

Phonics Terminology

What is phonics?

Words are made up from small units of sound called phonemes. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words. In phonics lessons children are taught three main things:

Blending - Children are taught to be able to blend. This is when children say the sounds that make up a word and are able to merge the sounds together until they can hear what the word is. This skill is vital in learning to read e.g. d-a-m-p, damp; t-e-n-t, tent.

GPCs - This stands for grapheme phoneme correspondences. This simply means that they are taught all the phonemes in the English language and ways of writing them down. These sounds are taught in a particular order e.g. the first phonemes to be taught are in Phase 2, Set 1 s, a, t, p, i, n

Segmenting - Segmenting is the opposite of blending. Children are able to say a word and then break it up into the phonemes that make it up. This skill is vital in being able to spell words e.g. b-a-t v-a-n r-ai-n b-ur-n

Tricky terminology

Blending- This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and using knowledge of GPCs to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents and then merging these phonemes together to make a word. This is the basis of reading.

Digraph - A grapheme containing two letters that makes just one sound (phoneme) e.g. ch-i-p, sh-o-p, c-oa-t,

Grapheme- a written form of a spoken sound (phoneme) e.g. a, b, ee, igh

Oral Blending - This involves hearing phonemes and being able to merge them together to make a word. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to blend written words.

Oral Segmenting /sound talk - This is hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to segment words to spell them.

Phoneme – a single spoken sound (this could be made up of more than one grapheme).

Phonics- this is the method of teaching children to read, based on learning the sounds that letters represent.

Segmenting - This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it, using knowledge of GPCs to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order. This is the basis of spelling.

Split digraph- A split digraph is a digraph that is split by a consonant. Usually a long vowel sound e.g a-e (cake) i-e (five) o-e (code) e-e (sphere) and u-e (rule)

Synthetic Phonics- This is a method of teaching reading which first teaches the letter sounds and then build up to blending these sounds together to achieve full pronunciation of whole words.

Tetragraph- A sequence of four letters to represent a single phoneme e.g igh (eight)

Trigraph - A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound (phoneme) n-igh-t, ch-air, t-ear

What is the difference between a digraph and blend?

A digraph is made up of two letters that make one phoneme (sound) e.g ai. A blend is two letters when blended you can hear both phonemes e.g nk.