Knowing only the 500 most frequent, a student could read only the words shown here.

Could it be an _______? The year before, _______ had seen one for the first time when his mother took him to a _______ _______ in _______, _______ _______. He had _______, _______, as the _______ a _______ by _______ on the _______ of a _______ that was _______ on the _______. Now _______ an _______ was right here in _______, and about to _______ over his house. Not _______ to _______ a thing, _______ the _______ and _______ up the _______ of the house to its _______. From there he had a good _______ of the _______, _______ the _______ place. And in the _______, _______ ever_______, he saw the _______.

Knowing the 1,000 most frequent words, a student could read only the words shown here.

Could it be an _______? The year before, _______ had seen one for the first time when his mother took him to a _______ in _______, _______. He had watched, _______, as the _______ gave a _______ by _______ on the _______ of a _______ that was _______ on the ground. Now maybe an _______ was right here in _______, and about to _______ over his house. Not _______ to _______ a thing, _______ opened the window and _______ up the _______ of the house to its _______. From there he had a good view of the _______ River, _______ past the _______ place. And in the sky, coming ever _______, he saw the _______. 
Knowing the 2,000 most frequent, a student could read only the words shown here.

Could it be an airplane? The year before, Charles had seen one for the first time when his mother took him to a flying _______ in _______, Virginia. He had watched, ________, as the _______ gave a _______ by _______ oranges on the _______ of a _______ that was _______ on the ground. Now maybe an airplane was right here in _______, and about to fly over his house. Not _______ to _______ a thing, Charles opened the window and climbed up the _______ roof of the house to its _______. From there he had a good view of the _______ River, _______ past the _______ place. And in the sky, coming ever closer, he saw the plane.
Knowing the 4,000 most frequent, a student could read all the words shown here except those in grey.

Could it be an airplane? The year before, Charles had seen one for the first time when his mother took him to a flying exhibition in Fort Myer, Virginia. He had watched, enthralled, as the pilot gave a bombing demonstration by dropping oranges on the outline of a battleship that was traced on the ground. Now maybe an airplane was right here in Minnesota, and about to fly over his house. Not wanting to miss a thing, Charles opened the window and climbed up the sloping roof of the house to its peak. From there he had a good view of the Mississippi River, flowing languidly past the Lindbergh place. And in the sky, coming ever closer, he saw the plane (Giblin, 1997, p. 3).