

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics

In school your child learns to identify all the sounds we use in spoken English: phonemic awareness. We teach the letter/sound correspondences of the alphabetic code, phonics and the key skills of blending and segmenting.

We can use our phonics knowledge to **decode**: read

is the reverse of

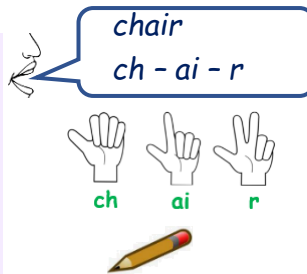
We can use our phonics knowledge to **encode**: spell

c a t = cat



For **reading** we teach **blending**: sound out and blend the sounds all through the word (decoding)

For **spelling** we teach **segmenting**: starting with a **spoken word**- we say the word, *sounding out each of the sounds* to then match the letter(s) we need to write it (encoding)



abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Your child learns how to **write** the letters (graphemes) as they are taught each sound (phoneme).

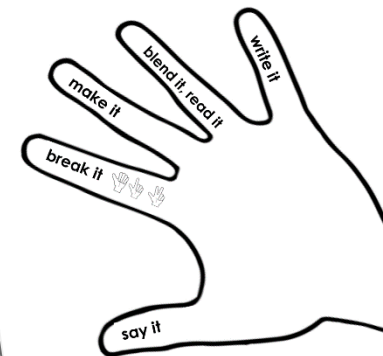
Phonics

Phonics is a method of teaching children to read by linking sounds (phonemes) and the letter symbols that represent them (graphemes) - the alphabetic code.

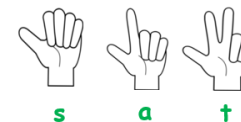
s

a

t



Use bottle lids, bricks, plastic letters or letter cards to have fun making words. When *segmenting*, or breaking a **spoken word** into sounds, it helps to say the word slowly. Your child says all the sounds they hear in the word and can hold a finger up for each sound. They then choose the letters they need to make the word.



Phonics - Elkonin Boxes

In school your child will be using Elkonin boxes to investigate and record each sound/phoneme in a word. We start with short words like 'at' and then 'dog'. Ask your child to explain how they use Elkonin boxes.

sh	o	t				
----	---	---	--	--	--	--

f	r	igh	t			
---	---	-----	---	--	--	--

Try splitting or segmenting these words into sounds/ phonemes and fitting them into Elkonin boxes. **Say** (don't show) the word for your child to repeat then say the sounds they hear.

cup	shark	wing	flash	yesterday
house	power	window	night	cheese

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Phonics - Diacritical Marking

In school your child will be using **diacritical marking** to investigate and record each sound /phoneme they hear in a word. They listen carefully and say the words accurately. (We usually start this at Stage 4.)

Ask your child to explain how they use diacritical marking.

The diacritical marking code records:
































	<i>single letter sounds</i>	
*	('single phonemes')	
	<i>digraphs/trigraphs/quadrigraphs</i>	
*	('joined phonemes')	
	<i>split digraph</i>	
*	('split phonemes')	






























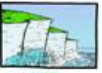


















Try using diacritical marking with the words below.

cup	shark	wing	flash	night	stone
make	please	plate	field	bridge	game

* The original Active Literacy Programme uses these terms*

A **phoneme** is the smallest unit of sound in a word. Phonemes combine to make syllables and words. **Graphemes** are written /printed letters that represent the sounds in words. Phonemes can be represented by 1 - 4 letter graphemes - for example: 'b', 'g', 'sh', 'ai', 'igh', 'dge', 'ough', 'aigh'.

a apple 	t tap 	s sun 	i ink 	p pig 
n net 	r red 	m map 	d dog 	e egg 
c cat 	k key 	g gate 	l leg 	f fox 
o orange 	b bat 	u umbrella 	h hand 	w window 
j jam 	v van 	y yo-yo 	z zebra 	x box 
qu queen 				
a_e flame 	e_e athlete 	i_e pine 	o_e cone 	u_e cube 

sh shark 	th thumb  the 	ch chips 	ng ring 	wh whale 
ph phone 	ee cheese 	oo book 	ck duck 	ai train 
oy boy 	oa boat 	ay play 	ea bread  pea 	ow snow  cow 
ue glue 	aw draw 	oi coin 	au sauce 	ew chew 
ou you  mouse 	igh night 	ss grass  dress 	ll bell 	ff cliff 
kn knee 	mb lamb 	tch match 	wr wrong 	ie field  pie 
ve glove 	ch choir 	se hose 	oe toe 	ough thought  bough 
ough dough  through 	gn sign 	dge bridge 	ch chef 	ti fraction 

a b Why phonics? ee sh

For some children learning to read and write seems easy, but for some it can be harder. This can be for many reasons, but one of the main reasons is that English is such a tricky language. The words that we speak in English are made up of about 44 sounds represented by more than 150 combinations of the 26 letters in the alphabet.

Some sounds (phonemes) can be represented by 1,2,3 or 4 letters:

/t/ t, /f/ ph, /ch/ tch, /ay/ aigh

One sound can be represented by many spelling alternatives (graphemes):

/oa/ o, oa, ow, oe, o_e, eau, ough

One grapheme can represent many sounds: ough -

/oa/ though, /o/ thought, /oo/ through, /ou/ plough, /u/ thorough.

Children need to learn the alphabetic code to decode and read words and write the sounds they hear in a word to spell it. We do not ask children to guess words by looking at the pictures. We use pictures to help us understand a story.




Children can use a code chart to help remember which letters/graphemes can be used for a sound.

English Alphabetic Code – /phonemes/ and graphemes or spelling alternatives												
Consonant Sounds												
/b/	/c/	/d/	/f/	/g/	/h/	/j/	/l/	/m/	/n/	/p/	/kw/ qu	
bat	cat	dog	fox	gate	hand	jam	leg	map	net	pig	queen	
bb	k	-dd	-ff	-gg	wh	g	-ll	-mm	-nn	-pp		
bu	-ck ch kh cc qu	-ed -de	ph -ft -ffe -gh	gu gh -gue	whole	-ge	/l/ -le	-me -mb -mn	kn gn -ne pn			
/r/	/s/	/t/	/v/	/w/	/wh/	/ks/	/y/	/z/	/sh/	/th/	/ch/	/ng/
red	sun	tap	van	window	whale	x box	yo-yo	zebra	shark	thumb	chips	ring
-rr	-ss c	-tt	-ve	-u penguin	⚓	-ks		/gz/ pegs	ch -fi	the	-tch	
wr	-se	-ed				-cks		exam	-ci		tu	/ngk/ bank
rrh	sc -st sw ps					-kes		/zh/ vision treasure oallage	-sci s sugar -ce ocean		⚓ ch- loch	
Vowel Sounds												
/ā/	/ē/	/ī/	/ō/	/ū/	/ay/	/ee/	/igh/					
cat	egg ea ie ei ay-says ai-said a-any were	pin y -e	on a aw au al -ough ough	rug o oo ou ough	day ai -ay a_e e_e -ey ea a aigh eigh ei	see y -ey ea ie ei e e_e eo-people	high i_e ie i y eye ei					
Some wee Scottish differences												
/oa/	/yoo/	/oo/	/ou/	/oy/	/or/er/ schwa /er/ /ar//air/ /eer/							
boat	new	book	found	boy	In Scottish English the /r/ is always pronounced so we do not need to learn separate phonemes combined with /r/ - /c//a//r/ not /c//ar/.							
ow	ew	u_e	ow	oi	The /oo/ sound is hard to distinguish a long and short oo sound as in the English code.							
o_e	u_e	-ew	ough		Watch out for issues with adding in a vowel sound in words like fire (fi/yer) and girl (gi/nj)							
oa	u	ou			/wh/ is a different sound to /w/ in Scottish English.							
o	-ue	-ui										
oe	-ui	-oul										
ough	-iew	-oe										
ew	ewe	-wo -two										
oo		ough										
ou												
eau												

Spelling Strategies

Using our phonics knowledge is the main strategy we teach to spell words. There are many ways to spell some sounds e.g. *play*, *sail*, *eight* all have the /ay/ sound, and some letters represent different sounds e.g. *cat*, *cell*, so we continue to teach phonics code.

Your child learns some other strategies to spell common words that have tricky spellings e.g. *where*, *does*, *always*, or topic words e.g. *lighthouse*. Exploring patterns, 'tricky bits' and learning about the history of our words helps your child spell independently.

Use your phonics knowledge 	Break and blend phonemes s c r e a m i n g Elkonin Boxes
Break and blend phonemes Diacritical Marking faster shop home	Syllabification yes/ter/day, win/dow 
Tricky letters me all you of friend	Compound words indoors doorstep sunshine
Morphology – word parts: prefixes, roots + suffixes uncomfortable discovered	Use a mnemonic  Watch out! There's a RAI in Separate

Analogy: *time*, *crime*, *lime*, *slime*

Ask your child what strategy they could use to help them spell each word:

playground elephant because said shell they




Reading

Reading can be broken into two main parts:
DECODING and **COMPREHENSION**.

Decoding is how we 'lift the words off the page' to be able to read them. **Comprehension** is understanding the words.



To begin with, children will have books to help them learn to **decode** and become fluent readers. Decoding is taught using phonics.

Look closely 	Sound it out 	Blend it together r - u - g rug	Read the word 
--	--	---------------------------------------	---

learning to read



reading to learn.

What can you do to help?

Help your child develop their decoding and fluency skills by listening to them read their 'reading book'. If they stick at a word, give praise for trying to 'sound out' the sounds in the word. If still stuck, you can give the word.

Prior Knowledge

What do I already know about this?

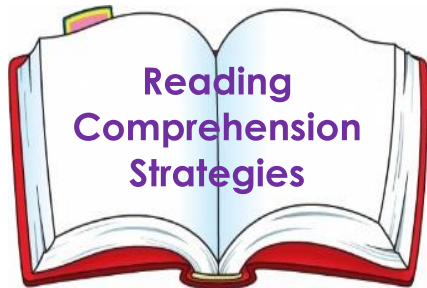
- What do I already know about this topic?
- What genre or type of text is this?
- What clues are there in the title/blurb/ headings/ pictures?
- What predictions do I have?
- What might I learn from this text?
- Who and what is this text for?

Metalinguistics

What can I do to work out words/ phrases I don't know?

- Read on
- Read back
- Think about what I know about the topic or text
- Look for smaller words within words
- Look for parts of the word I already know -*bi cent enial*
- Does it sound like any words I already know?
- Last resort- use a dictionary

Find it



Talk about it

Prove it

Visualisation

How can I make notes/display information/ create images in a way to help me remember and understand what I have read?

You could use:

- A flow chart
- A mind map or spider diagram
- A timeline or step plan
- A picture
- A diagram
- A story plan or story board
- Bulleted notes

Inference

The author does not always tell us everything. How can I work out stated or implied messages in the text?

What clues are there in the text to help me work out things about characters / settings and plot?

Consider the author's use of:

- Word choice
- Imagery
- Sentence structure
- Bias and persuasive techniques



Main Ideas

What can I do to work out the author's message?

What is the theme of the text?

Consider :

- Author's use of inference – read between the lines.
- What does the author want me to know or feel after reading the text?

Can I justify my opinion?

Summarising and Paraphrasing

How can I show my understanding of the text?

Consider:

- Combining information from inferences, visualisation and key messages.
- Make a list of the key ideas.
- Only include important details.
- Use my own words.

We start with the **Find it, Prove it, Talk about it** strategies and move to these other strategies at second level.

Reading - how you can help at home

Reading aloud to your child, talking about the words and pictures, and sharing ideas about the book.

Reading yourself: children who see adults reading, and enjoying reading, are much more likely to want to read themselves.



Have a regular time for reading so reading becomes a habit.



Most importantly, **talk** with your child. Spend time with them doing simple activities (cooking, making something, building a model). As you talk about what you're doing, you are helping them to learn new words. Later, when they see words written down, they have already heard them and know what they mean.

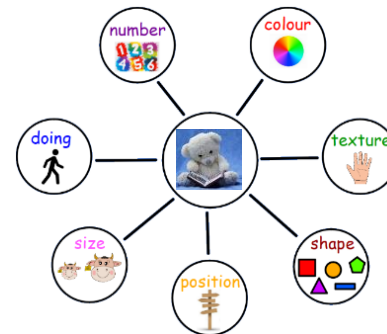


Writing - how you can help at home

- **Talk** about what you are doing, name objects all around us and name feelings to build your child's 'word store'. You cannot write about things you don't know about!
- Let your child see you writing. Children learn from watching others.
- Read stories to your child from an early age. We learn lots of words from books. Having a good vocabulary will help with knowing what to write.
If we haven't heard stories, we can't tell a story. If we can't tell a story, we can't write a story.

'Reading and writing float on a sea of talk.'

James Britton



A useful way to support children's talking and writing is this description bubbles tool. You can ask your child to describe familiar things. Encourage your child to talk in sentences e.g. 'My teddy has a round tummy. He is soft. He has two ears. My teddy is white.'