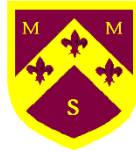


Maids Moreton CE School Phonics Guide for Parents.



Sort your phonemes from your graphemes, blending from segmenting, decoding from encoding and digraphs from trigraphs with our parents' guide to phonics teaching. Our step-by-step explanation takes you through the different stages of your child's phonics journey towards becoming a fluent reader and writer. We will explain what your child will be expected to learn and the vocabulary you need to know to support them at home.

What is phonics?

Phonics is a method of **teaching children to read by linking sounds (phonemes) and the symbols that represent them (graphemes, or letter groups)**. Phonics is the learning-to-read method used in primary schools in the UK today.

In all **systematic synthetic phonics**, the graphemes (letters) and corresponding phonemes (sounds) are taught just before the introduction of words that contain these letters. To read these words, children are taught to pronounce the individual phonemes (sounds) associated with the graphemes (letters) they see, and then to blend them together (**synthesise**) to form the word. We teach spelling alongside, by reversing the blending process and segmenting a word into phonemes and their corresponding grapheme. Learning strategies used include the practice of word building, **blending** (pushing sounds together) and **segmenting** (pulling sounds apart) which helps children to read and spell.

What is a phoneme?

A **phoneme** is the smallest unit of sound. The phonemes used when speaking English are:

s sat	t tap	p pan	n nose	m mat	a ant	e egg	i ink	o otter
g goat	d dog	ck click	r run	h hat	u up	ai rain	ee knee	igh light
b bus	f farm	l lolly	j jam	v van	oa boat	oo cook	oo boot	ar star
w wish	x axe	y yell	z zap	qu quill	or fork	ur burn	ow now	oi boil
ch chin	sh ship	th think	th the	ng sing	ear near	air stair	ure sure	er writer

On her website, **The Phonics Nest**, Mrs Bristow, our English subject leader and EYFS teacher, demonstrates how to pronounce all the sounds correctly. Mrs Bristow's Phonics Dictionary also takes you, step by step, through all the teaching terminology you will need to unlock phonics <https://thephonicsnest.co.uk/what-is-phonics/>

Phonics in Reception

Children are taught **letter sounds** in Reception. This involves thinking about what sound a word starts with, saying the sound out loud and then recognising how that sound is represented by a letter. The aim is for children to be able to see a letter and then say the sound it represents out loud. This is called **decoding**.

Some phonics programmes start children off by learning the letters s, a, t, n, i, p first. This is because once they know each of those letter sounds, they can then be arranged into a variety of different words (for example: sat, tip, pin, nip, tan, tin, sip, etc.). While children are learning to say the sounds of letters out loud, they will also begin to learn to write these letters (**encoding**).

They will be taught where they need to start with each letter and how the letters need to be formed in relation to each other. Letters (or groups of letters) that represent phonemes are called **graphemes**.

Children then need to go from saying the individual sounds of each letter, to being able to **blend the sounds and say the whole word**. This can be a big step for many children and takes time.

Children start by decoding (reading) three-letter words arranged consonant, vowel, consonant (**CVC words**)

They will learn other letter sounds, such as the consonants g, b, d, h and the remaining vowels e, o, u. They may be given letter cards to put together to make CVC words which they will be asked to say out loud.

Children will also learn about **consonant clusters**: two consonants located together in a word, such tr, cr, st, lk, pl. Children will learn to read a range of **CCVC words** (consonant, consonant, vowel, consonant) such as trap, stop, plan.

They will also read a range of CVCC words (consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant) such as milk, cart.

Children are then introduced to vowel digraphs. A **digraph** is two vowels that together make one sound such as: /oa/, /oo/, /ee/, /ai/. They will move onto sounding out words such as deer, hair, boat, etc. and will be taught about **split digraphs**.

When a digraph is split by a consonant it becomes a split digraph. For example:

- wrote – the 'oe' here makes one sound. The 'oe' digraph is split by the 't'
- flame – the 'ae' here makes one sound. The 'ae' digraph is split by the 'm'.
- bike-the 'ie' here makes one sound. The ie digraph is split by the k
- complete – the 'ee' here make one sound. The 'ee' digraph is split by the 't'.
- tube –the 'ue' here makes one sound. The 'ue' digraph is split by the 'b'

The children will also start to read words combining vowel digraphs with consonant clusters, such as: train, groan and stool.

Children will also learn the consonant digraphs (two consonants that together make one sound) ch and sh and start **blending** these with other sounds to make words, such as: chat, shop, chain and shout.

Alongside this process of learning to **decode** (read) words, children will need to continue to practise forming letters which then needs to move onto encoding. **Encoding** is the process of writing down a spoken word, otherwise known as spelling. They should start to be able to produce their own short pieces of writing, spelling the simple words correctly.

Access to fully decodable reading books, which mirror the phonics teaching in class and children's level of phonological development, is an essential feature to support children in their grasp of the reading of all the phonemes.

By the end of Reception, children should be able to read and write one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes. This will enable them to make phonetically plausible attempts at spelling words.

Phonics in Year 1

In Year 1, they will start to further explore alternative vowel **digraphs** and **trigraphs** (a group of three letters that makes a single sound, like 'igh' as in 'sigh'). They will begin to understand, for example, that the letters ea can make different sounds in different words (dream and bread). They will also learn that one sound might be represented by different groups of letters: for example, light and pie (igh and ie make the same sound).

Phonics in Year 2

Children in Year 2 will be learning spelling rules, such as adding **prefixes** and **suffixes** to words (such as dis-, un- -ed, -ing, -er, -est, -ful, -ly, -y, -s, -es, -ment and -ness). They will be taught rules on how to change **root words** when adding these suffixes (for example, removing the 'e' from 'have' before adding 'ing') and then move onto harder concepts, such as silent letters (knock, write, etc) and particular endings (le in bottle and il in fossil).