



EYFS/KS1 Phonics Glossary

Introduction to Phonics

The way children are taught to read, write and spell in schools today is called phonics or sometimes 'letters and sounds.' This guide tells you about some of the terms you may hear teachers use when talking about phonics or how your child is making progress in Literacy. There are also some top tips to help your child with phonics at home.

Word	What Does It Mean?
blend	Saying the individual sounds that make up a word and then merging or blending the sounds together to say the word – used when reading.
consonant	Most letters of the alphabet (excluding the vowels: a,e,i,o,u).
CVC words	<p>Abbreviation used for consonant-vowel-consonant words, used to describe the order of sounds. Some examples of CVC words are: cat, pen, top, chat (because ch makes one sound).</p> <p>Other similar abbreviations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VC words e.g. on, is, it. • CCVC words e.g. trap and black. • CVCC words e.g. milk and fast.
digraph	<p>Two letters which together make one sound e.g. ee, oa, ea, ch, ay.</p> <p>There are different types of digraph:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vowel digraph: a digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel, for example; boat or day. • Consonant digraph: two consonants which can go together, for example shop or thin. • Split digraph (previously called magic e): two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated within the word e.g. a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e. For example cake or pine.
grapheme	Written letters or a group of letters which represent one single sound (phoneme) e.g. a, l, sh, air, ck.

Word	What Does It Mean?
letters and sounds	<p>A Government document detailing the teaching of phonics. There are 6 phases described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1: This is split into 7 aspects, which focus on hearing and talking about environmental sounds and letter sounds. • Phase 2: Learning 19 letters of the alphabet, along with the first 5 'tricky words' and using them to read and spell simple words and captions'. • Phase 3: Learning the remaining letters of the alphabet, some 2 and 3 letter digraphs, along with the next set of 'tricky words'. Reading and writing captions and sentences. • Phase 4: Learning to blend and segment longer words, including words with adjacent consonants and more than one syllable. Reading and writing using these and the next 'tricky words', within sentences. • Phase 5: Learning alternative spellings and pronunciations for phonemes, including their common usage within words. Reading and writing using these and the next 'tricky words', within sentences. • Phase 6: Learning longer words and spelling rules. Children may work from another document from this point, called 'Support for Spelling'.
phoneme	<p>A single sound that can be made by one or more letters – e.g. s, k, z, oo, ph, igh.</p> <div data-bbox="975 916 1520 1272"> <p>Top Tip! When starting phonics, avoid using the letter names (see, ay, tee etc) and use the sounds instead (c, a, t)! This will help your child with spelling and recognising letter sounds when reading. Letter names can be introduced more gradually.</p> </div>
phonics	<p>Phonics teaches children to listen to and identify the sounds that make up words. This helps them to read and write words.</p>
pure sound	<p>Pronouncing each letter sound clearly and distinctly without adding additional sounds to the end e.g. 'f' not 'fuh.'</p> <div data-bbox="975 1507 1520 1899"> <p>Top Tip! It is tricky to say some sounds without the 'uh' sound at the end – like b, d, v and g! Try to emphasise the main letter sound when talking about these letter sounds. Some are easier to say by dragging the sound out e.g. ffffff rather than 'fuh' or mmmmmm rather than 'muh.'</p> </div>

Word	What Does It Mean?
segment	<p>This is the opposite of blending (see above). Splitting a word up into individual sounds – used when spelling and writing.</p> <div>  <div> Top Tip! Play word games with your child that encourage them to build words and recognise individual sounds in words e.g. word jigsaw puzzles, Hangman style games, I-Spy and making collections of objects that contain the same letter sounds at either the beginning, middle or end. </div> </div>
tricky words	<p>Words that are difficult to sound out e.g. said, the, because.</p> <div>  <div> Top Tip! Have some tricky word flashcards around and use them to practise reading and word recognition. </div> </div>
trigraph	<p>Three letters which go together make one sound e.g. ear, air, igh, dge, tch.</p>
vowel	<p>The letters a, e, i, o, u.</p>

How to help your child learn to read

If your child has recently started school, you might be wondering how you can help them learn to read at home, or perhaps you are interested in knowing a bit more about what they are learning at school. Most parents of young children were taught to read using a different strategy to the one used today, which is why it can be hard to know what to do for the best. This guide provides some information and advice from a qualified teacher about the current reading strategy in schools.

The way children are taught to read these days is called phonics (or more recently, letters and sounds). There are some other useful words you might want to know like phoneme (the sound of each letter) and grapheme (what each letter looks like).

Phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (how it looks) are now taught in a special order, this is because education specialists have worked out that this is the best way to help children learn to read. The phonemes-graphemes are also split into 5 groups called phases. This is to help teachers assess where children are with their phonics.

What differs now from when most of us were children, is the very short sounds that letters make. You may remember being taught “t” as a “ter” sound, now it has a very short and snappy “t” – if you whisper it, it’s easier to make the sound. The two I find particularly tricky to pronounce are l and n. With the “l” sound, pronounce as you would at the end of “Hull”, more of an “ul” sound. With “n”, don’t be tempted to say “ner”, it’s very much a “n” on its own, like in “Euan”. Another tricky one is “r”, not “rer” as you might think, but more of a growling “rrr” sound. When you say a letter, think how it actually sounds in a word, for example “f” might come out as “fer” but in a word has a very short “f” sound, like in “fluff”, if you think that “f” is said “fer” then this word would become “ferluffer”.

For quite a lot of letters, there is the temptation to put an “er” on the end, “h”, “j”, “t” being a few examples. It’s really important though that you keep the sounds really short, because if you think about it, when children are blending (which means putting the sounds together to make words), it won’t work if all the letters end with an “er” sound. Think of “cat”, with the way I was taught it when I was a child it would make sense to pronounce it “ceratter”, whereas with the short whispered sounds it’s far easier to blend the letters.

The vowel sounds (a, e, i, u and o) can be taught as you normally say them (a as in apple, e as in elephant, i as in igloo, u as in under, o as in orange), however there are some exceptions (e.g. child) but these will be addressed in school later on. There is also a list of tricky words (link from Twinkl) that do not follow the normal pronunciation of other words.

Here is the order in which the letters are taught, and the phases:-

Phase 1

1) tuning in to sounds

2) listening and remembering sounds

3) talking about sounds

(so basically being aware that words are made of graphemes and phonemes).

Phase 2

Learning which letter makes which sound (one set taught per week):

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

Phase 3

Set 6: j v w x

Set 7: y z, zz qu

ch, sh th ng ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er

Phase 4

No new graphemes

Practicing all the graphemes and blending them together to make words.

Phase 5

New graphemes:

ay (day) ou (out) ie (tie) ea (east) oy (boy) ir (girl) ue (blue) aw (saw)

wh (when) ph (photo) ew (new) oe (toe) au (Paul)

Split digraphs (where the sound is split by another letter)

a-e (make) e-e (these) i-e (like) o-e (home) u-e (rule)

New pronunciations for known letters:

i (fin, find), o (hot, cold), c (cat, cent), g (got, giant), u (but, put (in south of England), ow (cow, blow), ie (tie, field), ea (eat, bread),

er (farmer, her), a (hat, what), y (yes, by, very), ch (chin, school, chef), ou (out, shoulder, could, you)