Dear Dragon Classroom Collection

Collection Description

The enduring appeal of the original Dear Dragon series, written by former first grade teacher Margaret Hillert, has spanned over three decades.

These brand new titles continue to explore the adventures of a boy and his pet dragon as they play and learn together while helping emergent readers learn to recognize high frequency words.

The Role of High-Frequency Words in Learning to Read

Many of the most frequently appearing words are not decodable (e.g., are, come, is). Due to their irregular spelling, common phonics rules do not support the decoding of these words. Consequently, they must be recognized by sight. When children recognize these words by sight, their reading fluency improves. Automaticity is a key factor in promoting fluent reading, which allows children to expend more cognitive capacity on making meaning (i.e., comprehension) from the text they read.

Research has shown that, within the over 600,000 words in the English language, a relatively small number of frequently occurring words make up the majority of text we read. For example, only 200 account for over half (i.e., 60 percent) of all reading (Zeno, Ivens, Millard, & Duvvuri, 1995). This is why they are called high-frequency words. The table below presents the 58 most frequent words in the Dear Dragon Classroom Collection, in order of frequency among the 200 most common words.

HF Rank	DD Word	HF Rank	DD Word	HF Rank	DD Word
1	the	36	we	144	put
3	and	37	there	149	away
4	a	38	can	159	big
5	to	45	will	167	mother
6	in	46	do	175	am
7	is	50	up	187	something
8	you	57	so	*	dear
9	that	66	like	*	dragon
10	it	69	see	*	eat
12	for	72	make	*	friend
14	on	78	now	*	fun
15	are	102	get	*	oh
17	with	106	good	*	play
20	at	108	go	*	red
21	be	111	want	*	spot
22	this	113	me	*	yes
24	I	115	too		
25	have	119	look		
29	one	127	come		
31	but	138	here		
32	what	143	help		

Source:
Zeno, S.M., Ivens, S.H., Millard, R.T., & Duvvuri, R. (1995). The educator's word frequency guide. Brewster, NY: Touchstone Applied Science Associates.

Titles in the Classroom Library Collection

1. It's Fall, Dear Dragon

2. It's Spring, Dear Dragon

3. It's Summer, Dear Dragon

4. It's Winter, Dear Dragon

5. Dear Dragon Goes Camping

6. Dear Dragon Goes to the Carnival

7. Dear Dragon Goes to the Library

8. Dear Dragon Goes to the Firehouse

9. Dear Dragon Goes to the Market

10. Dear Dragon Goes to the Zoo

11. I Did It, Dear Dragon

12. It's a Good Game, Dear Dragon

13. Play, Play, Play, Dear Dragon

14. Touchdown! Dear Dragon

15. Dear Dragon's Colors 1, 2, 3

16. Dear Dragon's A is for Apple

17. Dear Dragon Helps Out

18. Dear Dragon Goes to the Bank

19. It's Bedtime, Dear Dragon

20. It's Groundhog Day, Dear Dragon
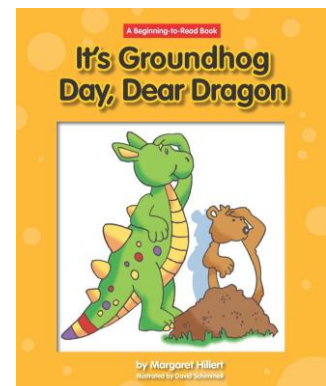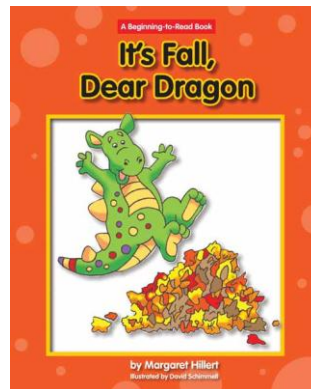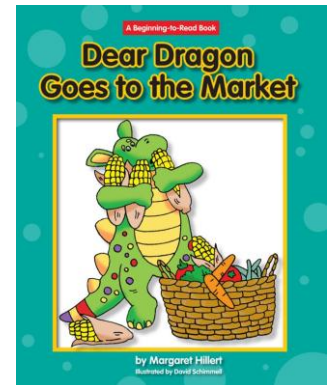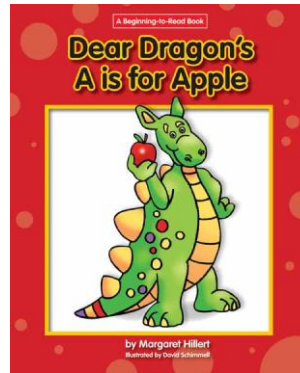
Sample Lesson Plan

Objective: Children will recognize and read high-frequency sight words both in isolation and in connected text.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy:

Kindergarten—Foundational Skills

Print Concepts
1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
a. Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page-by-page.
b. Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.
c. Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.

Phonics and Word Recognition
3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
c. Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet. Read common high-frequency words by sight (e.g., *the*, *of*, *to*, *you*, *she*, *my*, *is*, *are*, *do*, *does*).

Materials:
- Dear Dragon book
- High-frequency word cards

Instructional Sequence:
1. Introduce the Book, focusing on the cover and eliciting conversation and predictions from children of what the story might be about.
2. Guide children through a picture walk to activate prior knowledge, build background, and develop oral language.
3. Review 5-7 high-frequency words. Ask children to record the words in their personal, alphabetical sight word journal or on an ABC chart (provided)
4. Read the Book, pausing occasionally to elicit high frequency words from children.
5. Reread the book, inviting children to read the words they know.
6. Have children take turns buddy reading.

Draw and Dictate:
1. Using the template provided, invite children to draw a picture of their favorite part of the story.
2. Ask the child to tell you what is happening in the picture as you dictate the sentence(s).
3. Add the page to the child's personal book for future practice reading.

Assessment:
1. Provide children with Cloze sentences derived from the Dear Dragon books and ask them to fill in the blanks using the high-frequency words.

It can ____ in ____. (go, here)   Look ____ I ____. (what, have)

2. Create new Cloze sentences to allow children to transfer their knowledge of the words.

          You are my ____. (friend)   I ____ you. (like)

Five Fun Activities to Teach and Reinforce High-Frequency Words

Bingo
1. Provide a Bingo Card template with 9, 12, 16, or 20 spaces (depending on the children's developmental level and experience playing Bingo).
2. Select targeted high frequency words and write them on the board and/or ask children to select their word cards.
3. Ask children to write the words in any space on their Bingo Card—be sure to allow for the "free" space in the center.
4. Provide markers such as plastic disks, beans, or crackers.
5. Randomly call out the high-frequency words and encourage children to mark the word on their individual cards.

Concentration
1. Assign partners or allow children to select a partner to play the game.
2. Each child selects 5-10 (predetermined by the teacher) of their high-frequency word cards to create a matched set.
3. Students mix up the word cards and place them face down on a table or flat surface.
4. Taking turns, each child turns over a two cards. If the words are the same, the child keeps the cards. If the words are not the same, the cards are turned face down again for the other child to take a turn.

Go Fish
1. Assign partners or allow children to select a partner to play the game.
2. Each child selects 10-20 (predetermined by the teacher) of their high-frequency word cards to "shuffle" and stack in a pile.
3. Taking turns, partners take one card each from the pile until each child has 5 cards.
4. One child asks the other "Do you have a __," naming one of the words in his or her own hand.
5. If the other child has the card, s/he gives it to the other child and the cards are placed face up on the table.
6. If the other child does not have the card, s/he says, "Go Fish," and the requester selects another card from the pile.
7. Play continues until the stack of cards is distributed.
8. Further practice recognizing the sight words is offered when children sort through the words to retrieve their original cards.

People Sentences
1. Hand out one high-frequency word card to each student.
2. Ask each child to recite a sentence using his or her selected high-frequency word.
3. Invite children to find a partner and create a sentence using both of their high-frequency words.
4. Record sentences on chart paper for future reading practice.
5. Invite children to read the sentences and designate the high-frequency words (highlight the words).
6. Repeat the pair/share several times.
7. Once children are comfortable creating sentences with two high-frequency words, challenge them to do so with three or more words.

The 58 Most Frequent Words in the Dear Dragon Classroom Collection

a	for	make	the
am	friend	me	there
and	fun	mother	this
are	get	now	to
at	go	oh	too
away	good	on	up
be	have	one	want
big	help	play	we
but	here	put	what
can	I	red	will
come	in	see	with
dear	is	so	yes
do	it	something	you
dragon	like	spot	
eat	look	that	

Alphabet Chart for Recording Sight Words

Aa	Bb	Cc	Dd
Ee	Ff		Hh
Ii	Jj	Kk	Ll
Mm	Nn	Oo	Pp
Qq	Rr	Ss	Tt
Uu	Vv	Ww	Xx
	Yy	Zz	

Draw and Dictate

Name _____   Date _____