

How Children Learn Phonics

A Presentation for
Parents and Carers



Did You Know...?

The English language has:

26 letters



44 sounds

over 100 ways to spell those sounds



It is one of the most complex languages to learn to read and spell.

The Jargon - A Quick Guide

phonics (also known as 'synthetic phonics') - The teaching of reading by developing awareness of the sounds in words and the corresponding letters used to represent those sounds

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

grapheme - How a phoneme 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 'way', 'make', 'fail', 'great', sleigh and lady'.

blending - Putting together the sounds in a word in order to read it, e.g. 'f - r - o - g, frog'

segmenting - Breaking a word into its constituent sounds in order to spell them, e.g. 'frog, f - r - o - g"

What Is Phonics?

Phonics is a method for teaching reading and writing.

It develops phonemic awareness – the ability to hear, recognise and use the sounds within words.

Learners are also taught the correspondence between sounds and the graphemes (spelling patterns) that represent them.

Phonics is currently the main way in which children in British primary schools are taught to read in their earliest years.

Children will also be taught other skills, such as whole-word recognition (see ‘tricky words’), book skills and a love and enjoyment of reading.

Why Are Children Taught Phonics?

Phonics, taught in a structured way, is generally accepted to be the most effective way to teach reading and writing.

Children learn to hear and recognise sounds in words and spell them correctly.

This assists with their confidence, accuracy and fluency.

Phonics should not be taught in isolation - children also need to learn other reading and comprehension skills alongside phonic knowledge.

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The Importance of Listening Skills

Phonics learning relies on children being able to hear and distinguish the sounds within words.

Children with poor listening and/or attention skills can struggle with phonics learning.

Listening skills begin at birth and there are lots of things that parents and carers can do to support these skills.

Children are also taught listening and attention skills during their early years education (age 0-5).

The first phase of formal phonics education (Phase 1) also focuses on key listening skills. Without these skills, children may struggle to master the next stage of their phonics learning.

Letters and Sounds

Letters and Sounds is a resource for the teaching of phonics which was issued by the Department for Education in 2007.

It remains the most common way to teach phonics in British primary schools.

It is divided into six sections, or phases, intended to begin in the preschool years and finish at the end of year 2 (age 7).

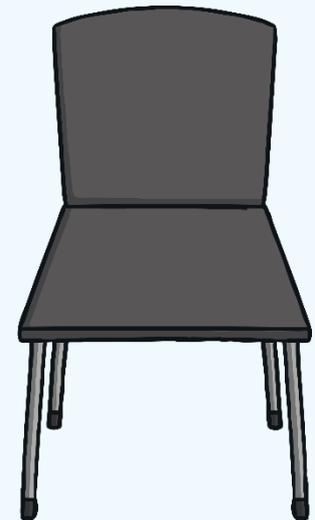
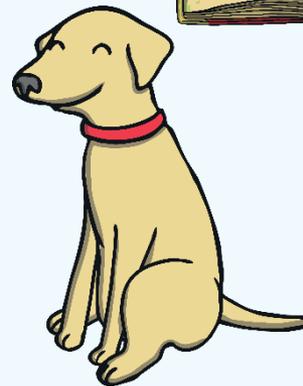
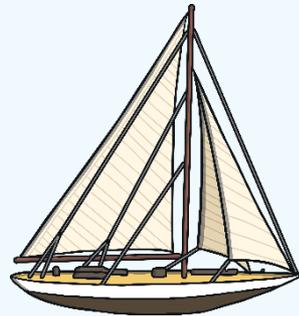
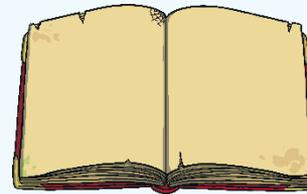
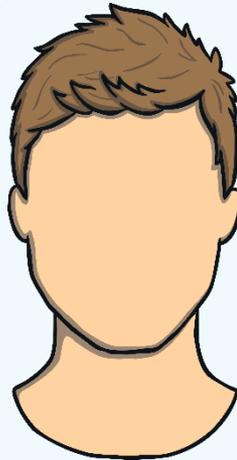
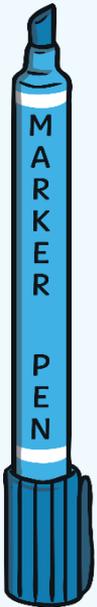
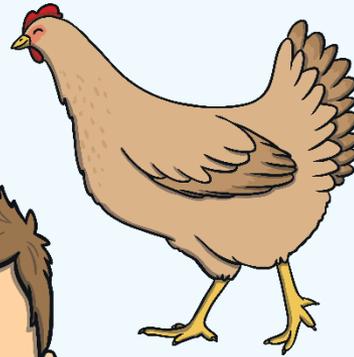
The Read, Write Inc scheme we use at Tweedmouth West is based upon this.

Step One - Being able to listen and attend

There are seven aspects, with a focus on listening skills.

- 1: Environmental sounds
- 2: Instrumental sounds
- 3: Body percussion
- 4: Rhythm and rhyme
- 5: Alliteration
- 6: Voice sounds
- 7: Oral blending and segmenting

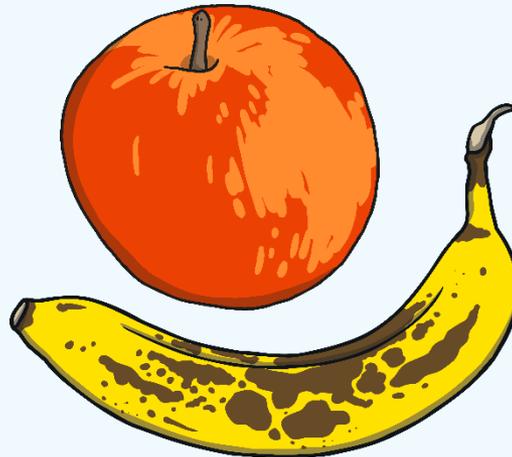
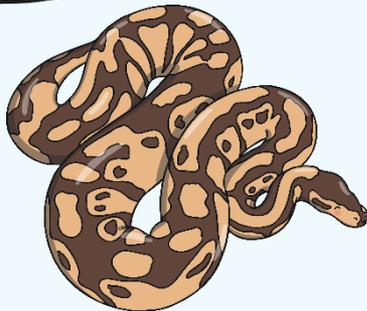
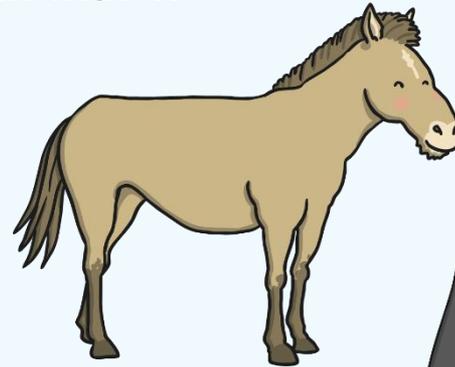
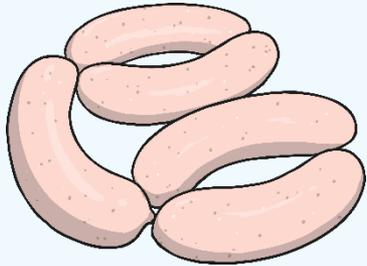
Find the Rhymes



Find the Starting (initial) Sounds

Can you find three things beginning with 'sss'?

How many things begin with 'h'?



Step Two – Reception or earlier

In step 2, children begin to learn some letter sounds and to match them to graphemes.

Most of the first sounds are single-letter sounds but there are also several digraphs, where one sound is represented by two letters, e.g. 'ck', 'll', 'ss'.

Children also begin to blend the sounds to make words. By the end of step 2, children will be able to read some 'vowel-consonant' (vc) and 'consonant-vowel-consonant' (cvc) words, e.g. up, in, cat, pin.

A new sound is taught daily. All others are reviewed.

Focus on the pure sound – not 'mu'...'mmmmm'

Children will also learn to read the 'tricky' words (red words in a RWI ditty)

the, to, go, I, no, which cannot be read phonetically.

Teaching Phonics in School

Children are taught reading and spelling daily throughout the week, and each session will follow a structured format.

The activities used to teach will vary and can be adapted. They are multisensory and appeal to different learning styles. They involve games and individual and group activities as well as teacher-led sessions.

Teachers will assess children's understanding throughout each session and will also assess knowledge of sounds to see whether a child is ready to move on to the next phase.



Next Step – digraphs

Children are taught another 25 graphemes.

The final single-letter sounds are taught, together with more consonant digraphs (e.g. zz, qu) and several vowel digraphs (e.g. ai, ee, igh).

Children also continue to learn how to blend and segment CVC words using the new sounds, e.g. tail, sheet, night – note that these words still only have three sounds.

Children will then move on to blending and segmenting two-syllable words such as cooker, eating, broken.

Tricky words also continue to be taught.

The Year 1 Phonics Check

In June, all year 1 children are expected to complete the year 1 phonics screening check.

The aim is to check that a child is making progress in phonics. They are expected to read a mixture of real words and 'nonsense' words.

If a child has not reached the expected standard, schools must give additional support to help the child to make progress in year 2.

Helping Your Child at Home

Work on listening skills. Identify sounds in the environment

Practise segmenting and blending. 'Fred Talk'

Look for familiar sounds and words in the world around you. E.g. names of shops and places

Support your child to complete homework.

Practise new sounds and graphemes.

Read to and with your child **every day if you can and ENJOY it.**

