

Phonics
Information for Parents

Technical vocabulary

Segmenting - breaking up words into their individual sounds so that we can spell a word

Blending - putting individual sounds together so that we can read a word

A **phoneme** - the smallest unit of sound in a word



A **grapheme** - the letter or letters that represent the phoneme.



The grapheme could be 1 letter, 2 letters or more! Sometimes we put sound buttons under the graphemes to make it clearer

at rain high

Saying the phonemes using the shortest possible sound helps children to understand phonics more quickly.

You need to be careful not to add an 'u' sound to the end of the other letter sounds.

Phase 1 (Nursery/Pre-school):

- Showing an awareness of rhyme and alliteration (words that start with the same sounds)
- Distinguishing between sounds in the environment and phonemes
- Exploring and experimenting with sounds and words
- Beginning to orally blend and segment phonemes

Phase 2 Learning graphemes

- 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,

During Phase 2 children will:

- Use these common consonants and vowels, children will blend them to read and segment them to spell, simple 3 phoneme words
- Understand that words are constructed from phonemes and that phonemes are represented by graphemes.

Phase 3

Learning one grapheme for each phoneme we have in English

- Set 6 - j, v, w, x
- Set 7 - y, z, zz, qu
- Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng
- Long vowel graphemes: ear, air, ure, er, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo

In Phase 3 children will:

- use more graphemes to blend to read and segment them to spell simple 3 and 4 phoneme words.
- Recognising and read 'tricky words' (eg what, my, the, are)

Common Words

- Some are decodable and can be 'sound talked' like 'and' 'it' 'in'
- Others are 'tricky' and cannot be 'sound talked' like 'the' 'no' 'go'.
- They need to be learned by sight and then applied in context, so children know them off by heart and understand their meaning.
- We follow these steps when teaching common words.
 - Step 1- recognising and reading the words.

- Step 2- Say a sentence using each word.
- Step 3- Have a go at spelling and writing the words.

Reading

Tips for helping your child to enjoy books:

- Encourage your child to pretend to 'read' a book before he or she can read words.
- Schedule a regular time for reading - perhaps when you get home from school or just before bed.
- Look for books on topics that you know your child is interested in - maybe dragons, insects, cookery or a certain sport.
- When you read to your child, make the experience interactive - ask questions about the story, the pictures and what they think of the characters.
- Enrol your child at the local library so they can try new books regularly
- Keep an eye out for the themes that catch your child's imagination at school - and help follow it up with more reading.

Here are some things to talk about, when sharing books at home.

- Locate and recall title
- What is happening in the picture?
- Who is in the story?
- How does X feel? How do you know?
- What do you think will happen next?
- What do you think X might say?
- Chat about the story and relate to own experiences
- Did you enjoy the story? Why?
- What happened at the beginning? End?

Here are some tips for helping your child to read the text.

- Check children are reading print from left to right. (Running their finger underneath the text will help.)
- Encourage children to 'sound talk' words they don't know.
- If they make a mistake ask 'Does that look right?'
- 'What is happening in the picture that could help?'
- 'Does that make sense?'

Activities to try at home!

- **Splat the letter!** Write graphemes on individual pieces of paper/post its, you say a letter sound and your child splats the correct grapheme with a fly swat!
- **Box of sounds-** place cards with letters on in to a box. Children choose a letter and say the sound it makes. They could then match the letter to an object or picture of something beginning with that sound.
- **Sound sorting-** gather a selection of objects from around the house and sort them in to tubs labelled with the letter sound that the object begins with.
- **Bucket of sounds** - Label 3 or 4 buckets or ice cream tubs with a grapheme on each, say a sound and your child throws a ball in to the matching bucket and says the sound.

- **What's in the box?** Place 'post its' with simple words on, in to a box or bag. Children choose a word, sound talk it and blend the sounds to read the word. They could then match this to a picture or an object. This game can be adapted to use segmenting. Children choose a picture from the box, sound talk it, they could match it to a word, or have a go at writing the word.
- **Common word bingo-** write 4 common words on a piece of paper, then write them and a few more on to 'post its', place in to a bag. The bingo caller says a word then your child crosses it off, if they have a matching one, on their bingo board. Start off with the bingo caller showing them the word, then see if they can identify the word without it being shown.
- **Run to the word-** write 4 words on separate pieces of paper, or write them in chalk outside. You 'sound talk' a word and your child runs to the word and reads the word by blending the sounds together.
- **Silly sentences** - Choose a word or picture and make up a silly sentence using that word.
- **Quick write-** say a letter sound and your child has a go at writing the letters that make the sound.
- **Countdown-** make a list of words. See if your child can sound talk, blend and read them before the time runs out on an egg timer.

Useful web sites

- www.coxhoe.durham.sch.uk/Curriculum/Literacy.htm click on KS1 activities
- www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/4_11/site/literacy.shtml
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/>
- www.ictgames.com/literacy.html literacy based games
- www.phonicsplay.co.uk click on parents
- <http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>