

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).

