



# Support your child at home: Phonics and early reading

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# What is phonics?

Phonics is a fundamental part of reading and writing.

Phonics is a method of teaching people to read by matching sounds with letters or groups of letters.

# Technical vocabulary

- A **phoneme** is the smallest unit of sound in a word. A phoneme may be represented by 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters.

t ai igh

- A **grapheme** is the letter(s) representing a phoneme.
- There are **44** phonemes. Phonemes are represented by different graphemes.

ai ay

# Technical vocabulary

- A **digraph** is two letters which make one sound.
  - A consonant digraph contains two consonants:

sh th ck ll

- A vowel digraph contains at least one vowel:

ai ee ar oy

- A **split digraph** is a digraph where the two letters are not adjacent.  
(e.g. **make**)

- A **trigraph** is three letters which make one sound.

igh air

# Phase 1

- To develop language and increase vocabulary through speaking and listening activities.
- To develop phonological awareness.
- To distinguish between sounds.
- To speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control.
- To become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration.
- Use **sound talk** to segment words into phonemes.
- Example activities - listening walks, silly soup, rhyming chants/songs.

# By the end of Phase 1

Children will have experienced a wealth of listening activities, including songs, stories and rhymes.

They will be able to distinguish between speech sounds and many will be able to blend and segment words **orally**.

Some will also be able to recognise spoken words that rhyme and will be able to provide a string of rhyming words.

# Phase 2

## To introduce grapheme-phoneme correspondences

- Children know that words are constructed from phonemes and that phonemes are represented by graphemes.
- They have knowledge of a small selection of common consonants and vowels – only 19.
- They **blend** them together in reading simple CVC words and segment them to support spelling (using magnetic letters can help, for example).

## Phase 2

s	a	t	p	i
n	m	d	g	o
c	k	ck	e	u
r	h	b	f	ff
l	ll	ss		

I	to	the
no	into	
go		

### Letter Progression (one set a week)

- Set 1: s a t p
- Set 2: i n m d
- Set 3: g o c k
- Set 4: ck e u r
- Set 5: h b f, ff l, ll s

**Pronunciation** - not 'uh' on the end – use soft voice!



# Blending

Blending is a key skill children need when learning to read. Early in F2 (Reception), they'll begin to learn their sounds. At the same time, they'll begin to learn how to blend them together to read words.

So, /c/ /a/ /t/ can be 'sounded out' and they'll blend it to read 'cat'.

c ----- a ----- t

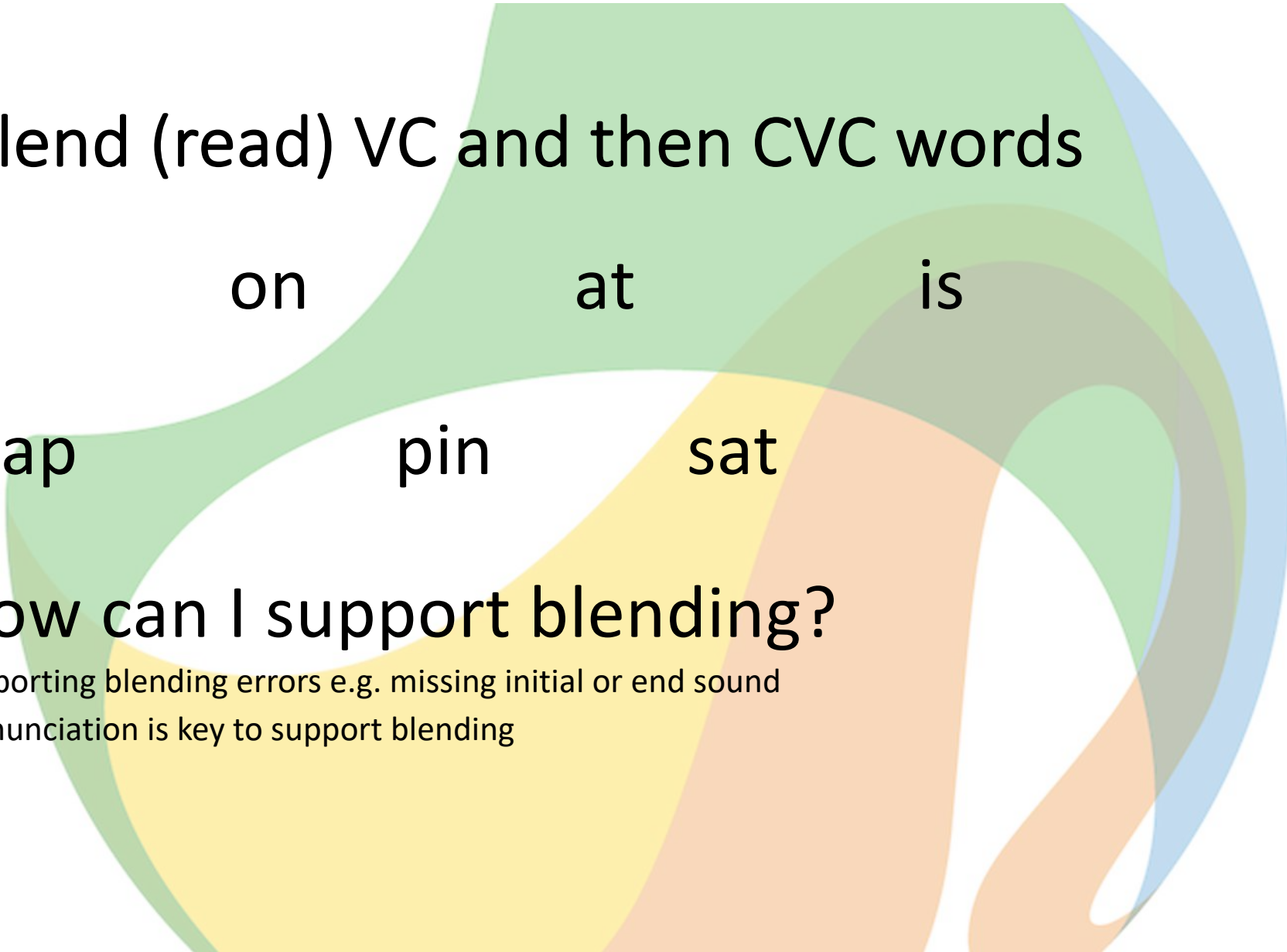
c-----a-----t

c—a—t

Orally segment cvc words



How can you support?



Blend (read) VC and then CVC words

it

on

at

is

map

pin

sat

**How can I support blending?**

Supporting blending errors e.g. missing initial or end sound

Pronunciation is key to support blending

# Segment VC and CVC words

Pre writing



How can you support?

# High frequency words and tricky words

- High frequency words are simple common words like 'had' or 'the'. They are essential words: they're needed to make up even the simplest of sentences and the beginner reader will soon come across them when learning to read.
- Some high frequency words are decodable and some aren't. High frequency words that aren't decodable are commonly called 'tricky words' or 'sight words'.

an	it	had	his	a
as	of	back	not	the
at	off	and	got	to
if	on	get	up	I
in	can	big	mum	no
is	dad	him		go
				into

## Phase 3

**To teach children one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes in order to read and spell simple regular words.**

- Know that phonemes are represented by graphemes
- Learn another 25 graphemes, most of them comprising 2 letters (digraphs), which they can blend for reading and segment for spelling eg: boat, church, thorn

# Phase 3

qu	ch	sh	th	ng
ai	ee	igh	oa	oo
oo	ar	or	ur	ow
oi	ear	air	er	ure

Phase 3 tricky words

he	she	we	are
me	be	you	they
all	her	was	my

## Grapheme – phoneme correspondence

- give the sound when shown any Phase Three grapheme
- find any Phase Three grapheme when given the sound



# Blending and segmenting

feet

torch

light

soap

thing

thing





# Phoneme frames



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## Phase 4

- In Phase 4, children are not taught any new phonemes or graphemes.
- They will further manipulate the phonemes and graphemes they've already learnt.
- Many of the words in Phase 2 and 3 required children to blend approximately three sounds together in order to read them.
- Phase 4 requires children to blend an increasing number of sounds together in order to read.



stamp

# Phase 4

Children now have the ability to blend and segment therefore they are moving beyond simple cvc words to cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc and cccvc.

black  
ccvc

strong  
ccvc

felt  
cvcc

blank  
ccvcc

# Phase 5

- Children should be able to read and spell words with adjacent consonants, such as **trap**, **string** and **flask**.
- Children will learn that one sound can be represented by a number of different graphemes according to the word it appears in and different graphemes can represent more than one sound
- Children will learn more graphemes and phonemes. For example, they already know **ai** as in **rain**, but now they will be introduced to **ay** as in **day** and **a-e** as in **make**.
- Alternative pronunciations for graphemes will also be introduced, e.g. **ea** in **tea**, **head** and **break**.
- With practice, speed at recognising and blending graphemes will improve. Word and spelling knowledge will be worked on.

## Phase 5

ay	ea	ie	oe	ue
a_e	e_e	i_e	o_e	u_e
oy	ir	aw	ou	ew
wh	ph	au	ey	

# Alternative graphemes

vowels			
There needs to be at least one of these vowel sounds in every word (one per syllable).			
phoneme (sound)	examples	grapheme (written pattern)	
short vowel sounds			
/ a /	<u>a</u> pple	a	
/ e /	e <u>l</u> ephant, br <u>ea</u> d	e	ea
/ i /	i <u>g</u> loo, g <u>y</u> m	i	y
/ o /	<u>o</u> ctopus, w <u>a</u> sh	o	a
/ u /	<u>u</u> mbrella, w <u>o</u> n	u	o
long vowel sounds			
/ ae /	r <u>ai</u> n, tr <u>ay</u>	ai, ay, a-e, a	
/ ee /	t <u>ree</u> , m <u>e</u>	ee, ea, ie, y, e, ey	
/ ie /	l <u>igh</u> t, k <u>ite</u>	igh, i-e, y, i, ie	
/ oa /	bo <u>o</u> t, bo <u>o</u>	oa, ow, o, o-e	
/ ue /	t <u>u</u> be, em <u>u</u>	u-e, ew, ue, u	
/ oo /	mo <u>o</u> n, scre <u>w</u>	oo, ue, ou, ew, u-e	

phoneme (sound)	examples	graphemes (written pattern)	
/ b /	<u>b</u> and, bu <u>bb</u> les	b	bb
/ c /	<u>c</u> ar, du <u>ck</u>	c	k, ck, q, ch
/ d /	<u>d</u> igger, pu <u>dd</u> le	d	dd
/ f /	<u>f</u> ish, giraffe	f	ff, ph, gh
/ g /	<u>g</u> uitar, g <u>og</u> gles	g	gg
/ h /	<u>h</u> elicopter	h	
/ j /	<u>j</u> ellyfish, frid <u>ge</u>	j	g, dge, ge
/ l /	<u>l</u> eaf, bell	l	ll, le
/ m /	<u>m</u> op, ham <u>mm</u> er	m	mm, mb
/ n /	<u>n</u> ail, <u>kn</u> ot	n	nn, kn

# Year 1 phonics screening

- A screening check for Year 1 children
- Aimed at identifying children who may need extra help
- Assesses decoding skills using phonics
- 40 items to be read (20 real words, 20 pseudo words)
- If children don't pass in Year 1, they have to retake the test at the end of Year 2.
- What does it look like?

grit

start

best

hooks

blan



steck



hild



quemp





# How can I help at home

- Reading is the key.
- Children learn best when they're actively engaged in the process of **constructing meaning**, which is the key purpose of reading.
- Reading at home is essential to give children time to practise what they learn at school and to develop fluency (about 90 words per minute is ideal).
- We change books at school every week.

# How can I help at home

- Ask your child to find items around the house that represent particular sounds, i.e. 'oo' - 'spoon' 'bedroom'
- Play matching pairs – with key words or individual sounds/pictures
- Key words on the stairs
- Play tricky word bingo
- Flashcard letters and words – how quickly can they read them?
- Notice words/letters in the environment
- Go on a listening walk around the house or when out and about
- Lots of activities **online** for children to practise their phonic knowledge

# Online resources

- <https://www.scholeselmet.leeds.sch.uk/learn-more/phonics/>
- <https://www.moortown.leeds.sch.uk/learn-more/phonics/>
- <https://www.stjameswetherby.leeds.sch.uk/learn-more/phonics/>
- <https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds>
- <http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>
- YouTube: Alphablocks, alphabet song, jollyphonics song