



NORTHBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
CAMBODIA
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

📍 P.O. Box 2042, Phnom Penh 3, Cambodia
☎ +855 (0)23 900 749
✉ admissions@nisc.edu.kh
🌐 northbridgecambodia
📱 northbridgecambodia
🌐 www.nisc.edu.kh



Letters and Sounds in Early Learning

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Kate Watson-Penhall



What is phonics?

- More than teaching children letters and sounds.
- Begins from very young - EL2 and before.
- Developing an awareness of sounds that builds a solid foundation for later learning about letters and sounds for reading and writing.
- We use the Letters and Sounds programme - split into 6 phases.
- In EL2-4, we focus on Phase 1. (EL4 also begin to learn within Phase 2 later)
- Phase 1 is broken down into 7 aspects.



Phase 1: Aspect 1

General sound discrimination: Environmental sounds

Aims:

- to raise children's awareness of the sounds around them in their environment;
- to develop listening skills.



In school:

- Going on a listening walk;
- Drumming on different objects and comparing the sounds;
- Making shakers.



Try at home: The Magic Box

- Put 4-5 objects that make sounds into a box, e.g. a set of keys, a packet of chips, a squeaky toy.
- One by one, demonstrate the sound each object makes. Then make the sounds without your child seeing the object.
- Pause to see if your child can recognise and name the sound.



General sound discrimination: Instrumental sounds

Aims:

- to develop children's awareness of the sounds made by various instruments and noise-makers.



In school:

- Comparing and matching noise-makers;
- Playing instruments along with a story;
- Making loud and quiet sounds with instruments;
- Identifying which instrument made a sound.



Try at home: Enlivening Stories

- Start by singing a well-known song or nursery rhyme, e.g. Humpty Dumpty.
- Add sounds to the story, e.g. crash saucepan lids together for when Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
- You can use instruments or any objects that make sounds, e.g. pots and pans, plates and bowls, etc.



General sound discrimination: Body Percussion

Aims:

- to develop children's awareness of sounds and rhythms.

In school:

- Singing songs and action rhymes;
- Clapping rhythms;
- Exploring making sounds by stamping, tapping, clapping with different body parts.



Try at home: Follow the sound

- Explore the sounds you can make with your bodies, e.g. clapping, stamping, patting, rubbing.
- Make a pattern of body sounds, e.g. clap clap clap
- Encourage your child to copy the pattern.
- Let them make a pattern for you to follow.
- Extend it by adding more complicated patterns, e.g. clap stamp clap.



Phase 1: Aspect 4

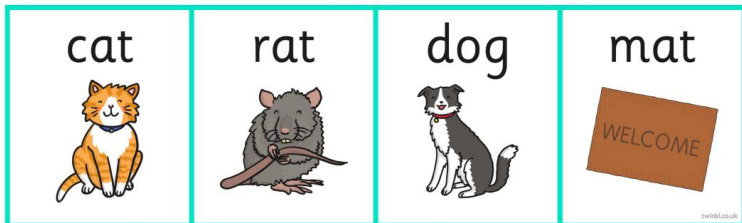
Rhythm and Rhyme

Aims:

- to develop children's appreciation of rhythm and rhyme in speech.

In school:

- Rhyming stories;
- Rhyming bingo;
- Clapping out syllables in words;
- Identifying the odd one out (e.g. which one doesn't rhyme?)



Try at home: Finish the Rhyme

- Use books with predictable rhymes that your child is familiar with.
- Stop as you come to the final word in the rhyme.
- Invite children to complete it.



Humpty Dumpty sat
on the wall.
Humpty Dumpty had
a great _____

Phase 1: Aspect 5

Alliteration

Aims:

- to develop children's understanding of alliteration (words that start with the same sound).

In school:

- I-spy games;
- Matching objects that start with the same sound;
- Spotting objects or people that start with the same sound as their name.



Try at home: Silly Soup

- Pretend to make a “Silly Soup” by adding to a pan objects that start with the same sound, e.g. socks, sausages, snake.
- Allow your child to make their own recipes by adding their own objects that start with the same sound.
- Be careful that objects start with the same sound not just the same letter, e.g. socks and shoes **do not** start with the same sound.

Voice Sounds

Aims:

- to distinguish between different vocal sounds.

In school:

- Feeding pictures to a toy robot to say the sounds in a robotic voice;
- Games identifying whose voice is speaking;
- Playing with voice sounds, e.g. be a steam train *chchch*; buzz like a bumble bee *zzzzzzz*; make your voice go down a slide *whieee!*



Bread and butter,
Marmalade and jam,
Let's say hello as _____
As we can.

Try at home: Sound Story Time

- When reading stories together, ask your child how they can use their voices to add sounds to stories, e.g. *We're going on a Bear Hunt*.
- Challenge your child to say words fast, slow, high, low, quiet and loud.



Oral Blending and Segmenting

Aims:

- to develop oral blending and segmenting of sounds in words.

In school:

- Playing games where an adult says the sounds and children try to pick out the object, e.g. c-u-p, children find the cup.
- Talking to a toy in “sound-talk”.

Find the
c-u-p



Try at home: Oral blending

- When giving your child instructions or asking questions, segment the last word into separate sounds, then blend them together to say the word, e.g.

Get your b-a-g,
bag!

Time for b-e-d,
bed!

Brush your t-ee-th,
teeth!

Phase 1: Aspect 7

Oral Blending and Segmenting



Reflection

Can your child:

- recognise rhyming words?
- hear the initial sound in words?
- recognise when a group of words all begin with the same letter?
- join in with rhythm or beat, e.g. with instruments or voices?
- distinguish and name different sounds in the environment?

Did you know all of this knowledge and understanding of phonics comes before recognising the printed letter?

Phase 2

Learning letters and sounds

EL4 students begin to learn that letters make sounds.

Challenge:

Write down as many words as you can using only the letters:

A B C D E F G H

Now write down as many words as you can using only the letters:

S A T P I N M D

How can I help my child at home?

Talk to your child about sounds.

Play with rhyme and voice sounds - have fun and be silly!

Try some of the activities suggested here.

Read with your child daily.

Talk to your child's teacher - they can suggest ways to follow up at home.



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WELCOME



Thank you!