Tricky teaching for younger learners!

NB: It should be noted that although, ideally, reading and phonics should occur during early education, where appropriate older students may be taught through these methods. In such a case, activities should be altered to be fit for age and purpose.

1. **Introduction (reading, writing and recognition)**

   Tricky words must be directly introduced during phonics time. It is important that you do not introduce a word with sounds that have not yet been taught in phonics lessons. Introduce the word by displaying it on the board and identify every sound in the word. Phonetically it should say... but it doesn’t! This is because it is a TRICKY word! Stick a picture of Tricky the Tarantula on the word. Explain that Tricky the Tarantula tries to trick us by making the words sound a little different than we expect. Ask the children if any of them know what it actually says. Can anyone tell you what it means or use it in a sentence? Have the children practise writing the word on their whiteboards. Once tricky words have been introduced, they should be displayed somewhere in the class on a Tricky the Tarantula board, possibly on a spiders web to engage the children.

   Children should then, over the week, engage in an assortment for engaging activities to help reinforce their learning. Activities should always involve a variety of word recognition, reading and writing games.

2. **Back Writing (reading and writing)**

   Working in pairs, children pull a tricky word from a treasure chest. They must read the word to themselves and then attempt to finger write the word on their partners back. They should write the word one letter at a time and not move on until the child has guessed the correct letter. Once finished, the child must work out what tricky word was written on their back and use it in a sentence. If they get it correct, their partner can give them a House Point (or any alternative reward system). The words can also be written in the air or on the carpet.
3. **Talking Tins (recognition and writing)**

Using “talking tins” or any other recording device, the teacher prerecords the tricky words that the class are working on. Children then have to match the talking tin to the correct tricky word flashcard. For higher ability children, they may have to write the tricky word on their whiteboard as opposed to matching it to a flashcard.

4. **Splat (reading)**

Using a large dice, the teacher sticks a different tricky word on each surface. The children are then given 6 colourful cut outs in the shape of a splat. Children roll the dice and if they can read the tricky word that it falls upon, they get to stick a splat shaped cutout over the word they have read. This can be made into a game by having 2 di. Children then take turns rolling their own di. The first to splat all of the words wins.

5. **Magic Bag (reading and writing)**

One child holds the Magic Bag of letters. They are to pull out a letter. Can you name any tricky word that has this letter as its initial sounds? For higher ability children, they are to pull out a number of letters. Can you make any of this week’s tricky words from the letters you selected?

6. **Football Matching (recognition)**

Using a shoe box, painted green, draw out the markings of a football pitch. Write the different tricky words on different positions on the pitch and cut thin, sliced wholes in the box where the words are written. On lollipop sticks, either write the tricky words or stick footballs on with the tricky words written on them. The children are then to match the tricky words by sliding the lollipops into the correct wholes. By sticking on the tricky words with blutac instead of writing them on, the football pitch box be reused over and over. The show box can also be made into a flower garden by adding flowers to the lollipop sticks with the tricky words.

7. **Fishing (reading)**

Fill a box or tray with sand, shredded paper or glitter. Then, on magnets you must attach the tricky words for the week. Spread the magnets throughout the box. The children are then to fish out the words and read them as they do. For this you can use either a fishing net or any magnetic rod or toy. Make this a game between partners by seeing who can make the biggest catch of the day!
8. **Bottle tops (recognition)**

Similar to the fishing game, you are to write the tricky words onto bottle tops using a permanent marker. Then, drop the bottle tops into a bucket of water. Using spatulas, children are to fish out the bottle tops. On a laminated sheet of card, the teacher is to have written out the tricky words for that week. Children are to match up the bottle tops to the correct words. Make this into a game by seeing who can complete their card with bottle tops first.

9. **Glitter writing (writing)**

Provide the children with a selection of trays filled with a variety of different materials: glitter, sand, shaving foam, corn flour gloop, coloured PVA glue etc. Using their fingers, children are then to try to write their tricky words in the materials.

10. **Pass the Parcel (reading)**

Decorate a box to look inviting, possible with wrapping paper and ribbons. Then, fill the box with the tricky words of the week. Much like the game of pass the parcel, the children are to pass around the box whilst the music plays. When the teacher stops the music. The child holding the box brings out a word. They are to then try to read the word to their peers. Classmates show if the word was read correctly by using the formative assessment method of “shaky thumbs”.

11. **Magicians hat (reading and writing)**

Create an engaging and exciting magicians hat for the children. Select one child to wear the hat. On a postit note, the teacher is to write a tricky word and stick it on the hat. The rest of the children are to read the word to themselves and give clues about the word. It may be a clue as to the meaning of the word, or it may be the letters of the word in the wrong order. If the magician is really magic, he or she will be able to guess what the tricky word is!

12. **Bingo**

Create bingo cards by writing tricky words in a 4 by 4, or 6 by 6 grid. Create bingo tickets by writing the tricky words onto small sheets of paper or counters. Working in groups of 4 or 6, each child has their own bingo card. One child is to be the bingo caller and is to pull the bingo tickets from a bag and read the words. If the children have the word on their board, they call out the word. The first to call the word is given the ticket, as more than one child may have the word. The first child to cover all words on their board with a ticket must shout BINGO! He or she is the winner.