What is a common exception word?

Common exception words are words where the usual spelling rule doesn't apply. As children come across unfamiliar spelling and sound patterns in tricky words, their phonics knowledge won't always help them to sound out and read the word; such as the common exception words "sugar", "improve", "climb" and "because". Some of these exception words are used frequently, so children are introduced to common exception words in Year 1 and Year 2. However some of these words will be introduced to children in Reception.

Children have a list of these words which they are expected to learn to read and spell by the end of each year in primary school. The following pages have a list of these words.

Year 1 Common Exception Words Checklist

| Word | R | W | Word | R | W | Word | R | W |
|---|---|---|--------|---|---|-------------------|---|---|
| a | | | I | | | school | | |
| are | | | is | | | she | | |
| ask | | | love | | | <mark>50</mark> | | |
| be | | | me | | | some | | |
| by | | | my | | | the | | |
| come | | | no | | | there | | |
| do | | | of | | | they | | |
| friend | | | once | | | to | | |
| full | | | one | | | today | | |
| go | | | our | | | was | | |
| has | | | pull | | | we | | |
| he | | | push | | | <mark>were</mark> | | |
| here | | | put | | | where | | |
| his | | | said | | | <mark>you</mark> | | |
| house | | | says | | | your | | |
| Including from Phonics: Phase 2 Phase 3 Phase 4 | | | | | | | | |
| all | | | into | | | out | | |
| have | | | like | | | <mark>what</mark> | | |
| her | | | little | | | <mark>when</mark> | | |

Year 2 Common Exception Words Checklist

| Word | R | W | Word | R | W | Word | R | W |
|-----------|---|---|---------|---|---|---------|---|---|
| after | | | eye | | | only | | |
| again | | | fast | | | parents | | |
| any | | | father | | | pass | | |
| bath | | | find | | | past | | |
| beautiful | | | floor | | | path | | |
| because | | | gold | | | people | | |
| behind | | | grass | | | plant | | |
| both | | | great | | | poor | | |
| break | | | half | | | pretty | | |
| busy | | | hold | | | prove | | |
| child | | | hour | | | should | | |
| children | | | improve | | | steak | | |
| Christmas | | | kind | | | sugar | | |
| class | | | last | | | sure | | |
| climb | | | many | | | told | | |
| clothes | | | mind | | | water | | |
| cold | | | money | | | who | | |
| could | | | most | | | whole | | |
| door | | | move | | | wild | | |
| even | | | Mr | | | would | | |
| every | | | Mrs | | | | | |
| everybody | | | old | | | | | |

Year 3 / 4 Common Exception Words Checklist

| Word | R | W | Word | R | W | Word | R | W |
|--------------|---|---|------------|---|---|-----------|---|---|
| accident | | | consider | | | group | | |
| accidentally | | | continue | | | guard | | |
| actual | | | decide | | | guide | | |
| actually | | | describe | | | heard | | |
| address | | | different | | | heart | | |
| although | | | difficult | | | height | | |
| answer | | | disappear | | | history | | |
| appear | | | early | | | imagine | | |
| arrive | | | earth | | | increase | | |
| believe | | | eight | | | important | | |
| bicycle | | | eighth | | | interest | | |
| breath | | | enough | | | island | | |
| build | | | exercise | | | knowledge | | |
| busy | | | experience | | | learn | | |
| business | | | extreme | | | length | | |
| calendar | | | famous | | | library | | |
| caught | | | favourite | | | material | | |
| centre | | | February | | | medicine | | |
| century | | | forward | | | mention | | |
| certain | | | forwards | | | minute | | |
| circle | | | fruit | | | natural | | |
| complete | | | grammar | | | naughty | | |

| Word | R | W | Word | R | W | Word | R | W |
|--------------|---|---|-----------|---|---|------|---|---|
| notice | | | regular | | | | | |
| occasion | | | reign | | | | | |
| occasionally | | | remember | | | | | |
| often | | | sentence | | | | | |
| opposite | | | separate | | | | | |
| ordinary | | | special | | | | | |
| particular | | | straight | | | | | |
| peculiar | | | strange | | | | | |
| perhaps | | | strength | | | | | |
| popular | | | suppose | | | | | |
| position | | | surprise | | | | | |
| possess | | | therefore | | | | | |
| possession | | | though | | | | | |
| possible | | | thought | | | | | |
| potatoes | | | through | | | | | |
| pressure | | | various | | | | | |
| probably | | | weight | | | | | |
| promise | | | woman | | | | | |
| purpose | | | women | | | | | |
| quarter | | | | | | | | |
| question | | | | | | | | |
| recent | | | | | | | | |

Year 5 / 6 Common Exception Words Checklist

| Word | R | W | Word | R | W | Word | R | W |
|-------------|---|---|-------------|---|---|-------------|---|---|
| accommodate | | | convenience | | | government | | |
| accompany | | | correspond | | | guarantee | | |
| according | | | criticise | | | harass | | |
| aggressive | | | curiosity | | | hindrance | | |
| amateur | | | definite | | | identity | | |
| ancient | | | desperate | | | immediate | | |
| apparent | | | develop | | | individual | | |
| appreciate | | | dictionary | | | interfere | | |
| available | | | disastrous | | | interrupt | | |
| average | | | embarrass | | | language | | |
| awkward | | | environment | | | leisure | | |
| bargain | | | equipment | | | lightning | | |
| bruise | | | equipped | | | marvellous | | |
| category | | | especially | | | mischievous | | |
| cemetery | | | exaggerate | | | muscle | | |
| committee | | | excellent | | | necessary | | |
| communicate | | | existence | | | neighbour | | |
| community | | | explanation | | | nuisance | | |
| competition | | | familiar | | | оссиру | | |
| conscience | | | foreign | | | occur | | |
| conscious | | | forty | | | opportunity | | |
| controversy | | | frequently | | | parliament | | |

| Word | R | W | Word | R | W | Word | R | W |
|---------------|---|---|-------------|---|---|------|---|---|
| persuade | | | sincerely | | | | | |
| physical | | | soldier | | | | | |
| privilege | | | stomach | | | | | |
| profession | | | suggest | | | | | |
| programme | | | symbol | | | | | |
| pronunciation | | | system | | | | | |
| queue | | | temperature | | | | | |
| recognise | | | thorough | | | | | |
| recommend | | | twelfth | | | | | |
| relevant | | | variety | | | | | |
| relevant | | | vegetable | | | | | |
| restaurant | | | vehicle | | | | | |
| rhyme | | | yacht | | | | | |
| rhythm | | | | | | | | |
| sacrifice | | | | | | | | |
| secretary | | | | | | | | |
| shoulder | | | | | | | | |
| signature | | | | | | | | |
| sincere | | | | | | | | |