

PHONICS

THE BASICS – HELPSHEET

Phonics is an effective way of teaching children how to read and write. This is achieved through learning the sounds of letters, and how letters sound when they are combined with other letters. It involves matching the sounds of spoken English (phonemes) to patterns of individual letters or groups of letters (graphemes).

Key Terminology	Phase 1
<p>Phoneme – The smallest unit of sound in a word. There are 44 in English.</p>	<p>Early phonics teaching (for example that at pre-school or nursery) focuses heavily on developing children's listening skills. Children gain an awareness of different sounds: - Environmental sounds; -Instrumental sounds; -Voice sounds; -Rhythm and rhyme; -Body percussion/ Oral blending.</p> 
<p>Grapheme - A letter or a number of letters that represent a sound in a word; a way of writing down a phoneme.</p>	<p>Phase 2</p> <p>Children in phase 2 begin to learn the sounds that different letters make (phonemes). Children focus on learning the 19 most common single letter sounds, and a few double letter sounds. Generally, these are broken down into smaller sets of around 6 sounds, in order to make them easier to remember. The most commonly used phonemes are usually taught first – they are /s/, /a/, /t/, /p/, /i/, and /n/.</p> 
<p>Decoding - This occurs successfully when a student uses their knowledge of letter-sound relationships in order to accurately read a word.</p>	<p>Phase 3</p> <p>In phase 3, children learn the remaining 25 or so (depending on the scheme) more difficult/less commonly used phonemes. They are mainly made up of two letters, for example /ch/, /sh/, /ow/, and /ee/. Children also learn the names of the letters, alongside the sounds that they make – singing songs like the alphabet song, and other mnemonics, helps this. Children also learn some more common 'tricky words', for example and 'they'</p> 
<p>Blending/ Synthesising - The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and merge phonemes in order to make words, e.g. s-n-a-p = snap.</p>	<p>Phase 4</p> <p>From phase 4, children should be confident with each of the phonemes. From this point onwards, phonics becomes all about refining and securing their knowledge. They also begin to learn more about spelling patterns and tricky words. They learn: -Reading and spelling CVCC words (e.g. such, milk); -Reading and spelling high frequency words; -Reading and writing sentences; -Learning more tricky words (e.g. 'have', 'some').</p> 
<p>Segmenting - The process of using phonics for writing. Children listen to the whole word and break it up into phonemes, choosing the correct grapheme for each phoneme.</p>	<p>Phase 5</p> <p>Phase 5 generally takes children the whole of Year 1. They begin to explore alternative spellings for sounds, such as 'igh'. These are mastered in reading first, before being applied into spelling. Children also learn new graphemes (different ways of spelling each sound) and learn the alternative pronunciations of certain graphemes (for example in 'show' and 'cow'). They learn about split digraphs (which they sometimes know as the magic 'e') for example i-e in 'time.' They learn one last phoneme - /zh/ as in 'measure.'</p>
<p>CVC word – A word spelt consonantvowel-consonant.</p>	<p>Phase 6</p> <p>Phase 6 ordinarily takes place throughout Year 2, helping children to become more fluent readers and accurate spellers. By phase 6, children should be able to read hundreds of words by: -Reading them automatically; Decoding them quickly/ silently; Decoding them aloud. They should be able to spell most of the words accurately, although this is normally a little behind reading. Amongst other things, they also learn: -Prefixes and suffixes; The past tense;; Where to place apostrophes for omission; Spelling rules; Strategies for learning high frequency words;</p>
<p>Digraph – Two letters which together make one sound. There are different types: vowel, consonant, and split.</p>	
<p>Trigraph - Three letters which together make one sound, e.g. dge.</p>	
<p>Split Digraph - Two letters which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated in a word.</p>	
<p>Consonant Digraph - Two consonants which make one sound.</p>	
<p>Vowel Digraph - A digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel, e.g. ea, ay, ai</p>	