

# How Children Learn Phonics

A Presentation for  
Parents and Carers



# Did You Know...?

The English language has:

**26 letters**



**44 sounds**

**over 100 ways to spell those sounds**



It is one of the most complex languages to learn to read and spell.

# A Quick Guide on Phonics Terms

**phonics** (also known as ‘synthetic phonics’) – The teaching of reading by developing awareness of the sounds in words and the corresponding letters used to represent those sounds

**phoneme** – Any one of the 44 sounds which make up words in the English language

**grapheme** – How a phoneme is written down. There can be more than one way to spell a phoneme. For example, the phoneme ‘ay’ is spelt differently in each of the words ‘**way**’, ‘**make**’, ‘**fail**’, ‘**great**’, **sleigh** and ‘**lady**’.

**blending** – Putting together the sounds in a word in order to read it, e.g. ‘f – r – o – g, frog’

**segmenting** – Breaking a word into its constituent sounds in order to spell them, e.g. ‘frog, f – r – o – g’

# What Is Phonics?

Phonics is a method for teaching reading and writing.

It develops phonemic awareness – the ability to hear, recognise and use the sounds within words.

Learners are also taught the correspondence between sounds and the graphemes (spelling patterns) that represent them.

Phonics is currently the main way in which children in British primary schools are taught to read in their earliest years.

Children will also be taught other skills, such as whole-word recognition (see ‘tricky words’), book skills and a love and enjoyment of reading.

# Why Are Children Taught Phonics?

Phonics, taught in a structured way, is generally accepted to be the most effective way to teach reading and writing.

Children learn to hear and recognise sounds in words and spell them correctly.

This assists with their confidence, accuracy and fluency.

Phonics should not be taught in isolation – children also need to learn other reading and comprehension skills alongside phonic knowledge.

# The Importance of Listening Skills

Phonics learning relies on children being able to hear and distinguish the sounds within words.

Children with poor listening and/or attention skills can struggle with phonics learning.

Listening skills begin at birth and there are lots of things that parents and carers can do to support these skills.

Children are also taught listening and attention skills during their early years education (age 0-5).

The first stage of formal phonics education (Stage 1) also focuses on key listening skills. Without these skills, children may struggle to master the next stage of their phonics learning.

# Reading at Home



## Year 1 How to support your child with their reading at home?

**Digraph-** 2 letters that make 1 sound: er, oi, aw

**Trigraph-** 3 letters that make 1 sound: igh, ear

**Split digraph-** 2 letters (vowels) that are split by a consonant: a-e (make), e-e, (compete), i-e (nice), o-e (phone), u-e (huge)

**Special friends-** All of the above (digraphs, trigraphs, split digraphs)

"Say the sounds, read the word"- When reading, children should say the sounds and read the word, to ensure they are sounding and blending out every sound.

1. Talk through the front cover of the book

What can you see?

What do you think the book is going to be about? Why?

Make a prediction. Say it out loud. Write it into a sentence.

Read the blurb/synopsis- Was your prediction accurate?

2. Focus on this weeks' Year 1 Common Exception Words which are sent out for homework on seesaw.

Will you see any in your books this week?

Challenge- Use a timer: How quickly can you read these words?

Try again the following day, can you beat your time?

At Blackthorns Community Primary Academy, we use the Phonics Scheme *Sounds - Write*. A quality-first programme which supports our pupils with their reading.

There are free video tutorials on their website- <https://www.sounds-write.co.uk/>

They are also on Facebook- <https://en-gb.facebook.com/SoundsWritePhonics/>

Pupils receive Oxford Reading Tree and PM Benchmarking books, as well as online Bug Club logins.

Free e-books for home reading- <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/readingtree-at-home/>



### Year 1 Common Exception words

|       |      |       |        |
|-------|------|-------|--------|
| the   | his  | go    | ask    |
| a     | has  | so    | friend |
| do    | I    | by    | school |
| to    | you  | my    | put    |
| today | your | here  | push   |
| of    | they | there | pull   |
| said  | be   | where | full   |
| says  | he   | love  | house  |
| are   | me   | come  | our    |
| were  | she  | some  |        |
| was   | we   | one   |        |
| is    | no   | once  |        |



## Year 1 How to support your child with their reading at home?

3. Can you create a list of real and alien words with the sound that your book is focused on?



For example:

trainers plain snail rain nail pain chain grain  
snaib scrain rait chait straig shaich thain quail

trainers

Remember, you can add your sound buttons too!  
(Sound buttons are taught in Phonics lessons and will be shown in our Phonics Parent Helper Workshop)

4. Begin reading the story. Model how to read sentences that require expression.

- Ensure children recognise punctuation such as question marks, exclamation marks and font changes, to support their tone.
- Whilst reading, pause and ask your child questions to check their understanding. Use these question words: Who, What, When, Where, and most importantly, Why? Focus on using the Guided Reading Comprehension Dog Questions, sent out in the weekly homework to help support questioning.
- Ensure children understand new and unfamiliar words. Use a dictionary if possible.
- Ensure your child re-reads their books daily, to build fluency. They should be reading the Year 1 Common Exception Words (as mentioned above) fluently.

Use the Sounds-Write saying, "say the sounds and read the word"- Using the script at home, that is used in daily Phonics sessions at school, will help your child to understand that words are made up of sounds. Use this script throughout the day to help your child practise blending sounds together to make words.

Miss Renfree says...

1. Say: These are the sounds that make up the word t-r-ai-n, train.

ai, t, r and n. What is the first sound you hear in the word t-r-ai-n, train? "t". What is the second sound in the word t-r-ai-n, train? "r". What is the third sound in the word t-r-ai-n, train? "ai". And, what is the last sound you hear in the word t-r-ai-n, train? "n".

2. Say: Can you say the sound and read the word? "t-r-ai-n, train".

If you have further questions about this phonics, please do not hesitate to speak to me.

Thank you,

Miss Piper Renfree

# Sounds-Write

## About Sounds-Write

Sounds-Write is a quality first phonics programme. Its purpose is to provide classroom professionals with a comprehensive system with which to teach reading, spelling and writing. Ideally it will be introduced in YR, taught in KS1 and fine-tuned throughout the rest of Key Stage 2. In addition, it also serves very successfully as an intervention or catch-up programme.

### Teaching the Initial Code

At the start of the programme, simple, one sound/one spelling, one-syllable, CVC words only are introduced. As the programme progresses, the complexity of one-syllable words is increased to four-, five- and six-sound words of the structure CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC/CCCVCC, before introducing the most common consonant digraphs.

### The Extended Code and Polysyllabic Words

Thereafter, from Y1 onwards, all the remaining common vowel and consonant sound to spelling correspondences are taught until all the common spellings for the forty-four sounds in English have been covered. In parallel with this, pupils are taught how to read and spell polysyllabic words, progressing from two-syllable to five- and six-syllable words.



# Initial Code: Stage One

Stage 1 of The Initial Code has seven aspects, with a focus on listening skills.

1: Environmental sounds

2: Instrumental sounds

3: Body percussion

4: Rhythm and rhyme

5: Alliteration

6: Voice sounds

7: Oral blending and segmenting

m



a



s



d



t



i



p



n



g



o



c



k



u



b



f



e



l



h



sh



r



j



v



y



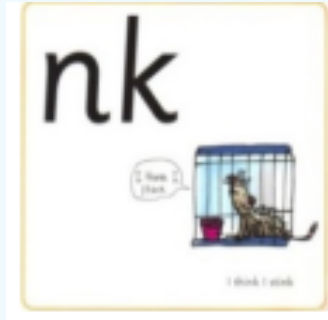
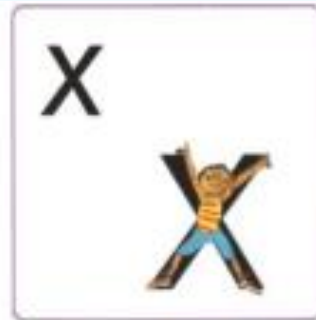
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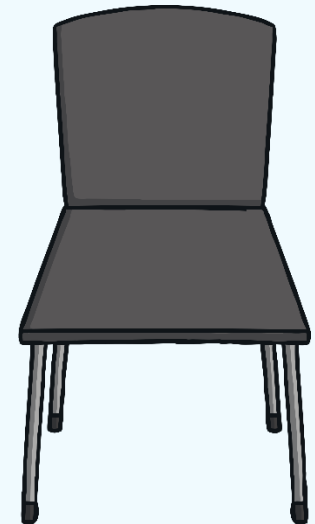
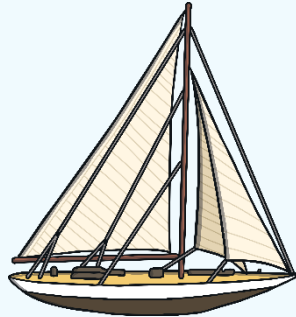
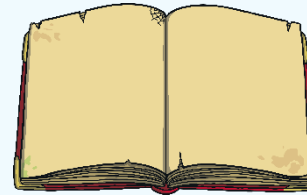
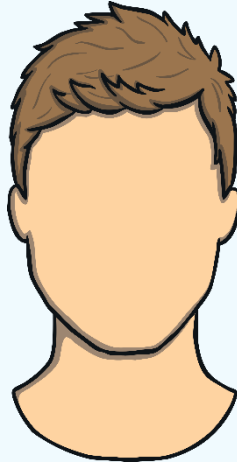
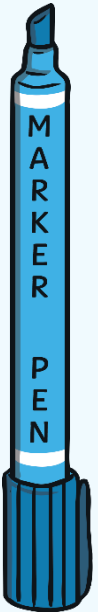
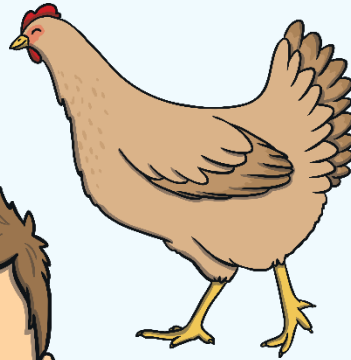
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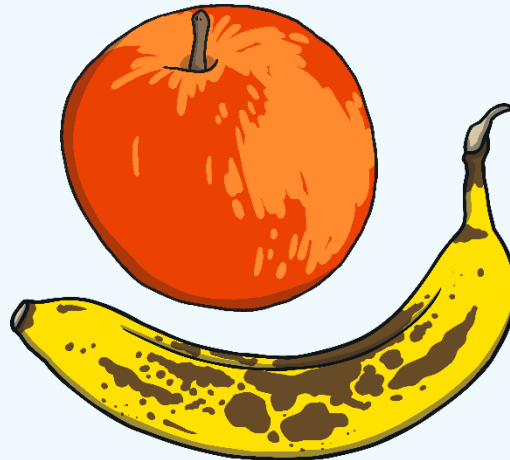
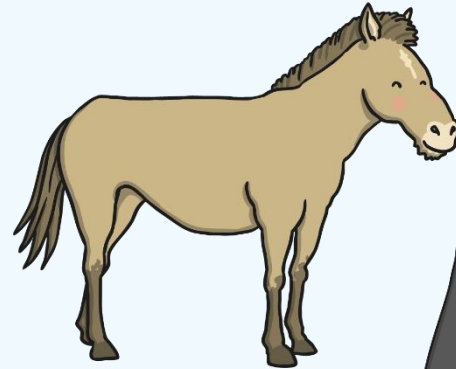
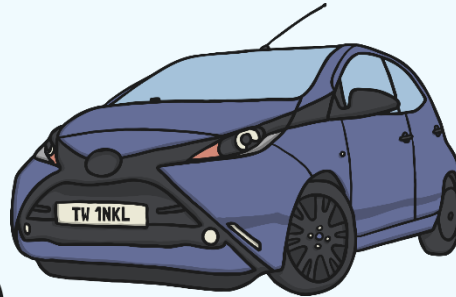
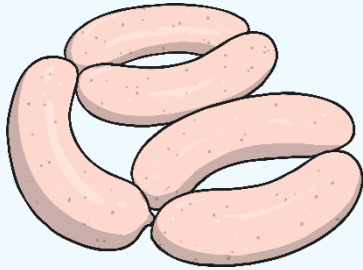
# Find the Rhymes



# Find the Starting Sounds

Can you find three things beginning with 'sss'?

How many things begin with 'h'?



# Initial Code: Stage Two

In Stage 2, children begin to learn some letter sounds and to match them to graphemes.

Most of the first sounds are single-letter sounds but there are also several digraphs, where one sound is represented by two letters, e.g. 'ck', 'll', 'ss'.

Children also begin to blend the sounds to make words. By the end of Phase 2, children will be able to read some 'vowel-consonant' (vc) and 'consonant-vowel-consonant' (cvc) words, e.g. up, in, cat, pin.

Five sets of letters are introduced – one set per week.

Children will also learn to read the 'tricky' words **the, to, go, I, no**, which cannot be read phonetically.

# Teaching Phonics in School

Children are taught reading and spelling daily throughout the week, and each session will follow a structured format.

The activities used to teach will vary and can be adapted. They are multisensory and appeal to different learning styles. They involve games and individual and group activities as well as teacher-led sessions.

Teachers will assess children's understanding throughout each session and will also assess knowledge of sounds to see whether a child is ready to move on to the next phase.





# Extended Code: Stage Three

Stage 3 usually lasts around 12 weeks. Children are taught another 25 graphemes.

The final single-letter sounds are taught, together with more consonant digraphs (e.g. zz, qu) and several vowel digraphs (e.g. ai, ee, igh).

Children also continue to learn how to blend and segment CVC words using the new sounds, e.g. tail, sheet, night – note that these words still only have three sounds.

Children will then move on to blending and segmenting two-syllable words such as cooker, eating, broken.

Tricky words also continue to be taught.

# Sounds and Rhymes (Vowels)

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  ay: may I play        |  ee: what can you see?        |  igh: fly high      |  ow: blow the snow                |  ew: chew the stew                |
|  ai: snail in the rain |  ea: cup of tea               |  ie: flies on a pie |  oa: goat in a boat               |  ue: continue the barbeque        |
|  a-e: make a cake      |  e: he, me, we, she, be       |  i-e: nice smile    |  o-e: phone home                  |  u-e: huge brute                  |
|  ae as in great        |  e-e: compete like an athlete |  i: I am kind       |  o: oh no! I don't want a potato! |  u for unite<br>unite, unit, duty |

# Additional Sounds and Rhymes

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  ir: whirl and twirl    |  oi: spoil the boy                       |  ou: shout it out                      |  air: that's not fair       |  or: shut the door             |
|  ur: nurse with a purse |  oy: toy for a boy                       |  ow: brown cow                         |  are: care and share        |  aw: yawn at dawn              |
|  er: a better letter    | <p>"are as in dare"</p> <p>"ear as in bear"</p> <p>"ere as in there"</p>  |   |  |  ou: the dinosaur is an author |
|  ure: sure it's pure    |  tion: pay attention, it's a celebration |  tious / cious: scrumptious, delicious |  ire: fire, fire!             |  ear: hear with your ear       |
|  ph: Phil the dolphin  |  wh: where's the white whale            |  ce: bounce the ball once             |  se: the mouse in the house |  oo: look at a book            |
|   |   |   |  |   |

# Extended Code: Stage Four

By Stage 4, children are able to represent each of 42 phonemes with a grapheme. Children will be able to read CVC words and begin to segment them to spell them.

Stage 4 is consolidation of children's knowledge. Children also move on to blending and segmenting using adjacent consonants, e.g. st, sp, tr, br, spr, str in words such as string, blow, train.

Phonics teaching continues to be regular and structured and children play games to consolidate their learning.

# Let's have our first phonics lesson!



## Sounds~Write Extended Code Unit 2 'ae'

Key Phoneme: 'ae'

### Learning Objectives:

To practise blending, segmenting, manipulating and identifying sounds in words.

To learn four of the most common spellings of the English speech sound 'ae' - **ay ai ea** and **a-e**.

# Extended Code: Stage Five

Children will broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes.

They will learn alternative ways of spelling the phonemes they have already learnt.

They will learn strategies to help them choose the correct grapheme for spelling.

Children will be reading with more and more fluency, no longer needing to 'sound out' most familiar words.

# The Year 1 Phonics Check

In June 2023, all year 1 children are expected to complete the year 1 phonics screening check.

The aim is to check that a child is making progress in phonics. They are expected to read a mixture of real words and 'nonsense' words.

If a child has not reached the expected standard, schools must give additional support to help the child to make progress in year 2.

# Extended Code: Stage Six and Beyond

Stage 6 is mainly taught as children progress through year 2 (age 6-7).

Children are becoming fluent readers and more accurate spellers. They learn more spelling patterns such as the use of prefixes and suffixes, contracted forms of words (e.g. can't, won't) and other words in common usage such as days of the week.

At this stage, children can read hundreds of words automatically. They are now reading for pleasure and reading to learn rather than learning to read.

They can decode words quickly and silently and only need to sound out longer or more unfamiliar words.



# Helping Your Child at Home

Work on listening skills.

Practise segmenting and blending.

Look for familiar sounds and words in the world around you.

Support your child to complete homework.

Practise new sounds and graphemes.

Read to and with your child **every day**:

- **Books from school (1x PM Benchmarking & 1x Oxford Reading Tree)**
- **Bug Club (constantly updated with new book band)**
- **Books from the library**
- **Books from home**

