



*Putting the Fun
in Phonics!*

Nursery Edition



What is Phonics?



What is phonics?

- * Words are made up from small units of sound called phonemes. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes (sound) that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words.
- * **Phoneme** = sound
- * **Grapheme** = letter formation
- * **Diagraph** = when two letters are put together to make one sound i.e. ch
- * **Trigraph** = when three letters are put together to make one sound i.e. igh, ear,



What is Phonics?



- * **Blending**

- * Children are taught to be able to blend. This is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This skill is vital in learning to read.

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- * **Segmenting**

- * Children are also taught to segment. This is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words.



What makes Phonics so tricky?



In some languages learning phonics is easy because each phoneme has just one grapheme to represent it. The English language is a bit more complicated than this. This is largely because England has been invaded so many times throughout its history. Each set of invaders brought new words and new sounds with them. As a result, English only has around 44 phonemes (sounds) but there are around 120 graphemes (letter formations or ways of writing down those 44 phonemes). Obviously we only have 26 letters in the alphabet so some graphemes are made up from more than one letter.

- * **ch th oo ay** (these are all digraphs - graphemes with two letters)
- * There are other graphemes (letter) that are trigraphs (made up of 3 letters) and even a few made from 4 letters (ough)

Another slightly sticky problem is that some graphemes can represent more than one phoneme. For example **ch** makes very different sounds in these three words: **chip**, **school**, **chef**.





So why bother learning Phonics?



- In the past people argued that because the English language is so tricky, there was no point teaching children phonics.

Now, most people agree that these tricky bits mean that it is even more important that we teach phonics and children learn it clearly and systematically. A written language is basically a kind of a code.

Teaching phonics is just teaching children to crack that code. Children learn the simple bits first and then easily progress to get the hang of the trickier bits.





How Is Phonics In Nursery Taught?



- Effective learning involves:

- * *Children having time to explore and experiment with ideas, materials and activities.*
 - * *Children feeling secure to try new experiences.*
 - * *Children learning through using all of their senses.*
 - * *Adults who give children opportunities to develop their own ideas.*
 - * *Adults who interact with and support children in developing confidence, and independence*
 - * *Adults who talk to children about their work, introducing appropriate vocabulary.*
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Letters And Sounds



Phase One





Phase One



Phase One of Letters and Sounds concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase 2. The emphasis during Phase 1 is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

- * Phase 1 is divided into seven aspects. Each aspect contains three strands:
 - Tuning in to sounds (auditory discrimination),
 - Listening and remembering sounds (auditory memory and sequencing)
 - and Talking about sounds (developing vocabulary and language comprehension).

It is intended that each of the first six aspects should be dipped into, rather than going through them in any order, with a balance of activities. Aspect 7 will come later when children have had plenty of opportunities to develop their sound discrimination skills.





General Sound Discrimination



Aspect 1 – **Environmental**

The aim of this aspect is to raise children's awareness of the sounds around them and to develop their listening skills. Activities suggested in the guidance include going on a listening walk, drumming on different items outside and comparing the sounds, playing a sounds lotto game and making shakers.



Aspect 2 - **Instrumental sounds**

This aspect aims to develop children's awareness of sounds made by various instruments and noise makers. Activities include comparing and matching sound makers, playing instruments alongside a story and making loud and quiet sounds.

Aspect 3 - **Body percussion**

The aim of this aspect is to develop children's awareness of sounds and rhythms. Activities include singing songs and action rhymes, listening to music and developing a sounds vocabulary.





Aspect 4 – Rhythm and rhyme

This aspect aims to develop children's appreciation and experiences of rhythm and rhyme in speech. Activities include rhyming stories, rhyming bingo, clapping out the syllables in words and odd one out.



Aspect 5 - Alliteration

The focus is on initial sounds of words, with activities including I-Spy type games and matching objects which begin with the same sound.



Aspect 6 - Voice sounds

The aim is to distinguish between different vocal sounds and to begin oral blending and segmenting. Activities include Metal Mike, where children feed pictures of objects into a toy robot's mouth and the teacher sounds out the name of the object in a robot voice - /c/-/u/-/p/ cup, with the children joining in.





Aspect 7 – Oral blending and segmenting

In this aspect, the main aim is to develop oral blending and segmenting skills.

To practise oral blending, the teacher could say some sounds, such as /c/-/u/-/p/ and see whether the children can pick out a cup from a group of objects. For segmenting practise, the teacher could hold up an object such as a sock and ask the children which sounds they can hear in the word sock.

The activities introduced in Phase 1 are intended to continue throughout the following phases, as lots of practice is needed before children will become confident in their phonic knowledge and skills.





How Can I Help at Home?





Talk, Talk, Talk



Play ‘**What do we have in here?**’ Put some toys or objects in a bag and pull one out at a time. Emphasise the first sound of the name of the toy or object by repeating it, for example, ‘c c c c – car’, ‘b b b b – box’, ‘ch ch ch ch – chip’.

Say: ‘A tall **t**in of **t**omatoes!’ ‘**T**ommy, the **t**icklish **t**eddy!’ ‘A lovely little **l**emon!’ This is called alliteration. Use names, for example, ‘**G**urpreet gets the **g**iggles’, ‘**M**ilo makes **m**usic’, ‘**N**aheema’s **n**ose’.

* Teach them ‘**Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers**’ or other tongue twisters exploring initial sounds.



Sound-talking

Find real objects around your home that have three phonemes (*sounds*) and practise ‘sound talk’. First, just let them listen, then see if they will join in, for example, saying:

‘I spy a p-e-g – peg.’

‘I spy a c-u-p – cup.’

‘Where’s your other s-o-ck – sock?’

‘Simon says – put your hands on your h-ea-d.’

‘Simon says – touch your ch-i-n.’

‘Simon says – pick up your b-a-g.’





Letters And Sounds

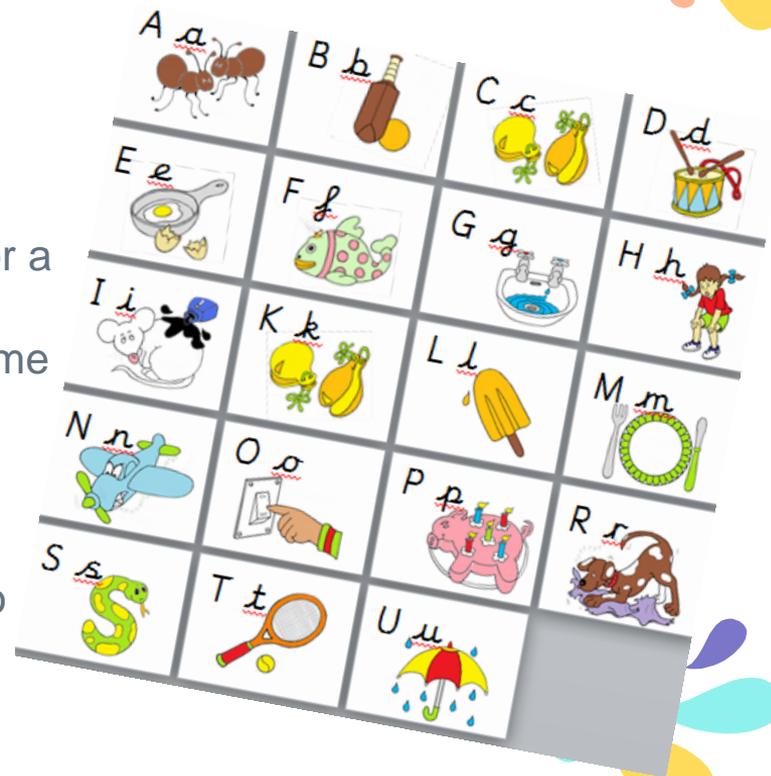
Phase Two

What's The Difference?

In this phase children will continue practising what they have learned from phase 1, including 'sound-talk'.

They will also be taught the phonemes (*sounds*) for a number of letters (*graphemes*), which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by **more than one letter**, for example, /ll/ as in **b-e-ll**.

They may be using pictures or hand movements to help them remember these.





Pure Sounds



Your child will learn to read the words by -
segmenting – breaking the word into sounds
blending – putting the sounds together to hear the word.
No ‘Schwaing’ in phonics

Sss not sir t not tuh P not puh

Pure sounds clip:

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ksblMiliA8&t=45s>

Jolly Phonics Songs A-Z

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei0iFs5uF6w>





Tricky Words



They will also learn several tricky words:
the, to, I, go, no.

Children will still be practising oral blending and segmenting skills daily.

They need plenty of practice at doing this!





How Can I Help At Home?



Magnetic letters

- Buy magnetic letters for your fridge, or for use with a tin tray. Find out which letters have been taught – have fun finding these with your child and place them on the magnetic surface.

Making little words together

Make little words together, for example, *it, up, am, and, top, dig, run, met, pick*. As you select the letters, say them aloud: ‘*a-m – am*’, ‘*m-e-t – met*’.

Breaking words up

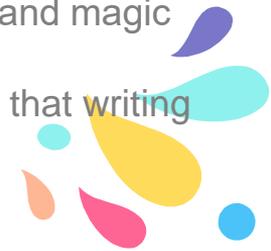
Now do it the other way around: read the word, break the word up and move the letters away, saying: ‘*met – m-e-t*’.

Both of these activities help children to see that reading and spelling are reversible processes.

Don't forget the writing box!

Spelling is harder than reading words – praise, don't criticise. Little whiteboards and pens, and magic boards, are a good way for children to try out spellings and practise their handwriting.

Your child might be trying to use letters from their name to write; this shows that they know that writing needs real alphabet letters. Try making or buy an alphabet poster.





Thanks!

Any questions?

