



Phonics- explained

What is phonics?

Phonics is

Knowledge of the alphabetic code

(26 letters, 44 phonemes, 140
different letter combinations)

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**Understanding of the skills of
segmenting and blending**

Letters and phonemes

- **Letters:** a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
- **44 phonemes:** /b/ /k/ /d/ /f/ /g/ /h/ /j/ /l/ /m/ /n/ /p/ /r/ /s/ /t/ /v/ /w/ /y/ /z/ /sh/ /ch/ /th/ /th/ /ng/ /zh/
- /a/ /e/ /i/ /o/ /u/ /ai/ /ee/ /igh/ /oa/ /oo/ /oo/ /ow/ /oi/ /ar/ /or/ /ur/ /air/ /ear/ /ure/ /er/
- **Some of 140 letter combinations illustrated in words:**
Cat, peg, pig, log, put,
pain, day, gate, station
burn, first, term, heard, work,
haul, law, call,
tried, light, my,
slaughter

Some definitions

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

Grapheme- Letter(s) representing a phoneme t ai igh

Digraph- Two letters, which make one sound

A consonant digraph contains two consonants sh ck th ll

A vowel digraph contains at least one vowel also known as long vowel phoneme ai ee ar oy

Trigraph- Three letters, which make one sound igh dge

Split digraph- A digraph in which the two letters are not adjacent (e.g. make) a_e e_e i_e o_e u_e

Segmenting

Identifying the individual phonemes in a spoken word (e.g. *h-i-m*) and writing down or manipulating letters for each sound to form the word 'him'

Blending

Recognising the phonemes in a written word, for example **c-u-p**, and merging or synthesising them in the order in which they are written to pronounce the word 'cup'

Adjacent consonants

- Formally known as blends
- Letter combinations where each letter makes an individual phoneme i.e s/p, t/r

● sp st sk sl
tr ft nt lt
mp un lp dr
cl sw cr sm
e.g. **step** **list** **clap** **grasp** **strap**

Adjacent consonants are no longer taught as blends as this can be a barrier to learning.

Four key principles

- Phonemes are represented by letters (grapheme)
- A phoneme can be represented by one or more letters
- The same phoneme can be represented/spelled in more than one way
- The same spelling may represent more than one phoneme

Sound buttons

leg
.. .

sail
. ai .

cake
. ake

lightbulb
. igh

● single
(bean)

———— Digraph/trigraph
(sausage)

⤿ Split digraph
(swing)

Phoneme frames

WORD	PHONEMES					
shelf	sh	e	l	f		
dress	d	r	e	ss		
think	th	i	n	k		
string	s	t	r	i	ng	
stripe	s	t	r	i	p	e
toast	t	oa	s	t		

Purpose of phase 2

(up to 6 weeks)

- Learn 19 phonemes and know the graphemes that represent them.

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

- Move on from orally blending and segmenting to blending and segmenting letters to read and spell (maybe with magnetic letters) VC and CVC words
- Introduce two syllable words, simple captions and some tricky HFW.

Purpose of phase 3

(up to 12 weeks – Suggested Timetable p76-78)

- Teach another 25 phonemes and graphemes to go with them.

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

- Learn letter names
- Continue to practise blending and segmenting using new phonemes and two syllable words

Purpose of phase 4 (4 – 6 weeks)

- To consolidate children's knowledge of graphemes in reading and spelling words containing adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words
- can blend adjacent consonants in words and apply this skill when reading unfamiliar texts, (CCVC, CVCC, CCVCC)
step list clap grasp strap
- can segment adjacent consonants in words and apply this in spelling
Beware - Adjacent consonants are not digraphs. They make two distinct sounds and should not be taught as a blend.

Purpose of Phase 5

- Children broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling
- Learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations some of which they will have already encountered in high frequency words
- Learn to choose the appropriate graphemes when spelling and begin to build up word specific knowledge

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

5a.
All year 1 to complete and embed

i fin, find	ow cow, blow	y yes, by, very
o hot, cold	ie tie, field	ch chin, school, chef
c cat, cent	ea eat, bread	ou out, shoulder, could, you
g got, giant	er farmer, her	Alternative pronunciations- End of year 1 and into year 2.
u but, put (south)	a hat, what	

Children move on to this when phase 5a is embedded.

5b

5c