

Go Sight Word "Island Hopping"!

First grade readers spend hours and hours on “sight” words—you know, the ones that show up constantly in books, and that often don’t follow regular spelling rules. You can always use flash cards, but as your kid will tell you, these can get old ... fast!

Here’s another way to go. All you need is chalk and some pavement for this silly, fun, and practical game. A parent can play with one child, or for more fun, try it at a playdate or birthday party with a whole group of kids divided into teams.

What You Need:

- Colored chalk
- Stretch of pavement
- A few index cards and a permanent marker
- 1-8 first graders
- Stopwatch



What You Do:

1. On one end of a paved surface, use your chalk to draw a circle big enough for a few kids to stand comfortably inside. For fun, invite your child to decorate it a bit, perhaps with drawings of palm trees or shells. This is “Shelter Island,” and it’s your home base. The object of the game is for each child to hop across a stretch of pavement to land safely on the island. Here’s the catch: the area all around may look like plain concrete, but today, it’s “Crocodile Sea,” and there are going to be snappers all around!
2. Now draw a series of roughly circular 12-inch blobs between you and the island, leaving about a foot between each one. Each blob is an “island hop” that can guide a lively first grader to safety. On each “island hop,” have your child help you write a sight word that he is studying. (Your teacher may have given you a list; if not, see below for common first grade words.) Draw enough blobs so that there can be several routes to the island, but try not to make any route longer than about four hops (at least at first).
3. While kids finish decorating the island and practice some hopping, take a minute to scope out some routes. On your index cards, write out five or more different routes of about four words each that a child can hop continuously before getting to the island.
4. Time to get to the island! How fast can your child make it? Can all his friends make it, too? Pull out a card, call out a route, and let the leaping begin! If your child needs coaching on words, that’s fine: the whole idea is to practice those sight words ... and get home safe for dinner too!

Common First Grade Sight Words:

The, you, she, said, that, do, for, they, two, be, go, mother, little, was, box, by, into, his, had, like, him, her, as, baby, this, with, what, out, father, then, came, come, when, some, have, there, about, from, who, girl, work, make, them, an, around, long, once, saw, eat, away, how, three, children, name, new, over