



# Parent guide to phonics



## What is phonics?

- Phonics is how we teach reading and writing.
- Each one of the **26 letters** in the alphabet has its own 'sound'. **This is different to how a letter name is said in the alphabet.**
- There are **44 sounds** all together in the English language.
- Some of these are made up of one, two or even three letters!
- Learning to read with phonics is a bit like learning a code, after learning just a few sounds, you will be able to use this code to read 100's of words.
- The more sounds you know, the more words you will be able to work out how to read.
- Some words are not decodable and we learn these as 'sight words' or 'tricky words'.
- Children are encouraged to write words phonetically before they learn how to spell them. This provides a better understanding of how words are made up of different sounds.

## The jargon- a quick guide

**Phoneme-** Any one of the 44 sounds which make up words in the English language

**Grapheme-** How a phoneme looks when it is written down. There can be more than one way to spell a phoneme. For example, the phoneme 'ay' is spelt differently in each of the words **w**ay, **m**ake, **f**ail, **g**reat, **s**leigh and **l**ady.

**Segmenting-** Breaking up words into their sounds to spell them. For example, cat = c a t

**Blending-** Putting sounds together in order to read words. For example, sh o p = shop

**Digraph-** 2 letters that work together to make 1 sound (sh, th, ph etc)

**Trigraph-** 3 letters that work together to make 1 sound (igh)

**Split digraph-** two letters that work together to make one sound but these letters are separated by another letter (**m**ade).

### How can you help?

- o Share books with your child, as often as possible.
- o Buy books or go to the local library. Read books by the same author and reread your child's favourites.
- o Use props and puppets to tell stories. Allow their imaginations to run wild!
- o Make reading more exciting by choosing books that are linked to their interests.
- o Talk about the pictures and ask questions about what your child is reading.
- o Try reading things that aren't books. You could read leaflets, signs, letters, magazines and many more!
- o Use ambitious vocabulary, explaining its meaning.
- o And finally...give lots of praise!

### How do we teach phonics?

- o Children are taught phonics daily.
- o They are taught in short, fun sessions using multi sensory activities (games, songs, technology).
- o We follow the 'Letters and Sounds' approach to phonics.
- o This begins with Phase 1 (focussing on listening and attention skills) and progresses to Phase 6 (becoming a fluent reader).

### Want to know more?

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/learn-to-read-phonics/>

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/what-is-letters-and-sounds-.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ksblMiliA>

- youtube video guide to pronunciation of all sounds.