacher's List of Over 5,500 Basic Spelling Words

Arranged by Order of Difficulty

From *I* (1.00) and *a* (1.00) to *psychology* (20.10)

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Alphabetically with Difficulty Level Assigned
on scale of 1.00 - 21.00

a (1.00), *abandon* (13.80), *zone* (3.70), *zoo* (2.95)

by

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Difficulty Words of Statistically Equivalent Spelling Difficulty
Factor

1.50	her was are be going land long man my play saw toy work
1.55	if add away back call cowboy room cat new
1.60	them bad came end fat hand his mother on read this sun fun
1.65	cars food had hot part run same school show week
1.70	cow five give got him house little most oil put tea way night
1.75	box bed down ago eat feet line times
1.80	about ball gave hard ran will bell do has May milk say stop
1.85	face from moon pay when bank books mail thing top town wood cap
1.90	letter more nut page sat save ship so two dear fish tree age
1.95	bee June law side stay stone game hope low pie six tell

Homophones: add/ad new/knew/gnu read/reed/Reid sun/son week/weak
him/hymn tea/tee/ti way/weigh night/knight box/Bach's feet/feat/fete
ball/bawl do/dew/due May/may male/mail wood/would more/Moore
so/sew/sow/sol¹ two/too/to dear/deer be/bee/Bea pie/pi(π)

¹*Sol* is more often mispronounced as "SOH" than it is correctly pronounced as "SOH'L." *Sol* is the only musical note spelled with three letters as in: *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do*. It is because *sol* is followed by *la* that we normally drop the ending sound of the letter *l*. As mentioned in the directions for usage—all these notes are for the benefit of the teacher or tutor, not necessarily the students.

Target Word	Difficulty Factor	Target Word	Difficulty Factor	Target Word	Difficulty Factor	Target Word	Difficulty Factor
Amount-Authorized		anyway	4.20	arise	7.45	associated	16.70
amount	5.25	anywhere	3.85	arithmetic	5.95	association	16.45
amounting	7.25	apart	3.60	arm	2.55	assortment	13.40
amounts	7.80	apartment	7.25	armor	2.55	assume	15.45
ample	9.15	ape	3.60	arms	3.95	assumed	14.80
amuse	8.10	apiece	11.70	army	3.65	assuming	14.40
amused	8.00	apology	18.20	arose	5.55	assurance	15.60
amusement	11.85	apparent	15.85	around	2.75	assure	12.65
amusements	14.05	apparently	15.05	arrange	11.20	assured	12.80
amusing	9.15	appeal	11.60	arranged	10.85	assuring	14.45
an	2.50	appear	9.65	arrangement	12.90	astonish	11.15
analysis	18.55	appearance	15.60	arrangements	14.05	at	1.45
anchor	13.70	appeared	11.05	arranging	12.70	ate	3.60
ancient	14.60	appearing	10.75	arrest	8.40	athletics	14.15
and	1.30	appears	9.05	arrival	14.15	atmosphere	15.35
angel	10.90	appetite	16.00	arrive	10.70	attach	10.80
angels	10.75	apple	2.70	arrived	8.90	attached	10.35
anger	6.00	apples	3.95	arrives	9.70	attaching	11.05
angle	7.60	applicant	16.40	arriving	10.45	attack	9.75
angry	8.15	application	15.25	arrow	4.45	attain	13.20
animal	6.90	applications	15.45	arrows	5.35	attempt	12.10
animals	7.00	applied	11.35	art	2.00	attempted	14.40
ankle	9.60	applies	12.65	article	13.85	attempting	13.60
announce	13.95	apply	12.45	articles	14.60	attend	8.05
announced	14.50	applying	14.15	artificial	16.95	attendance	14.55
announcement	15.50	appoint	14.15	artist	7.65	attendant	15.80
annual	15.65	appointed	10.20	as	2.10	attended	10.45
another	4.20	appointment	10.40	ascertain	18.40	attending	9.00
answer	6.45	appreciate	15.55	ashamed	7.35	attention	10.45
answered	8.90	appreciated	16.05	ashes	6.00	attitude	15.20
answering	8.10	appreciation	16.45	aside	3.75	attorney	17.20
answers	8.30	approach	13.45	ask	2.70	attorneys	17.60
ant	3.30	approval	15.85	asked	4.40	attractive	12.55
anticipate	18.30	approve	12.10	asking	2.20	audience	14.60
anticipation	18.50	approved	11.35	asks	11.25	auditorium	15.15
ants	3.85	approximate	18.30	asleep	3.80	August	7.30
anxiety	18.80	approximately	19.35	aspect	9.90	aunt	4.45
anxious	13.65	April	4.40	assemble	12.90	aunt's	13.25
any	2.30	apron	6.80	assembly	12.45	auntie	13.75
any more	4.15	arch	5.85	assign	14.25	aunts	7.90
anybody	3.80	are	1.50	assignment	13.15	author	10.20
anyhow	4.55	area	8.80	assist	12.30	authorities	17.75
anyone	2.45	aren't	6.95	assistance	16.25	authority	16.10
anything	3.05	argue	9.25	assistant	15.45	authorize	15.00
		argument	12.65	associate	16.55	authorized	14.80

Approximate Percentages of Students by Grade in 1953 Who Could Correctly Spell the Words of the Corresponding Difficulty Factors:

	Very Easy 99%-90%	Easy 89%-76%	Instructional 75%-25%	Difficult 24%-10%	Very Difficult 9%-0%
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Grade	Diff. Factors	Diff. Factors	Diff. Factors	Diff. Factors	Diff. Factors
2	1.00-1.05	1.10-1.30	1.35-2.70	2.75-3.00	3.05+
3	1.00-1.20	1.25-1.50	1.55-4.55	4.60-6.50	6.55+
4	1.00-1.30	1.35-2.60	2.65-7.00	7.05-11.00	11.05+
5	1.00-2.00	2.10-3.55	3.60-11.05	11.10-16.20	16.25+
6	1.00-3.40	3.45-5.25	5.30-13.70	13.75-18.00	18.05+
7	1.00-3.95	4.00-7.80	7.85-17.45	17.50-19.10	19.15+
8	1.00-4.95	5.00-10.40	10.45-18.65	18.70-19.80	19.85+

To use this chart, just look up any word and find its difficulty factor. Look along the line that represents the grade that you are teaching. Find the parameters that its difficulty factor fits between. That will tell you whether the word is very easy, easy, instructional, difficult, or very difficult for the grade.

Supposing you are teaching the 4th grade, and you want to find out whether or not you should teach the word **answer**:

You look up the word **answer** and find that it has a difficulty factor of **6.45**. You then look across the 4th grade line. As the number 6.45 lies between 2.65 and 7.00, it qualifies as a word at the “instructional” level, i.e., one already known by 25-75% of your students. If you were to look it up in *The New Iowa Spelling Scale* it would give the percentage as 29%.

The New Iowa Spelling Scale

Grade	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Grade Word							
<hr/> <hr/>							
a—approach							
<hr/> <hr/>							
a.....	Not Given!						
abandon.....	2	3	10	18	34	43	49
ability.....	1	2	6	19	30	57	71
able.....	2	21	56	76	86	95	97
about.....	9	51	78	91	97	97	99
above.....	4	29	59	76	84	94	97
abroad.....	10	13	37	54	69	86	
absence.....	4	6	14	28	49	50	
absent.....	1	2	6	13	25	41	56
absolute.....	1	2	6	13	25	41	56
absolutely.....	1	2	3	11	16	41	
abstract.....			3	8	16	34	
abundant.....	3	4	14	20	34	47	
abuse ¹	1	7	27	40	56	68	80
accept.....	1	4	20	42	60	61	
acceptable.....		3	5	21	39	48	
acceptance.....	1	2	3	6	11	25	44
accepted.....	3	5	13	33	52	65	
accepting.....	2	3	3	6	22	38	49
accident.....	2	5	21	44	60	76	
accidents.....	1	8	14	41	54	66	
accommodate.....	2	2	3	45	11	24	
accommodation.....	1	2	4	8	10	10	
accompanied.....	1	1	6	14	32	42	
accompany.....	2	3	3	8	20	48	60
accomplish.....	2	3	7	25	44	71	
accomplished.....		2	11	18	46	64	
accord	3	7	16	26	53	73	
accordance.....		2	9	14	42	49	
according.....	2	6	17	38	67	81	
accordingly.....		3	10	25	41	65	
account.....	3	5	32	46	73	81	
accounting.....	2	5	18	39	62	73	
accounts.....	4	7	39	54	70	78	
accurate.....		1	3	15	42	57	
accuse.....		4	11	22	44	61	
accustom.....	2	3	4	7	20	29	46
accustomed.....	2	2	6	8	25	30	
ache.....	2	6	9	17	43	64	70
achievement.....	1	3	6	9	15	36	
acid.....	2	11	15	33	56	64	
acknowledge.....	1	2	5	11	29	53	
acknowledged.....		2	3	12	24	38	
acknowledging.....		1	3	8	25	32	
acknowledgment.....	1	3	5	6	13	25	
acquaint.....		4	8	13	28		
acquaintance.....		1	3	3	11	20	
acquainted.....	2	4	5	9	14	25	
acquire.....	2	4	6	10	25	35	
acre.....	1	2	7	31	58	76	
acres.....	1	6	33	39	63	65	
across.....	6	26	56	72	83	90	91
act.....	3	23	61	69	88	93	98
acted.....	3	13	41	62	79	82	89
acting.....	3	19	46	70	80	84	91
action.....	2	4	16	44	67	89	94
actions.....	1	13	30	65	76	89	

¹Abuse is a heteronym. When it is a noun as in the phrase child abuse, it is pronounced "uh b'YOO-ss." When it is a verb as in the phrase to abuse a privilege, it is pronounced "uh b'YOO-z." All heteronyms are identified by the use of **bold italic**.

Grade	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Grade Word							
active.....	6	17	50	65	83	93	
activities.....	1	3	9	24	32	55	
activity.....	1	6	11	37	48	63	
acts ²	1	3	25	59	68	76	87
actual.....	6	4	12	27	55	78	
actually.....	1	1	6	24	45	64	
add.....	14	56	86	95	97	98	99
added.....	6	47	71	74	93	93	97
adding.....	11	55	74	77	93	96	98
addition.....	3	15	31	49	77	85	
additional.....	2	2	3	12	25	49	62
address	1	8	39	62	78	86	91
addressed.....	3	14	36	45	75	77	
addresses.....	1	5	27	47	66	80	81
addressing.....	4	7	21	34	57	68	82
adequate.....		1	5	6	9	22	
adjourned.....	2	3	5	15	28	43	
adjust.....	1	5	14	36	40	67	80
adjusted.....	2	5	13	24	44	47	76
adjustment.....	5	11	31	50	52	79	
administration.....		1	3	9	20	33	45
admiration.....	1	4	10	21	36	59	
admire.....	1	4	19	38	54	81	82
admired.....	7	19	34	48	71	80	
admission.....	1	3	9	33	53	69	
admit.....	8	27	40	47	68	74	
admitted.....	2	10	14	38	56	70	
adopt.....	3	9	18	29	44	63	74
adopted.....	3	6	15	35	42	69	72
adorable.....	1	13	25	36	62	76	
adore.....	1	7	24	48	59	78	85
advance.....	13	25	43	69	79	89	
advanced.....	1	10	28	43	68	75	
advantage.....	3	12	24	41	60	80	
advantages.....	1	7	12	31	51	82	
adventure.....	3	12	34	57	81	89	
adventures.....	1	17	29	48	76	89	
advertised.....	1	9	19	35	47	68	
advertisement.....	4	5	7	20	31	46	
advertising.....	4	11	21	38	52	71	
advice.....	12	24	41	61	72	76	
advisable.....	2	8	17	32	41	57	
advise.....	12	21	44	59	82	86	
advised.....	7	18	37	54	72	82	
advises.....	1	15	33	47	64	71	
advising.....	1	4	17	31	47	66	80
affair.....	2	4	18	32	63	78	
affairs.....	2	4	19	34	64	76	
affect		3	15	43	66	77	
affected.....	1	3	10	31	55	71	
affection.....	1	7	15	32	59	67	
affectionate.....	1	2	4	11	26	50	
affectionately.....	1	1	2	10	14	23	
affidavit.....	1	3	4	6	6	15	
afford.....	1	3	7	15	27	69	69
afraid.....	2	20	37	52	63	65	73
after.....	23	57	85	88	95	98	98
afternoon.....	5	35	73	80	90	93	97
afterward.....	1	7	24	45	63	78	85
afterwards.....	1	9	29	47	67	80	81
again.....	5	24	51	66	77	90	92
against.....	1	6	14	27	53	64	68
age.....	18	37	74	92	96	97	97
agency.....	1	6	16	30	45	64	
agent.....	15	34	52	69	87	88	

²Acts is a homophone of *ax* and *axe*. All homo-phones are identified by the use of **bold**.

Grade	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Grade Word							
agents.....	1	3	20	41	56	75	77
ages.....	2	25	51	76	84	91	92
ago.....	39	82	90	93	96	98	98
agree.....	9	18	42	64	77	85	89
agreeable.....	1	9	21	45	62	74	
agreed.....	1	6	31	44	69	73	85
agreement.....	7	14	38	51	67	82	
agricultural.....		1	3	6	31	40	
agriculture.....		1	6	17	36	56	
ahead.....	26	63	73	87	96	96	
aid	2	16	40	53	84	87	91
aim.....	1	8	27	53	76	85	89
air	8	59	88	96	97	99	100
airplane.....	2	21	51	70	84	88	92
airplanes.....	4	21	40	57	68	78	85
airport.....	4	29	64	81	87	93	98
aisles.....	1	3	3	9	13	24	
alarm.....	4	17	34	65	78	85	89
alas.....	4	11	21	36	48	56	60
alfalfa.....	6	6	14	25	37	40	49
alive.....	21	39	68	83	90	94	96
alike.....	6	40	69	82	91	97	97
all	61	89	93	97	98	99	100
all right.....	1	17	23	25	28	40	41
alley.....	2	4	21	43	58	67	71
alligators.....	3	4	7	19	32	37	
allow.....	1	6	15	42	70	77	79
allowance.....	3	7	12	22	40	63	
allowed	1	3	10	29	52	64	66
allowing.....	2	5	11	25	58	70	77
almost.....	2	23	62	74	82	92	96
alone.....	3	28	63	68	81	88	89
along.....	11	51	80	90	92	95	96
aloud	1	13	31	60	62	66	73
already.....	21	50	68	79	82	90	
also.....	6	33	60	83	88	93	97
altar	2	7	10	30	33	34	
alter	2	14	33	37	58	62	80
although.....	5	18	41	57	74	83	
altogether.....	1	5	24	41	54	70	72
always.....	5	36	61	79	84	89	96
am.....	66	71	82	91	94	97	98
ambassador.....	1	4	6	8	20	33	40
ambition.....	3	4	9	28	47	66	
amendment.....	2	4	12	23	28	40	43
American.....	1	6	21	39	64	74	85
among.....	15	42	53	74	77	79	