



|     |       |          |      |           |
|-----|-------|----------|------|-----------|
| 1.  | I     | like     | not  | want      |
| 2.  | help  | it       | more | different |
| 3.  | who   | she      | you  | he        |
| 4.  | where | up       | on   | in        |
| 5.  | me    | make     | get  | look      |
| 6.  | what  | need     | are  | is        |
| 7.  | some  | put      | all  | this      |
| 8.  | don't | that     | go   | do        |
| 9.  | when  | finished | can  | here      |
| 10. | open  | turn     | stop | over      |

This grid displays the DLM™ "First 40" recommended core vocabulary words. These words are recommended for students who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) that need to start with a limited number of words in their communication systems due to motor, sensory, and/or cognitive challenges. These words were selected from a larger core vocabulary set based on their usefulness in everyday communication and in addressing the DLM™ Essential Elements. The "First 40" words are intended to get a student started with AAC, and additional core vocabulary words should be added over time, as the student learns and begins to use these words for communication.

If a student already has an effective AAC system, educators can compare the words in that system with the DLM™ "First 40" to see if additions to the current system would be helpful. If a student has an AAC system, but is not particularly successful at using it, consider using the DLM™ "First 40" to inform vocabulary selection.

The grid shown above is organized into 10 rows that have 4 words each. For students who need to start with an extremely limited number of words on a page, you could create 10 pages with these 4 core vocabulary words on each page. Although the student may only have access to 4 core words/symbols at one time, the AAC system provides the student with a total of 40 core words across the 10 pages.

For most students starting at this level, the communication partner will need to navigate or display the pages for the student. The communication partner will also need to model use of the AAC system with the student to provide opportunities to learn the vocabulary and so that the student can understand how the AAC system can be used to communicate. For more information on how to model a student's AAC system (also known as Aided Language Stimulation), refer to the DLM™ Core Vocabulary and Communication professional development module.

Several DLM™ state educators have used information from the “First 40” to create their own AAC systems or communication overlays. Watch this site for sample overlays and AAC systems that will be available for your use, free of charge.

Selection Process for the DLM “First 40” core vocabulary words:

1. We reviewed words ranked 1-60 on the DLM™ ranked core word list, which contains 463 total words.
2. We selected 40 of the highest ranked words to address communication and the early expressive language demands of the DLM™ Essential Elements.
3. We organized the 40 words in groups of 4 that would lend themselves to expression and modeling of language. This was instead of organizing words according to grammatical function or category.
4. Each page contains at least two, 2-word combinations for expressive phrases and for receptive input. Some pages contain words that could comprise 3 word phrases.
5. For this first set of 40 words, we tried to create groupings of words that could help students with both communication and language growth. For example, the question word, who, is on a page with pronouns. When someone asks a “who” question, you typically respond by indicating a person. Another example is that we combined the word, where, with words indicating location. As the pages grow (e.g., 9, and 12 locations), the combination of word classes on each page will be more diverse.



