



Growing the Tricky Word List: Helping Your Child with Year 2 Common Exception Words

Key points

- Some words are called 'common exception words' because they do not follow the regular phonics rules (the way we link sounds to letters) that children learn in school.
- It is completely normal for children to find these words challenging because they cannot be fully 'sounded out'.
- Learning these words is about spotting the 'tricky part' of the word and remembering it by sight.
- Your child is not failing at phonics when they struggle with these words; the words themselves are simply the exceptions.
- Every child learns at their own pace, and the goal is to build confidence through gentle, everyday exposure.

Things to try at home

- Play a game of 'I Spy' using tricky words found on cereal boxes or street signs.
- Use a colourful pen to highlight the 'tricky bit' of a word together, like the 'o' in 'people'.
- Create simple flashcards and hide them around the room for a playful treasure hunt.
- Read a story together and see if your child can spot any of their tricky words on the page.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher, who can share the specific word list used in their school.
- The GOV.UK website for official information on the National Curriculum in England.