

THE IRREGULAR WORDS TEST (IWT)

Description

The Irregular Words Test was developed by John Shefelbine (1999) to measure high frequency words that cannot easily be sounded out (for example, could, they, and though). These words need to be taught and mastered as sight words. Since sight word learning is relatively slow and time intensive, it makes sense to limit sight word instruction to words that are common and irregular. Some students who have made good progress in phonics strategies have difficulty transitioning from decodable regular text because of their limited mastery of high frequency sight words.

The words are arranged in order of frequency, so when students have a difficult time reading words in one column, they have even more trouble reading those that follow.

Students should know most of the first 60 by the end of first grade and most of all 120 (110+) by the middle of second grade.

When to Give

The Irregular Words Test is for students reading between a preprimer and second grade level on a graded word list such as the San Diego Quick. Students below preprimer, will know few if any of the words. Those above second grade, tend to know most of them.

Materials

- Student Word List (one page). We suggest you cut up the lists and paste them on cards that are presented one at a time. If you choose not to do this, at least cover the lists so the student sees only one at a time.
- One copy of the recording sheet for each student you are assessing.

Administration

Sit across from the student with your recording sheets on a clipboard at an angle so the student cannot see what you are writing. Place or uncover the first list of words in front of the student.

Give the following directions.

SAY:

“I’d like you to read some words to me. These are sight words that are hard to sound out. If you recognize or know the word, read it out loud. If you don’t know the word, go on to the next one. I can’t give you any help because I need to see what you can do all by yourself.”

Stop the assessment when only 0 to 1 words are correct in a column of ten.

120 Irregular Words from the 600 Most Frequent J. Shefelbine CSUS 1992, '95 (rev), '99 (rev)

Name: _____ Evaluator: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Directions: (For students between a preprimer and second grade level on a graded word list such as the San Diego Quick.) Read down each column using a cover sheet so only one set of ten words is visible. Mark correct responses with a check (✓). If incorrect, record with an X. Stop the assessment when only 0 to 1 words in a column are correct.

Part I (First 60) (from the 223 most frequent)
(teacher recording form)

A	B	C	D	E	F
the	one	would	water	put	world
of	what	other	very	again	want
a	were	into	word	old	different
to	there	two	where	great	together
you	your	could	most	should	school
was	their	been	through	give	once
are	said	who	another	something	enough
they	do	people	come	thought	sometimes
from	many	only	work	both	four
have	some	find	does	often	head

Total Part I = ___/60

Part II (Second 60)
(teacher recording form)

G	H	I	J	K	L
above	told	group	behind	already	although
kind	young	true	ready	warm	heart
almost	heard	half	built	mind	wild
earth	answer	cold	hold	says	weather
mother	against	course	piece	heavy	someone
country	learn	front	talk	beautiful	won
father	toward	early	blue	everyone	field
eyes	money	brought	instead	watch	gold
today	move	though	either	hour	build
sure	done	become	friend	carry	walk

Total Part II = ___/60

Grand total = ___/120

Summarize instructional implications:

Part I

(IWT - student form)

A	B	C	D	E	F
the	one	would	water	put	world
of	what	other	very	again	want
a	were	into	word	old	different
to	there	two	where	great	together
you	your	could	most	should	school
was	their	been	through	give	once
are	said	who	another	something	enough
they	do	people	come	thought	sometimes
from	many	only	work	both	four
have	some	find	does	often	head

Part II

(IWT - student form)

G	H	I	J	K	L
above	told	group	behind	already	although
kind	young	true	ready	warm	heart
almost	heard	half	built	mind	wild
earth	answer	cold	hold	says	weather
mother	against	course	piece	heavy	someone
country	learn	front	talk	beautiful	won
father	toward	early	blue	everyone	field
eyes	money	brought	instead	watch	gold
today	move	though	either	hour	build
sure	done	become	friend	carry	walk