

Phonics

In school, we follow the Letters and Sounds programme. Letters and Sounds is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills which consist of six phases.

The Terminology

Phoneme

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word. It is generally accepted that most varieties of spoken English use about 42 phonemes.

Graphemes

A grapheme is a symbol of a phoneme. It is a letter or group of letters representing a sound.

Segmenting and blending

Segmenting consists of breaking words down into phonemes to spell. Blending consists of building words from phonemes to read. Both skills are important.

Digraph

This is when two letters come together to make a phoneme. For example, oa makes the sound in 'boat' and is also known as a vowel digraph. There are also consonant digraphs, for example, sh and ch.

Trigraph

This is when three letters come together to make one phoneme, for example igh.

Split digraph

A digraph in which the two letters are not adjacent – e.g. make

Abbreviations

VC, CVC, and CCVC are the respective abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonantvowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, and are used to describe the order of graphemes in words (e.g. am(VC), Sam(CVC), or each(VC), beach(CVC), bleach(CCVC)).

Letters and Sounds

Phase 1

Phase One of Letters and Sounds concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase 2. The emphasis during Phase 1 is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

Phase 1 is divided into seven aspects. Each aspect contains three strands: Tuning in to sounds (auditory discrimination), Listening and remembering sounds (auditory memory and sequencing) and Talking about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

Useful website for phase 1 games:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-1-games.html>

Phase 2

In Phase 2, letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time. A set of letters is taught each week, in the following sequence:

Set 1: s, a, t, p

Set 2: i, n, m, d

Set 3: g, o, c, k

Set 4: ck, e, u, r

Set 5: h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

The children will begin to learn to blend and segment to begin reading and spelling. This will begin with simple words.

Words using set 1

at	sat	pat	tap	sap
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Words using set 1 and 2

(+i)	(+n)	(+m)	(+d)
it	an	am	dad
is	in	man	sad
sit	nip	mat	dim
sat	pan	map	din
pit	pin	Pam	did
pip	tan	Tim	Sid
sip	nap	Sam	and
tip	tin		dip

Words using sets 1-3

(+g)	(+o)	(+c)	(+k)
tag	got	can	kid
gag	on	cot	kit
gig	not	cop	Kim
gap	pot	cap	Ken
nag	top	cat	
sag	dog	cod	
gas	pop		
pig	God		
dig	Mog		

Words using set 1-4

(+ck)	(+e)	(+u)	(+r)
kick	get	up	rim
sock	pet	mum	rip
sack	ten	run	ram
dock	net	mug	rat
pick	pen	cup	rag
sick	peg	sun	rug
pack	met	tuck	rot
ticket	men	mud	rocket
pocket	neck	sunset	carrot

Words using set 1-5

(+h)	(+b)	(+f and ff)	(+l and ll)	(+ss)
had	but	of	lap	ass
him	big	if	let	less
his	back	off	leg	hiss
hot	bet	fit	lot	mass
hut	bad	fin	lit	mess
hop	bag	fun	bell	boss
hum	bed	fig	fill	fuss
hit	bud	fog	doll	hiss
hat	beg	puff	tell	pass
has	bug	huff	sell	kiss
hack	bun	cuff	Bill	Tess
hug	bus	fan	Nell	fusspot
	Ben	fat	dull	
	bat		laptop	
	bit			
	bucket			
	beckon			
	rabbit			

Alongside this children are introduced to tricky words. These are the words that are irregular words. That means that phonics cannot be applied to the reading and spelling of these words.

High Frequency words

to	the	no	go	l
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Useful websites for phase 2 onwards:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-2.html>

<http://www.nessy.com/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/>

<http://www.nessy.com/hairyletters/>

Phase 3

By the time they reach Phase 3, children will already be able to blend and segment words containing the 19 letters taught in Phase 2.

Over the twelve weeks which Phase 3 is expected to last, twenty-five new graphemes are introduced (one at a time).

Set 6: j, v, w, x

Set 7: y, z, zz, qu

Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng

Vowel digraphs: ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

High Frequency words:

we	me	be	was	no	go
my	you	they	her	all	are

Phase 4

By Phase 4 children will be able to represent each of 42 phonemes with a grapheme. They will blend phonemes to read CVC words and segment CVC words for spelling. They will also be able to read two syllable words that are simple. They will be able to read all the tricky words learnt so far and will be able to spell some of them.

This phase consolidates all the children have learnt in the previous phases.

High frequency words:

said	so	she	he	have	like
some	come	were	there	little	one
they	all	are	do	when	out
what	my	her			

By this point children would be expected to be reading CVC words at speed along with the tricky words from the previous phases. It is important that children are taught that blending is only used when a word is unfamiliar.

Phase 5

Children will be taught new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these graphemes and graphemes they already know. They will begin to learn to choose the appropriate grapheme when spelling. The children will be automatically decoding a large number of words for reading by this point.

High frequency words:

oh	their	people	Mr	Mrs	looked
called	asked				
water	where	who	again	thought	through
work	mouse	many	laughed	because	different
any	eyes	friends	once	please	

New graphemes for reading:

ay day	oy boy	wh when	a-e make
ou out	ir girl	ph photo	e-e these
ie tie	ue blue	ew new	i-e like
ea eat	aw saw	oe toe	o-e home
		au Paul	u-e rule

By this phase children should be reading words fluently and no longer be blending and segmenting familiar words.











The real focus throughout the phase is to not only learn the new graphemes for reading but also to learn to read words with alternative pronunciations. Children also will need to learn alternative spellings for each phoneme.

Year 2

In Year 2, as well as revisiting alternate spellings covered in phase 5 phonics the children will be taught the principles of No-Nonsense spelling patterns and rules.

They are introduced to the adding of suffixes, plurals, homophones and how to spell longer words. Throughout the year the children are encouraged to develop strategies for learning spellings.

Top Ten ways to learn a spelling

1	<p>Break it into sounds eg</p> 	6	<p>Use word families eg</p>  <p>WOULD SHOULD COULD</p>
2	<p>Break it into syllables eg</p> 	7	<p>See words within words eg</p> <p>a friend to the end a rat in separate</p>  <p>SEPARATE</p>
3	<p>Break it into root words and affixes eg</p> 	8	<p>Use spelling rules eg</p>  <p>CRY, CRIES</p>
4	<p>Use a mnemonic eg</p>  <p>NECESSARY one collar two sleeves</p>	9	<p>By sight - learn the shape of the word eg</p>  <p>Look, Cover, Remember, Write, Check</p>
5	<p>Use your knowledge of word roots eg</p>  <p>MUSIC MUSICAL MUSICIAN</p>	10	<p>By movement - get used to writing the word with your finger, a pen, in the air.. eg</p>  <p><i>write</i></p>