

What is phonics?

The phonics approach teaches children to decode words by sounds, rather than recognising whole words.

Terminology

Here is a reminder of the terms we covered today:

- **phoneme** smallest unit of sound in a word. A phoneme can be represented by one (c-a-t), two (rain), three (night) or four letters (dough).
 - **grapheme** letter(s) that represent the phoneme (sound).
 - **blending** the process of saying sounds in the correct order to read the whole word 
 - **segmenting** listening for the phonemes in a word (sounds) and writing them down. This is the reverse phonic skill to blending, also called spelling.
 - **digraph** two-letters that make one sound: rain we call these 'special friends'.
 - **split digraph** where another letter comes in between the two graphemes e.g. tide we call these 'special friends forever'
 - **trigraph** three-letters that represent one sound: night we call these 'special friends'.
 - **'alien' word** to check whether a child can apply taught phonemes/graphemes 
 - **'grotty' grapheme**  here the letter doesn't make the expected sound
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What's important?

Children need a rich and varied diet; structure that comes with systematic and explicit phonic instruction and real stories to stimulate and excite them!

RESOURCES

Phonics Play <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>

Mr Thorne Does Phonics YouTube channel and iPhone apps

Recorded by a Year 1 teacher, the [Mr Thorne Does Phonics videos](#) have been a YouTube sensation – there are over 500 free literacy resources featuring Mr Thorne and Geraldine the Giraffe. Each of the phonics sounds is explained and appears on screen, and you can also watch Mr Thorne videos about high frequency words and spelling. [The Mr Thorne videos and games are now available as iPhone, iPad and Android apps](#). Letters and sounds, blends and spellings and words are all covered.

Jolly Songs book and audio CD

You might have heard your child singing some of these songs already, as so many schools use them. Each of the 42 phonics sounds has a song, sung by children on the audio CD which comes with the explanatory book. The tunes are very catchy, and we can guarantee you'll be hearing them (a lot!), singing them and then desperately trying to get them out of your head!

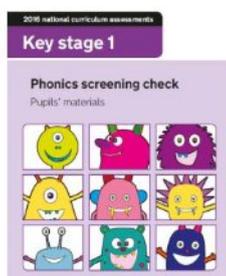
[Jolly Songs book and audio CD, available from £7.10](#)

Phonics storybooks

Learning phonics is a means to an end – learning to read! Help your child put their learning into practice and get excited about stories again with one of these [phonics eBooks on the Oxford Owl website](#). There are over 150 to choose from, all free to read and ranging in reading level from 1 to 7.

TheSchoolRun has an extensive selection of [downloadable, printable phonics worksheets](#) to help your child review what they've learnt in the classroom.

<http://www.theschoolrun.com/phonics>



Practise materials available online

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-2016-materials>

Available from the library and Amazon.



