OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

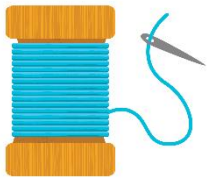
ELS Essential Letters and Sounds

developed by Knowledge Schools Trust

Getting all children to read well, quickly.

What are we going to cover?

- What is Phonics?
- What is Essential Letters and Sounds?
- How we teach phonics and watch a lesson.
- Getting children ready to read
- Supporting your child with reading at home
- Pronouncing pure sounds
- Using the letter formations and spelling sequence to support writing at home

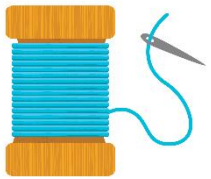


What is phonics?

First, your child will be taught the most straightforward letters and the sounds they make. For example, they will be taught that the letter ‘m’ represents an mmm sound.

Next, they will learn how sounds can be put together (blended) to make words. For example, they will learn that the sounds of the letters ‘m-a-t’ blend together to make the word ‘mat’.

Phonics - Oxford Owl for Home



What is phonics?

Phoneme: the smallest single identifiable sound in a word. The sounds letters represent.

For example, in the word 'cat' there are three phonemes c/a/t.

Grapheme: the written representation of a sound.

Digraph: two letters making one sound. For example, /sh/ in the word '**sh**op'.

Trigraph: three letters making one sound. For example, /igh/ in the word 'n**igh**t'.

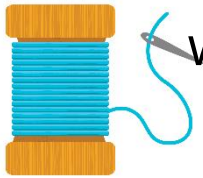
Split digraph: two vowel letters split but are split by one or more consonants. For example, /a-e/ in the word 'c**a**k**e**'.

What is ELS?

Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen phonics programme. It teaches children to identify the phonemes (smallest unit of sound) and graphemes (written version of the sound) within words.

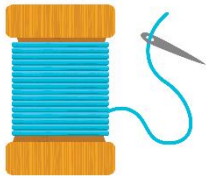
We teach children to decode words-by identifying each of the written sounds within the word before blending them together to read the word.

Children will experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers.



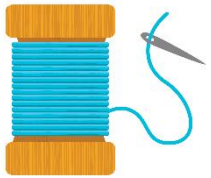
How do we teach phonics?

- We use a simple, consistent approach to teaching phonics.
- We have mnemonics and rhymes to support learning and recall
- We teach phonics every single day from the first days of Reception
- Your child will experience the same classroom routines within each lesson which reduces cognitive load and maximizes the chances of success.



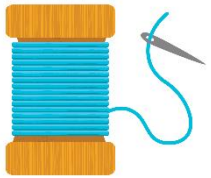
How do we teach phonics?

- Phonics throughout the day to review new sounds and graphemes taught
- Lots of opportunities for oral blending: /c/ /oa/ /t/
- We teach the ‘code’ for reading, alongside teaching vocabulary.



How do we assess phonics?

- During Daily phonic sessions.
- Half termly assessments for all children to assess all GPCS that have been taught and address any gaps. We will send home GPCs for children to practice at home.

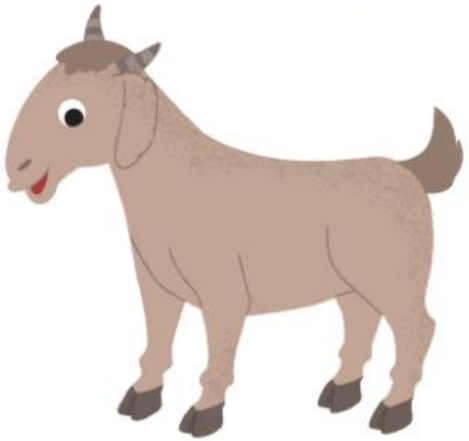


How do we teach phonics?

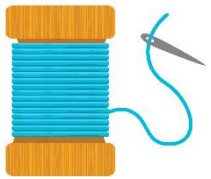
Teach

These words all have our new /g/ sound in.

g



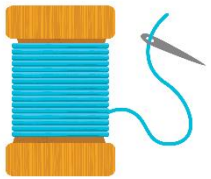
g ... g ... goat
g ... g ... bag
g ... g ... flag



How do we teach phonics?

Now let's read these harder to read and spell words altogether.

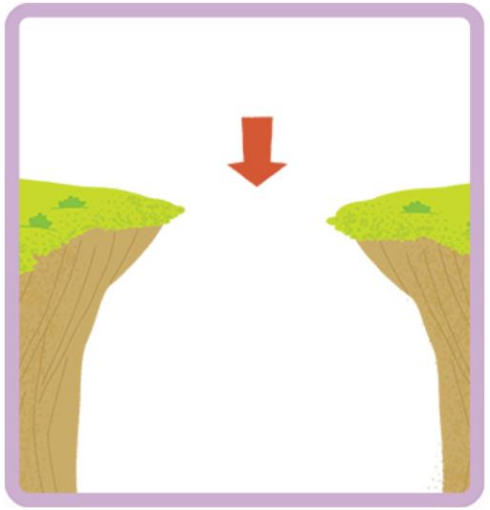
a	I
the	no



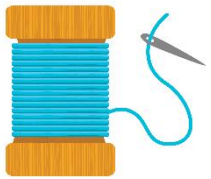
Can you use the word 'I' in a sentence?

How do we teach phonics?

gap

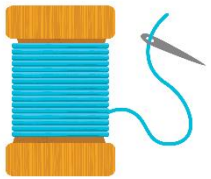


dig



How do we teach phonics?

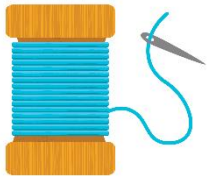
A dog can dig.



pleep

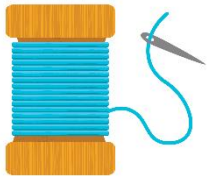
ELS Progression

Phase 1*	Phase 2	Phase 3**
Nursery/Pre-School Seven aspects: • Environmental sounds • Instrumental sounds • Body percussion • Rhythm and rhyme • Alliteration • Voice sounds • Oral blending	*Reception Autumn 1* • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 23 new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) • 12 new harder to read and spell (HRS) words	*Reception Autumn 2, Spring 1 and Spring 2* • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 29 new GPCs • 32 new HRS words • Revision of Phase 2



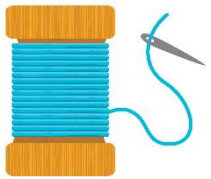
ELS Progression

Phase 4**	Phase 5 including alternatives and lesser-known GPCs	Beyond Phase 5
Reception Summer 1 • Oral blending • No new GPCs • No new HRS words • Word structures – cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc • Suffixes • Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3	*Reception Summer 2* • Introduction to Phase 5 for reading • 20 new GPCs • 16 new HRS words *Year 1 Autumn 1 and 2* • Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs • 2 new GPCs • 9 new HRS words *Year 1 Spring 1 and 2* • Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds • 49 new GPCs • 4 new HRS words • Oral blending • Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4	*Year 1 Summer, Year 2 and Key Stage 2* • With ELS, phonics teaching does not stop at the end of Year 1, but continues as children move through the school, with links being made between their GPC knowledge and spelling • Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling • Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum



Supporting your child with reading at home

- Only 1 in 3 children are read a bedtime story at night
- Reading a bedtime story every night to your child improves their outcomes
- If your child views themselves as a ‘good reader’ when they leave Primary School they are more likely to earn a higher salary in their 40s.
- We want all our children to leave primary school able to read well and confidently-you can support us in this journey.



© Oxford University Press 2021

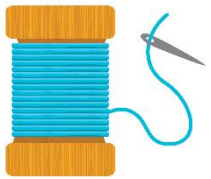
Supporting your child with reading at home

- Children are only reading from books that are entirely decodable
- Your child should be able to read their book confidently
- We only use pure sounds when decoding words (no ‘uh’ after the sound)
- We want them to practise reading their book four times across the week working on these skills:

  -decoding

  -fluency

  -expression

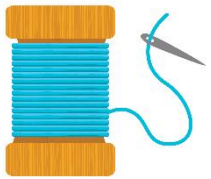


Supporting your child with reading at home

- Essential Letters and Sounds - Oxford Owl

Use flashcards to help your child practise saying sounds. Use flashcards to make words for your child to read through blending.

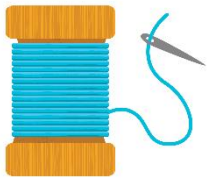
Pronunciation of sounds.



Supporting your child with writing at home

You can use the spelling sequence with your children at home to support them with their writing.

Let’s try this with the word: cat



We also practise saying our sentences before we write them to make sure we write the sentence we have planned and to ensure it makes sense!

Blend – To draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word: for example, s-n-a-p, blending together, reads ‘snap’.

Decoding- Extracting meaning from symbols. In the case of reading, the symbols are letters, which are decoded into words.

Digraph- Two letters making one sound: for example, ‘ch’, ‘th’, ‘sh’ and ‘ng’.

Grapheme- A letter or a group of letters representing one phoneme: for example, ‘sh’ ‘ch’ ‘igh’.

Harder to read and spell words- Words that children will find harder to read and spell as they will not have been taught the relevant GPCs.

Phoneme- The smallest single identifiable sound: for example, the letters ‘sh’ represent just 1 phoneme (Sh).

Pseudo words- Words that do not make sense but are made up of decodable sounds.

Segment- to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it: for example, the word ‘cat’ has 3 phonemes c/a/t. Children are asked to count the individual sounds in the word to help them to spell it.

Split digraph- 2 vowels that make one sound but are split by one or more consonants: for example, ‘a-e’ as in ‘make’ or ‘i-e’ as in ‘inside’. There are 6 split digraphs in the English language: ‘a-e’, ‘e-e’, ‘i-e’, ‘o-e’, ‘u-e’ y-e (as in type)’.

Trigraph- Three letters making one sound: for example, ‘igh’.

Questions