

Introduction to Reading a Decodable Book

Until this point in the year, the students have been working with *Pre-Decodable Books* that have allowed them to become familiar with a number of high-frequency words in print as well as to participate in “real” reading on their own. Beginning with this book, they will work with *Decodable Books*. In these books, the focus of instruction is decoding and reading fluency.

In each *Decodable Book*, students read a short, engaging story made largely of words that contain sounds and spellings that they have just learned. The books also continue to use a limited number of high-frequency words that the students are taught explicitly.

For the purposes of these books, a word is considered to be “wholly-decodable” if it contains *only* sound/spellings that the students have been taught explicitly. The students already have learned a number of high-frequency words from reading the *Pre-Decodable Books*. As a result, these words are now considered to be “readable.” A readable word is one that has been introduced, then reviewed at least twice.

To arrive at the decodability score for a book, we have combined the percentage of words in the book that are either wholly-decodable or readable. For example, a 32-word book that contains 18 wholly-decodable words, 12 readable words, and two new high-frequency words is 94 percent decodable.

For your convenience, each *Decodable Book* contains a list of the sound/spellings that are the focus of the book, as well as the high-frequency words the book introduces. Each book also contains a list of previously taught high-frequency words.

Research in Action Decodable Texts

Sound/spelling instruction is of little value to students if they do not have ample opportunities to read in connected text words that conform to the relationships they are learning. From late kindergarten through the beginning of grade 1, decodable texts are the most appropriate materials for students to use to practice word reading. Decodable texts are stories made up of a large number of words that contain specific sound/spellings that the students are learning, along with some high-frequency utility or high-frequency words such as *the, are, said, was, and have*, which are necessary in writing comprehensible and interesting text. Drawing on what they have been taught, students should be able to decode with ease most of the new words they encounter in these texts. Before reading, students should be made familiar with the high frequency words in the text, so that such words will not distract them from focusing on the words they are able to decode. (—*Marilyn Jager Adams*)