



Phonics Terminology

A guide for families

What is phonics?

Phonics teaches children to listen to and identify the sounds that make up words. This helps them to read and write words.

Terminology	Explanation	Example		
Phonics phase	There are six phases to learning phonics. Reading books will be matched to these phonic phases.			
Pure sound	This is how the sound is pronounced. Each sound should be clearly and distinctly sounded without adding additional sounds to the end.	's' and not 'suh'		
Phoneme	This is a single sound that can be made by one or more letters.	s k z t		
Grapheme	Written letters or a group of letters which represent one single sound.	sh, th, ng		
GPC	Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence The relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds.			
Digraph	Two letters making one sound.	sh, ch, th		
Vowel digraph	Two vowels which together make one sound.	ai, oo, ee		
Split digraph	Two letters which are split, making one sound.	a-e as in snake		
Trigraph	Three letters which go together to make one sound.	ing, air, ear		
Vowel	The letters a – e – i – o – u	a – e – i – o – u		
Consonant	Most letters of the alphabet, excluding the vowels.	b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z		
Segment and blend	Saying the individual sounds that make up a word and then merging or blending the sounds together to say the word.	c-a-t = cat		
VC, CVC, CCVC	The abbreviations for: VC = Vowel Consonant CVC = Consonant – Vowel – Consonant CCVC = Consonant – Consonant – Vowel – Consonant	VC = am CVC = ham CCVC = slam		
Tricky words	These are words that are difficult to sound out.			
	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
	l no the to go into	he she we me be you are her was all they my	said have like so do some come little one were there what when out	oh Mrs people their called Mr looked asked could