



The Premier Academy

Introduction to Phonics



TPA
HELPAS
TEAM

Glossary

Phoneme

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word. It is generally accepted that most varieties of spoken English use about 44 phonemes.

Grapheme

A grapheme is a symbol of a phoneme. It is a letter or group of letters representing a sound.

Tricky words

Words that are not decodeable/encodeable and need to be learnt.

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, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, and are used to describe the order of graphemes in words (e.g. *am* (VC), *Sam* (CVC), *slam* (CCVC), or *each* (VC), *beach* (CVC), *bleach* (CCVC)).

Introduction

What is Phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching children how spoken words are composed of sounds called phonemes and how the letters in words correspond to those phonemes (a phoneme is the technical name for the smallest unit of sound).

The process of reading involves decoding or 'breaking' words into separate phonemes, so that meaning can be gained. On the other hand, the process of spelling requires the writer to identify all the phonemes in a word and then use their knowledge of the phonemic code to write or 'make' the word.

English is essentially a code that can be encoded (written) and decoded (read). We need to teach children this code with as much emphasis as possible on the rules and regularities of the written language.

Children are taught that generally we can make a word from the sounds and then break it apart again when we want to spell it. Spelling and reading are taught together but children may be better at reading before spelling or vice versa.

Written English is recognised as being a complex language. We have 26 letters but 44 phonemes (sounds) in the spoken language. There are a huge number of letter combinations (graphemes) needed to make these 44 phonemes.

To add to the challenge a number of words (termed tricky words) do not fit this pattern and cannot be decoded/encoded and have to be learnt by recognising them, for example, go, was, they, come, there.

Letters and Sounds

Letters and Sounds is a government produced phonic teaching programme. Throughout the six phases of Letters and Sounds children will be taught the 44 phonemes and the corresponding graphemes. It is important to remember that there are alternative spellings to these graphemes for example:

The 'a' sound in day, plain, tape, baby

The 'e' sound in bed, bread

The 'ee' sound in me, beach, tree, key, pony

Phase One

Aim

By the end of Phase One, children will have experienced a wealth of listening activities, including songs, stories and rhymes. They will be able to distinguish between speech sounds and many will be able to blend and segment words orally. Some will also be able to recognise spoken words that rhyme and will be able to provide a string of rhyming words.

Seven Aspects and Three Strands

Phase One activities are arranged under the following seven aspects:

- Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds
- Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds
- Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – body percussion
- Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme
- Aspect 5: Alliteration
- Aspect 6: Voice sounds
- Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting

Each aspect is divided into three strands:

- ◆ Tuning into sounds (auditory discrimination)
- ◆ Listening and remembering sounds (auditory memory and sequencing)
- ◆ Talking about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

Activities within the seven aspects are designed to help children:

1. Listen attentively;
2. Enlarge their vocabulary;
3. Speak confidently to adults and other children;
4. Discriminate phonemes;
5. Reproduce audibly the phonemes they hear in order all through the word, for example, c-a-t, sh-o-p, c-ar-p-e-t
6. Use sound-talk to segment words into phonemes.

Ideas for Phonic Games and Activities

Yes and No – Write a question that has a yes or no answer and ask your child to read the sentence. What do they think the answer is?

For example: Could you carry an elephant on your head?

Has a cat got sharp claws?

Silly sentences – Write a sentence and ask your child to read it. Does this sentence make sense? Change one of the words. Does it still make sense?

For example: The girl came home on the *train*.

The girl came home on the *bird*.

Word chains – Creating strings of words which rhyme/have a similar spelling pattern.

Treasure or trash? – Have words written on 'coins', some of which are nonsense words. Ask your child to sound out the word and decide if it's treasure or a nonsense word.

For example – hurt / nurt

Bingo – Write letters/words on a wipeable board or a piece of paper. Call out random letters/words and get your child to cross them off if they have them on their board.

What's in the box? – Have a selection of objects in a box or bag. Write the name of an object on paper and ask your child to sound it out. Can you find that object in the box?

Matching game – Have a selection of pictures and words and ask your child to sound out the words and match them to the correct picture.

Purposeful list writing – Helping you to write a list for shopping, a to do list, a guest list etc.

Verb Pictures – Find as many verbs as you can from a picture/scene/photo. Can your child change the root verb into past and present tense and use it in a sentence?

This is also fantastic for expanding vocabulary and finding the best verb choice.

For example: **run, (ran, is running)** could be made better by using more adventurous words such as.....dash, rush, zoom, race, hurry, tear or sprint.

Supporting Learning at Home

Enjoying and Sharing Books

Experience shows that children benefit hugely by exposure to books from an early age. Right from the start, lots of opportunities should be provided for children to engage with books that fire their imagination and interest. They should be encouraged to choose and peruse books freely as well as sharing them when read by an adult.

Enjoying and sharing books leads to children seeing them as a source of pleasure and interest and motivates them to value reading.

Tips for Teaching Your Child the Sounds

- ◆ It is important for a child to learn lower case or small letters rather than capital letters at first. Most early books and games use lower case letters and your child will learn these first at school. Obviously you should use a capital letter when required, such as at the beginning of the child's name, eg. **Paul**.
- ◆ When you are reading with your child, remember to use the letter sounds when decoding (reading words): **a buh cuh duh e ...** rather than the alphabet names of the letters: **ay bee see dee ee ...**

However, remember that this does not work for all words; you will need to teach your child to recognise the 'tricky' words.

- ◆ When saying the sounds of **b, d, g, j** and **w** you will notice the 'uh' sound which follows each, for example buh, duh... You cannot say the sound without it. However, try to emphasise the main letter sound and keep the sound short.

Useful websites for Phase One onwards:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-1-games.html>

Useful websites for Phase Two onwards:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-2.html>

<http://www.nessy.com/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/>

Phase Two

Aim

The purpose of this phase is to teach at least 19 letters (shown below in sets in order of introduction) and move children on from oral blending and segmentation to blending and segmenting with visual letters. By the end of the phase many children should be able to read some VC (vowel consonant e.g. at, on) and CVC (consonant vowel consonant e.g. get, cap) words and to be able to spell them.

During the phase they will be introduced to reading two-syllable words (e.g. laptop) and simple captions (e.g. pat a dog). They will also learn to read some high-frequency 'tricky' words: **the, to, go, no**.

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

Example Words Which Include the Phase Two Sets

had	but	of	lap	ass
him	big	if	let	less
his	back	off	leg	hiss
hot	bet	fit	lot	mass
hut	bad	fin	lit	mess
hop	bag	fun	bell	boss
hum	bed	fig	fill	fuss
hit	bud	fog	doll	hiss
hat	beg	puff	tell	pass
has	bug	huff	sell	kiss
hack	bun	cuff	Bill	Tess
hug	bus	fan	Nell	fusspot
	Ben	fat	dull	
	bat		laptop	
	bit			
	bucket			
	rabbit			

Phase Three

Aim

By the end of Phase Three children will be able to represent each of the 44 phonemes by a grapheme, and be able to blend phonemes to read CVC words and segment CVC words for spelling. They will have some experience in reading simple two-syllable words and captions. They will know letter names and be able to read and spell some tricky words.

They will be able to read the tricky words: **he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are;**

They will be able to spell the tricky words: **the, to, I, no, go;**

Some new sets of graphemes will be introduced:

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

A digraph is where two letters combine to make one phoneme (sound).

Words Examples for the Phase Three Sets

Sounds	Word Example	Sounds	Word Example
j	jam	z	zip
v	vet	zz	buzz
w	win	qu	quick
x	box	ch	chop
y	yes		

Sounds	Word Example	Sounds	Word Example
sh	shin	oo (short)	cook
th	thick	ow	now
ng	song	ar	star
ai	train	air	hair
igh	sight	ear	hear
oa	boat	er	term
oi	coil	ur	curl
oo (long)	boot	or	fork
ee	tree	ure	pure

Next 200 Common Words

water	away	good	want	over
how	did	man	going	where
would	or	took	school	think
home	who	didn't	ran	know
bear	can't	again	cat	long
things	new	after	wanted	eat
everyone	our	two	has	yes
play	take	thought	dog	well
find	more	I'll	round	tree
magic	shouted	us	other	food
fox	through	way	been	stop
must	red	door	right	sea
these	began	boy	animals	never
next	first	work	lots	need
that's	baby	fish	gave	mouse
something	bed	may	still	found
live	say	soon	night	narrator
small	car	couldn't	three	head
king	town	I've	around	every
garden	fast	only	many	laughed
let's	much	suddenly	told	another
great	why	cried	keep	room
last	jumped	because	even	am
before	gran	clothes	tell	key
fun	place	mother	sat	boat
window	sleep	feet	morning	queen
each	book	its	green	different
let	girl	which	inside	run
any	under	hat	snow	air
trees	bad	tea	top	eyes
fell	friends	box	dark	grandad
there's	looking	end	than	best
better	hot	sun	across	gone
hard	floppy	really	wind	wish
eggs	once	please	thing	stopped
ever	miss	most	cold	park
lived	birds	duck	horse	rabbit
white	coming	he's	river	liked
giant	looks	use	along	plants
dragon	pulled	We're	fly	grow

First 100 Common Words

Phase 2

a	an	as	at	if	in
is	it	of	off	on	can
dad	had	back	and	get	big
him	his	not	got	up	mum
but	<i>the</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>go</i>
<i>into</i>					

Phase 3

will	that	this	then	them	with
see	for	now	down	look	too
<i>he</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>was</i>
<i>you</i>	<i>they</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>her</i>

Phase 4

went	it's	from	children	just	help
<i>said</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>like</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>some</i>
<i>come</i>	<i>were</i>	<i>there</i>	<i>little</i>	<i>one</i>	<i>when</i>
<i>out</i>	<i>what</i>				

Phase 5

don't	old	I'm	by	time	house
about	your	day	made	came	make
here	saw	very	put	<i>oh</i>	<i>their</i>
<i>people</i>	<i>Mr</i>	<i>Mrs</i>	<i>looked</i>	<i>called</i>	<i>asked</i>
<i>could</i>					

Tricky words are shown in *blue italics*.



Phase Four

Phase Four is a consolidation phase, where children practise reading and spelling using the phoneme-grapheme correspondences taught in the previous phases.

By the end of Phase Four, children are able to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants and some compound words (two words are joined together to make a new word), for example: helpdesk, sandpit, laptop.

They are able to read the tricky words: **some, one, said, come, do, so, were, when, have, there, out, like, little, what;**

They are able to spell the tricky words: **he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are;**

They can write each letter – usually correctly.

Developing Writing

When children are writing, their letter knowledge along with their ability to segment will allow them to make a good attempt at writing many of the words they wish to use. Even though some of their spellings may be inaccurate, the experience gives them further practice in segmentation and, even more importantly, gives them experience in composition and helps them see themselves as writers.



Phase Five

Children come to the end of Phase Five knowing most of the common grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs). They should be able to read hundreds of words, doing this in three ways:

- ◆ Reading the words automatically if they are very familiar;
- ◆ Decoding them quickly and silently because their sounding and blending routine is now well established;
- ◆ Decoding them aloud.

Children’s spelling should be phonemically accurate, although it may still be a little unconventional at times. Spelling usually lags behind reading, as it is harder.

By the end of Phase Five children should:

- ◆ Read automatically all the words in the list of 100 high-frequency words;
- ◆ Accurately spell most of the words in the list of 100 high-frequency words;
- ◆ Form each letter correctly.

Phase Five Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences

Sound	Word Example
ay	day
ou	out
ie	tie
ea	eat

Sound	Word Example
oy	boy
ir	girl
ue	blue
aw	saw

Sound	Word Example
wh	when
ph	photo
ew	new
oe	toe
au	Paul

Sound	Word Example
a_e	make
e_e	these
i_e	like
o_e	home
u_e	rule

Phase Six and Beyond

During this phase, children become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers. The shift from learning to read to reading to learn takes place and children read for information and for pleasure.

As children find that they can decode words quickly and independently, they will read more and more so that the number of words they can read automatically builds up. There is a list of the 300 high-frequency words in each child's reading record for reference.

Increasing the pace of reading is an important objective. Children should be encouraged to read aloud as well as silently for themselves.

To become successful readers, children must understand what they read. They need to learn a range of comprehension strategies and should be encouraged to reflect upon their own understanding and learning. Such an approach, which starts at the earliest stages, gathers momentum as children develop their fluency. Children need to be taught to go beyond literal interpretation and recall, to explore the greater complexities of texts through inference and deduction. Over time they need to develop self-regulated comprehension strategies by:

- ◆ Activating prior knowledge;
- ◆ Clarifying meanings – with a focus on vocabulary work;
- ◆ Generating questions, interrogating the text;
- ◆ Constructing mental images during reading;
- ◆ Summarising.

From an early stage, children need to be encouraged to read with phrasing and fluency, and to take account of punctuation to aid meaning. Much of the reading now will be silent and children will be gaining reading stamina as they attempt longer texts.

In addition, as children read with growing independence, they will engage with and respond to texts; they will choose and justify their choice of texts and will begin to critically evaluate them. It is important throughout that children continue to have opportunities to listen to experienced readers reading aloud and that they develop a love of reading.