

# Phonics and Early Literacy

How do we teach children to read?

Jason Oak



What it looks like before you can read

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# The alphabet

- 26 letters - a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z
- 44 different sounds
- Phonics is the understanding of how these 44 different sounds can be made by combining the letters of the alphabet.

Learning to read starts with the letters of the alphabet.

In nursery and Reception children start to the names of the letters, as well as the letter sounds.

# 44 SOUNDS

## DESK TOP

### CONSONANT SOUNDS

b	bb	d	dd	f	ff	ph	g	gg	h	wh
j	g	ge	dge	k	c	ck	ch	q	l	ll
n	nn	kn	gn	p	pp	r	rr	wr	s	ss
t	tt	v	ve	w	u	wh	y	z	zz	ze
								se	x	x
								cks		

### DIGRAPHS

ch	tch	wh
zh	ge	ng
sh	ti	ch
s	c	ss
th	th	th

### SHORT VOWELS


a
e
i
o
u
oo

### LONG VOWELS

a	ai	ay	ey	ea	ei	a_e	eigh
e	ee	ea	ei	ey	ie	y	e_e
i	ei	ie	y	i_e	igh		
o	oa	ow	oe	o_e	ough		
u	ue	ew	u_e				
oo	o	u	ui	ew	ou	ue	ough

### 'R' CONTROLLED VOWELS

air	are	ear	ere	eir
ar	al	a		
ear	ier	ere	eer	
er	ear	ere	ir	or
or	oor	ore	oar	our
al	ar	au	aw	augh

<b>44 SOUNDS DESK TOP</b>										<b>CONSONANT SOUNDS</b>										<b>DIGRAPHS</b>								
										b	bb	d	dd	f	ff	ph	g	gg	h	wh	ch	tch	wh					
										j	g	ge	dge	k	c	ck	ch	q	l	ll	m	mm	mb		zh	ge	ng	n
										n	nn	kn	gn	p	pp	r	rr	wr	s	ss	se	c	ce		sh	ti	ch	th
										t	tt	v	ve	w	u	wh	y	z	zz	ze	se	x	x		cks	s	c	ss
<b>SHORT VOWELS</b>										<b>LONG VOWELS</b>										<b>'R' CONTROLLED VOWELS</b>								
a										a	ai	ay	ey	ea	ei	a_e	eigh	air	are	ear	ere	eir						
e										ea	a	e	ee	ea	ei	ey	ie	y	e_e	ar	al	a						
i										y	i	ei	ie	y	i_e	igh	ear	ier	ere	eer								
o										ou	a	o	oa	ow	oe	o_e	ough	ou	ow	er	ear	ere	ir	or	ur			
u										o	a	ou	u	ue	ew	u_e	oy	oi	or	oor	ore	oar	ough					
oo										u	ou	oo	o	u	ui	ew	ou	ue	u_e	ough	our	al	ar	au	aw	augh		

## **Phonics consists of:**

- Identifying sounds in spoken words
- Recognising the common spellings of each phoneme
- Segmenting words into phonemes to help to decode them and to help spell them
- Blending phonemes into words for fluent reading

## Some definitions

- Phoneme - a single sound in a word
- Grapheme - the letter, or group of letters that represents one sound. It could be one, two, three, or more letters.
- How many phonemes can you hear in 'cat'?
- How many graphemes are there in 'cat'?

## **Blending (for reading)**

- Recognising the sounds in a written word, eg. c-u-p, or sh-ee-p
- Merging them in the correct order to pronounce the words cup and sheep



## **Segmenting (for spelling)**

- Identifying the individual sounds in a spoken word (eg, h-i-m, s-t-or-k) and writing down letters for each phoneme (sound) to form the words.

How does this work in practice?

## **Segmenting and Blending**

This is a video for Australian teachers, so some of the resources mentioned here are not used in this school, but it does explain very well how segmenting and blending work in practice.

## **Progression in Phonics**

- So, how do we start this process?
- Where does it go from there?
- How do children become fluent readers?

# Synthetic Phonics

- <http://www.mrthorne.com/category/start/>
- Synthetic phonics gives children the ability to decode (read) almost any new word they come across. Even made-up words, like 'zotty' or 'stodder' or 'shev'.

In UK schools, and this one, we teach synthetic phonics.

This is where we teach the [phonemes](#) (sounds) associated with the [graphemes](#) (letters) at the rate of about six sounds per week. The sounds are taught in isolation then blended together (i.e. synthesised), all-through-the-word.

For example, children might be taught a short [vowel sound](#) (e.g. /a/) in addition to some [consonant](#) sounds (e.g. /s/, /t/, /p/). Then the children are taught words with these sounds (e.g. sat, pat, tap, at). They are taught to pronounce each phoneme in a word, then to [blend](#) the [phonemes](#) together to form the word (e.g. /s/ - /a/ - /t/; "sat").

## Phase 1

- Distinguishing between sounds in the environment and phonemes
- Showing an awareness of rhyme and alliteration
- Exploring and experimenting with sounds and words
- Discriminating speech sounds in words
- <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/AnimalBingo.html>

Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.

## Phase 2

(6 - 10 weeks)

- Using common consonants and vowels
- Blending for reading and segmenting for spelling simple C-V-C words:  
c-a-t, d-o-g, s-a-t, p-i-n
- Understanding that words are constructed from phonemes and that phonemes are represented by graphemes
- <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/BuriedTreasure2.html>

Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.

## Phase 3

(around 12 weeks)

- All 26 letters of the alphabet
- Reading and spelling a wide range of c-v-c words
- Children will know one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes.
- Some simple digraphs are taught, eg.  
ch, oo, th
- <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/DragonsDen.html>

The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language.

## Phase 4

(around 6 weeks)

- A consolidation unit
  - No new graphemes taught
  - Reading and spelling of tricky (irregular) words continues
  - Segmenting adjacent consonants in words and learning how to spell them, eg. swim, clap, jump
  - Blending adjacent consonants in words and applying this skill when reading unfamiliar texts
- [http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/kentict/content/games/poopDeck\\_v4.html](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/kentict/content/games/poopDeck_v4.html)

No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, jump.



## Phase 5

(20 - 30 weeks)

- Reading phonetically decodable two- and three-syllable words
- Different ways of pronouncing known graphemes, eg. book, spoon
- Different graphemes for known phonemes, eg. been and bean
- Spelling complex words using phonetically plausible attempts.
- [http://www.ictgames.com/tellAtRex\\_v3.html](http://www.ictgames.com/tellAtRex_v3.html)

Now we move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.

# Example of Phase 5 Planning

Week	Teach Tricky High Frequency Words		Revisit and Review Phase 2 & 3 graphemes: *practise previously learned graphemes *practise blending and segmentation	Teach: * New Graphemes for <b>READING</b> (5 per week) page 151 * New phoneme /zh/ as in treasure  Practice blending and reading words with new GPC Practice segmenting and spelling words with the new GPC	Practice reading and spelling *polysyllabic words *words with adjacent consonants	Apply *read or write a sentence using one or more high frequency words and words containing the new grapheme
	Read	Spell				
1	oh, their	said, so	Phase 2: Set 1: s, a, t, p Set 2: l, n, m, d Set 3: g, o, c, k	New graphemes for reading: ay e.g. day ou e.g. out ie e.g. pie ea e.g. sea oy e.g. boy	* Polysyllabic words: *numbers between eleven and twenty eleven, (twelve)	* "Oh, let's have a day out at the seaside," said the boy. * Their mum made a pie so they could have a picnic.
2	people, looked	some, come	Phase 2: Set 4: ck, e, u, r Set 5: h, b, f, ff, ll, ss Phase 3: Set 6: j, v, w, x	New graphemes for reading: ir e.g. girl ue e.g. clue & ue e.g. due aw e.g. saw wh e.g. when	* Polysyllabic words: *numbers between eleven and twenty Thirteen, fourteen	*Some people saw the thirteen blue birds. *Why, when I whistle, does the white whale come?
3	Mr, Mrs	have, like	Phase 3: Set 7: y, z, zz, qu Consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng Vowel Digraphs: ai, ee, igh, oo, oa	New graphemes for reading: ph e.g. phonics ew e.g. blew oe e.g. toe au e.g. haul ey e.g. money	* Polysyllabic words: *numbers between eleven and twenty fifteen, sixteen	* Mr Paul Honey likes to have turkey for Christmas dinner. * The jaunty jockey rode a donkey at the launch of the new race.
4	called, asked	were, here	Phase 3: Vowel Digraphs: ac, or, uc, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, ec	New graphemes for reading: a - e e.g. came e - e e.g. these i - e e.g. like o - e e.g. bone u - e e.g. rude New phoneme /zh/ as in treasure	* Polysyllabic words: *numbers between eleven and twenty seventeen, eighteen	*In June the usual seventeen flutes were a pleasure to hear. *He asked the boxer to go home alone and not to park here.

## Phase 6

- Phonically irregular words
- Consolidate knowledge of less common grapheme-phoneme correspondences
- Recognising and spelling an increasing number of complex words
- Past tense
- Suffixes
- [http://www.ictgames.com/writing\\_runway\\_v2.html](http://www.ictgames.com/writing_runway_v2.html)

Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

In addition to all this,  
the children learn the  
most frequently used  
words and those that  
are not spelt  
phonetically -

### High Frequency Words

#### First 100 High Frequency Words

*in frequency order reading down the columns*

the	that	not	look	put
and	with	then	don't	could
a	all	were	come	house
to	we	go	will	old
said	can	little	into	too
in	are	as	back	by
he	up	no	from	day
I	had	mum	children	made
of	my	one	him	time
it	her	them	Mr	I'm
was	what	do	get	if
you	there	me	just	help
they	out	down	now	Mrs
on	this	dad	came	called
she	have	big	oh	here
is	went	when	about	off
for	be	it's	got	asked
at	like	see	their	saw
his	some	looked	people	make
but	so	very	your	an

### Next 200 High Frequency Words

(in frequency order reading down the columns (water to laughed then let's to grow))

water	bear	find	these	live
away	can't	more	began	say
good	again	I'll	boy	soon
want	cat	round	animals	night
over	long	tree	never	narrator
how	things	magic	next	small
did	new	shouted	first	car
man	after	us	work	couldn't
going	wanted	other	lots	three
where	eat	food	need	head
would	everyone	fox	that's	king
or	our	through	baby	town
took	two	way	fish	I've
school	has	been	gave	around
think	yes	stop	mouse	every
home	play	must	something	garden
who	take	red	bed	fast
didn't	thought	door	may	only
ran	dog	right	still	many
know	well	sea	found	laughed

let's	fun	any	better	lived
much	place	under	hot	birds
suddenly	mother	hat	sun	duck
told	sat	snow	across	horse
another	boat	air	gone	rabbit
great	window	trees	hard	white
why	sleep	bad	floppy	coming
cried	feet	tea	really	he's
keep	morning	top	wind	river
room	queen	eyes	wish	liked
last	each	fell	eggs	giant
jumped	book	friends	once	looks
because	its	box	please	use
even	green	dark	thing	along
am	different	grandad	stopped	plants
before	let	there's	ever	dragon
gran	girl	looking	miss	pulled
clothes	which	end	most	we're
tell	inside	than	cold	fly
key	run	best	park	grow

# Alphablocks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5j2YU6-DdY>



# Useful websites

- <http://www.mrthorne.com/category/start/>
- <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk>
- [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=alphablocks](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=alphablocks)
- <http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>
- <http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>