

## Phonic phases explained

When your child starts school, phonics becomes a big part of everyday life, transforming them from a non-reader to a child who is capable of reading fluently and spelling (mostly!) accurately by the end of Year 2.

### Phase 1

Early phonics teaching in pre-school, nursery and at the start of Reception focuses on developing children's listening, vocabulary and speaking skills.

In Phase 1 phonics, children are taught about:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion (e.g. clapping and stamping)
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting (e.g. hearing that d-o-g makes 'dog')

Activities for teaching Phase 1 phonics may include 'listening' walks, playing and identifying instruments, action songs, learning rhymes and playing games like I Spy.

### Phase 2

In Phase 2, the children learn to pronounce the 19 most common single letter phonemes themselves in response to letters, before blending them. This leads to them being able to read simple words and captions.

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

Tricky Words: the, to, I, no, go



## Phase 3

Phase 3 completes the teaching of the alphabet and moves on to sounds represented by more than one letter. The children will learn letter names and how to read and spell some tricky words.

Phonemes: j, v, w, x, y, z, zz, qu, ch, sh, th, ng, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

Tricky Words: he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, they, her, all, are

Activities might include learning mnemonics (memory aids) for tricky words, practising writing letters on mini whiteboards, using word cards and singing songs like the Alphabet Song.



## Phase 4

In Phase 4, the children learn to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants. Children will, among other things:

- Practise reading and spelling CVCC words ('bump', 'nest', 'belt', 'milk', etc)
- Practise reading and spelling high frequency words
- Practise reading and writing sentences

Tricky Words: said, so, have, like, some, come, were, there, little, one, do, when, out, what

Children should now be blending confidently to work out new words. They should be starting to be able to read words straight off, rather than having to sound them out. They should also be able to write every letter, mostly correctly.



## Phase 5

Phase 5 generally takes children the whole of Year 1.

Children learn new graphemes (different ways of spelling each sound) and alternative pronunciations for these: for example, learning that the grapheme 'ow' makes a different sound in 'snow' and 'cow'. They learn about split digraphs (the 'magic e') such as the a-e in 'name.'



Phonemes: ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh, ph, ew, oe, au, ey, a\_e, i\_e, u\_e, o\_e

Tricky Words: oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked

**They should become quicker at blending, and start to do it silently.**

By the end of Year 1, children should be able to:

- Say the sound for any grapheme they are shown
- Write the common graphemes for any given sound (e.g. 'e,' 'ee,' 'ie,' 'ea')
- Use their phonics knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words of up to three syllables
- Read all of the 100 high frequency words, and be able to spell most of them
- Form letters correctly

At the end of Year 1, all children are given a Phonics Screening Check to ensure they have mastered the appropriate knowledge.

## Phase 6

Phase 6 phonics takes place throughout Year 2, with the aim of children becoming fluent readers and accurate spellers.

By Phase 6, children should be able to read hundreds of words using one of three strategies:

- Reading them automatically
- Decoding them quickly and silently
- Decoding them aloud

They will also learn, among other things:

- Prefixes and suffixes, e.g. 'in-' and '-ed'
- The past tense
- Memory strategies for high frequency or topic words
- Proof-reading
- How to use a dictionary
- Where to put the apostrophe in words like 'I'm'
- Spelling rules
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Although formal phonics teaching is usually complete by the end of Year 2, children continue to use their knowledge as they move through school.