Heart words list

Heart words (also called trick words or red words) are common words with a part that doesn't follow the phonics patterns your child knows yet. The **red part** is the heart part. Sound out the rest, draw a heart over the red part, then read, spell and write the word. Practice two to five words at a time.

The vowel says /u/, as in cup

The biggest group. Ask your child what sound they hear in the middle, then show them which letter is making it.

the	e says /u/
of	o says /u/ and f says /v/
was	a says /u/ and s says /z/
what	a says /u/
from	o says /u/
some	o says /u/, and the e doesn't make the o say its name
come	o says /u/, and the e is silent
done	o says /u/, and the e is silent
one	o says /wu/, a w sound with no w written, and the e is silent
does	oe says /u/ and s says /z/
mother	o says /u/

The vowel says /e/, as in bed

Teach said and says together. Same surprise, and seeing them side by side helps both stick.

said	ai says /e/, not the long a in rain
says	ay says /e/ and s says /z/
any	a says /e/
many	a says /e/
friend	ie says /e/
again	the first a says /u/, and ai says /e/ for most American speakers

The vowel says /oo/, as in moon

Short words that end in o usually say /o/ as in go. These ones don't, so they get a heart.

to	o says /oo/
do	o says /oo/
who	wh says /h/ here, and o says /oo/
you	ou says /oo/, not /ow/ as in out
two	the w is silent

The vowel says /oo/, as in book

Could, would and should are one family. Learn one and your child gets all three.

put	u says /oo/ as in book
push	u says /oo/ as in book
pull	u says /oo/ as in book
could	oul says /oo/ as in book, and the l is silent
would	oul says /oo/ as in book, and the l is silent
should	oul says /oo/ as in book, and the l is silent

The vowel says its name when you'd expect something else

A vowel before two consonants is usually short. In find, kind, old and both it says its name anyway.

they	ey says /ā/ as in day
eight	eigh says /ā/ as in day
great	ea says /ā/ as in day, not /ee/ as in eat
find	i says its name
kind	i says its name
old	o says its name
both	o says its name

Words with r that don't sound the way they look

Put there and where on one card. Your child learns one heart part and reads two words.

are	ar says /ar/ as in car, and the e is silent
were	ere says /er/ as in her
there	ere says /air/ as in hair
where	ere says /air/ as in hair
your	our says /or/ as in for
four	our says /or/ as in for
word	or says /er/ after w
work	or says /er/ after w

A silent letter, or a consonant with a different sound

Here the vowel is fine. Point at the consonant that isn't doing its usual job.

is	s says /z/
has	s says /z/
know	the k is silent
write	the w is silent
walk	al says /aw/, and the l is silent
talk	al says /aw/, and the l is silent
listen	the t is silent

Words that end in ve

English words don't end in v, so an e gets added. Once your child knows that, have, give and live stop being heart words.

have	a is short, as it looks, and the e is only there because of the v
give	i is short, and the e is only there because of the v
live	i is short (as in I live here), and the e is there because of the v
love	o says /u/, and the e is there because of the v
move	o says /oo/ as in moon, and the e is there because of the v

Heart words for now: regular once your child learns the pattern

Only treat these as heart words if your child needs them before the pattern comes up. After that, sound them out.

I	a vowel on its own says its name
he	e at the end of a short word says its name, like me, we, she and be
my	y at the end of a short word says /ī/ as in pie, like by and fly
see	ee says /ee/
look	oo says /oo/ as in book
play	ay says /ā/ as in day
all	all says /awl/ as in ball and call

My child's heart words

Add the words from school or from the books your child is reading.