Word Pattern Detectives

Sort words by how their spellings help you read them.

4.2.F.1 "Students will expand their sight word vocabulary by reading regularly- and irregularly-spelled words in isolation and context with increasing automaticity."

NAME _____ DATE _____

REGULAR SPELLING

The letters follow familiar sound patterns. You can sound out the word to read it.

catfish

TRICKY SPELLING

Some letters do not make the sounds you might expect. Notice the surprising part and remember how the word sounds.

one

1 SORT

8 items

Read each word and circle REGULAR or TRICKY, then in Part 2 pick one word from each group and explain how you knew.

1.	sunset	REGULAR TRICKY
2.	picnic	REGULAR TRICKY
3.	said	REGULAR TRICKY
4.	backpack	REGULAR TRICKY
5.	does	REGULAR TRICKY
6.	friend	REGULAR TRICKY
7.	enough	REGULAR TRICKY
8.	handstand	REGULAR TRICKY

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick one word from each group and explain how you knew.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new REGULAR word and one new TRICKY word that are not on this page.

REGULAR _____

TRICKY _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence using a REGULAR word and a TRICKY word from the sort, and underline both words.

ANSWER KEY

Word Pattern Detectives

GRADE 4 · 4.2.F.1

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	sunset	**REGULAR**	Sun and set follow familiar sound patterns.
2	picnic	**REGULAR**	Both syllables follow familiar short-vowel patterns.
3	said	**TRICKY**	The letters ai make the unexpected short e sound.
4	backpack	**REGULAR**	Back and pack follow familiar sound patterns.
5	does	**TRICKY**	The letter o makes an unexpected short u sound.
6	friend	**TRICKY**	The letters ie make the unexpected short e sound.
7	enough	**TRICKY**	The letters ough make an unexpected sound like uff.
8	handstand	**REGULAR**	Hand and stand follow familiar sound patterns.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Task: Pick one word from each group and explain how you knew.
Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **REGULAR**: sandpit
- **TRICKY**: two

Challenge: I said the backpack was mine.

For Part 2, a student might explain that backpack can be sounded out, while the ai in said makes an unexpected sound. For Part 3, accept other words that clearly fit the categories.