

My child does not want to sound out words she doesn't know. Should I insist that she do so?

No. There are many words in English that cannot be “sounded out.” For example, “sounding out” the word ‘said’ would result in a word that is pronounced ‘sade,’ (rhyming with made, fade, paid, and braid) and sounding out ‘was’ would result in a word pronounced ‘wass,’ (rhyming with pass, class, and mass). So, thinking about the sounds of the letters will not, by itself, allow the reader to correctly identify all of the words she comes across.

Thinking about the sounds of the letters in the word will certainly help for most words, but there are other clues your child can and should use as well. For example, you might encourage your child to:



- **Check the pictures** – Often the pictures will provide clues about some of the words on the page.
- **Try to think of a word that would fit in the sentence** – Sometimes it is possible to figure out what an unfamiliar word is by thinking of a word that would make sense in the sentence.
- **Read past the puzzling word** – Sometimes reading past the puzzling word will give the child a better idea of what the word might be.
- **Double check (Cross check)** – When you think your child has an idea of what the word might be, ask her to check whether the word she is thinking of:
 - fits with the letters in the word on the page
 - sounds OK in the sentence she is reading
 - makes sense in the story (poem, etc.)
- **Reread** – Going back to the beginning of the sentence and reading it through again can help the child to decide whether everything fits.