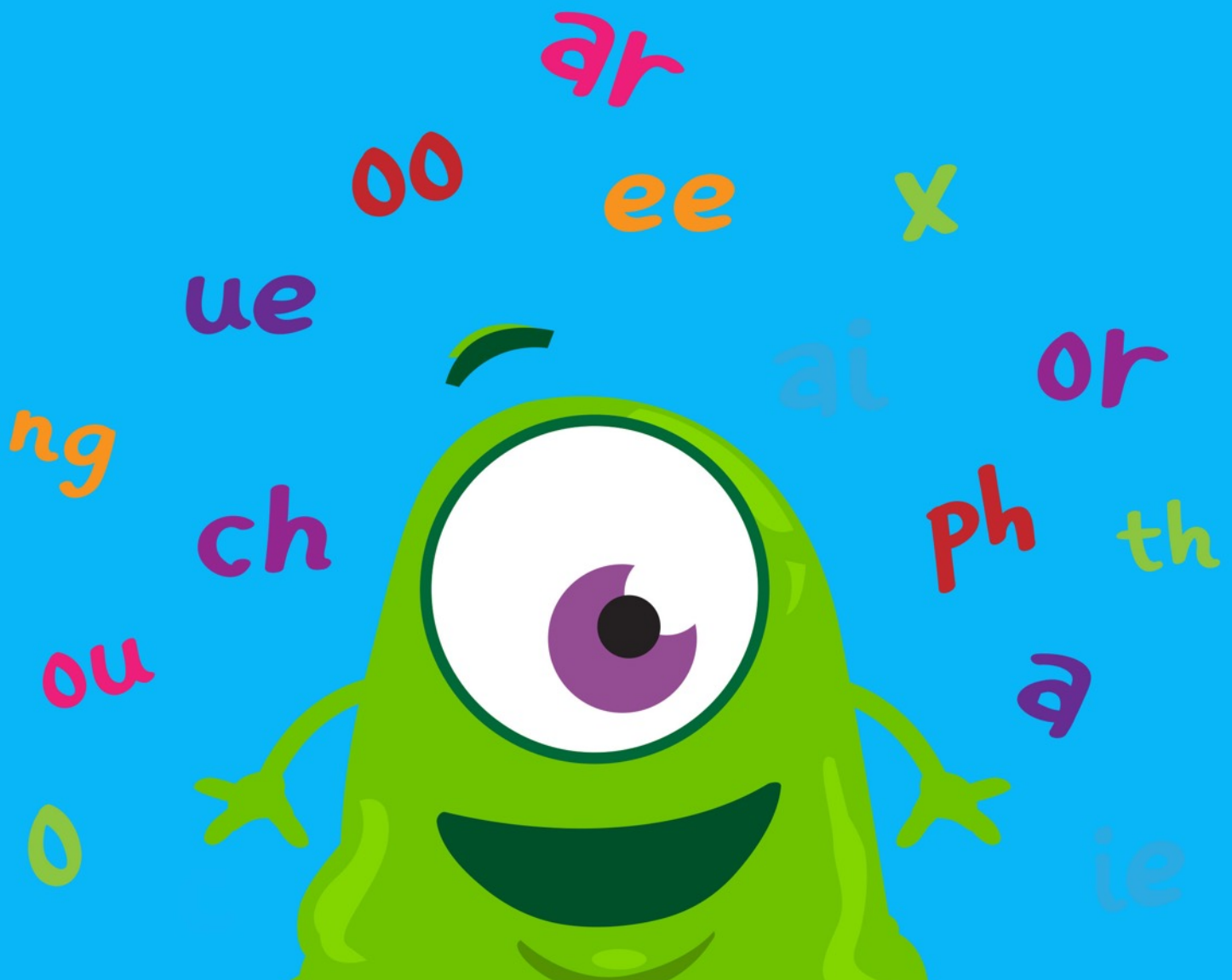


Phonics Parent Guide

ReadwithPhonics.com



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What is phonics?

Let's start at the beginning...

Each one of the 26 letters in the alphabet has its own 'sound'. This is very different to how a letter is 'said' in the alphabet.



For example:

'a' in 'arrow'



'b' in 'bat'.



Of course phonics is not that simple! There are more than 26 sounds in English language, in fact there are 44 sounds in total. Some of these sounds are made up of 2 or 3 letters. 2 letter sounds are called digraphs and three letter sounds are called trigraphs.

‘ou’ digraph



scout

‘ear’ trigraph



earth

It gets a bit more complicated than that too!

For example the 'n' sound, like in 'nail' is also spelt 'kn' like in 'knot' or 'gn' like in 'gnome'.



gnome



knot



nail

Still with us?! Good!

The sound that children struggle to spot the most when decoding words and breaking them down into its sounds is the 'split digraph'. This is when two letters work together to make one sound, however they are split by having a separate letter in the middle.

Fortunately 'split digraphs' always end in an 'e' which does make them a little easier to spot!

Examples of split digraphs include:



cake



bone

So that's it! We appreciate there has been a few new words thrown at you there that you may have never heard of, so below is a little phonics codebreaker to help us out before we go any further!

Phonics codebreaker

Phoneme – a sound as it is said

Grapheme – a sound that is written

Digraph– two letters that work together to make the same sound

Trigraph – Three letters that work together to make the same sound

Split digraph – Two letters that work together to make the same sound, separated by another letter

Why is phonics the best method for teaching my child to read?

Phonics makes learning to read easier, simpler and crucially gets children reading quicker. This helps to increase a child's confidence and instil a love of reading from an early age. Rather than memorising 1,000's of words individually, children are instead taught a phonics 'code'.



This code helps children work out how to read 95% of the English language.

If you didn't learn to read using phonics it can seem very complicated, but once the concept of words being made up of just 44 sounds is understood, children are able to make remarkably quick progress in their reading.



How is phonics taught in schools?

Children start to learn to read as soon as they start school at the age of 5. However, many children start before.



The first lesson in phonics is teaching children to recognise and differentiate between different sounds. This typically starts by asking children to listen to sounds that you can hear, such as the sounds that animals make, or sounds you hear when you go outside.

As schooling progresses children are then taught simple, single letter sounds from the alphabet, before moving on to learning about digraphs, trigraphs and split digraphs or long vowel sounds.

Phonics is often used in listening and writing lessons as well reading lessons. Often for example, children in schools are taught and encouraged to spell phonetically before they spell correctly, as this shows an understanding of how words are made up of sounds, and that different letters make certain sounds.



To make learning fun schools and teachers will often teach sounds through multi sensory activities such as singing or dancing or by playing games, both physical and online. All children learn differently so it is vital that teachers make learning as varied as possible.

Practising sounds as they are taught in school at home is one of the main factors in children improving their reading. From my experience, children who are either read to at home, or read at home

themselves, even for just a few minutes a week, make really noticeable improvements compared to those who do not.

Why is reading and learning to read so important?

Reading is one of the first things that children learn when they start school. It is the foundation of all education. When children can read, other subjects then become available to them and independent learning can begin. Those who are unable to read well will find themselves at a constant disadvantage throughout their education.

Reading doesn't only have educational benefits but social ones as well. Reading with your child can be one of the most exciting, memorable and special times for you as a parent. It is not everyday you can help teach your child a skill they will use every single day for the rest of their lives!

Learning to read also helps to instil confidence, independence and self belief that will massively help your child's all round development.

5 tips to help your child fall in love with reading

1. Choose books that your child is genuinely interested in.

This may sound obvious, but asking a child to read about robots if they love trains isn't going to have the same impact!

2. Pick a quiet and appropriate time to read

Creating a relaxed environment can really help to ease the pressure some children face when asked to practice their reading.

3. Talk about the story

It is important to make reading more than just about 'practicing reading'. Remember that books are stories! Talk about what is happening in the story 'what do you think this book is going to be about?' 'What do you think will happen next?' are great questions to engage your child in the storybook.

4. Identify tricky words first before you start reading



Once you start to read regularly you will learn the words that they will find tricky depending on their level. Reading the trickier words together before you start reading will give your child confidence when they see that word during the story.

5. Give them time to decipher the words

Giving your child time to decipher the words and not rushing them will increase their confidence. It is important for children to learn the process of how to read words. That is how phonics works. Ask them to take their time, sound it out and blend it back together.

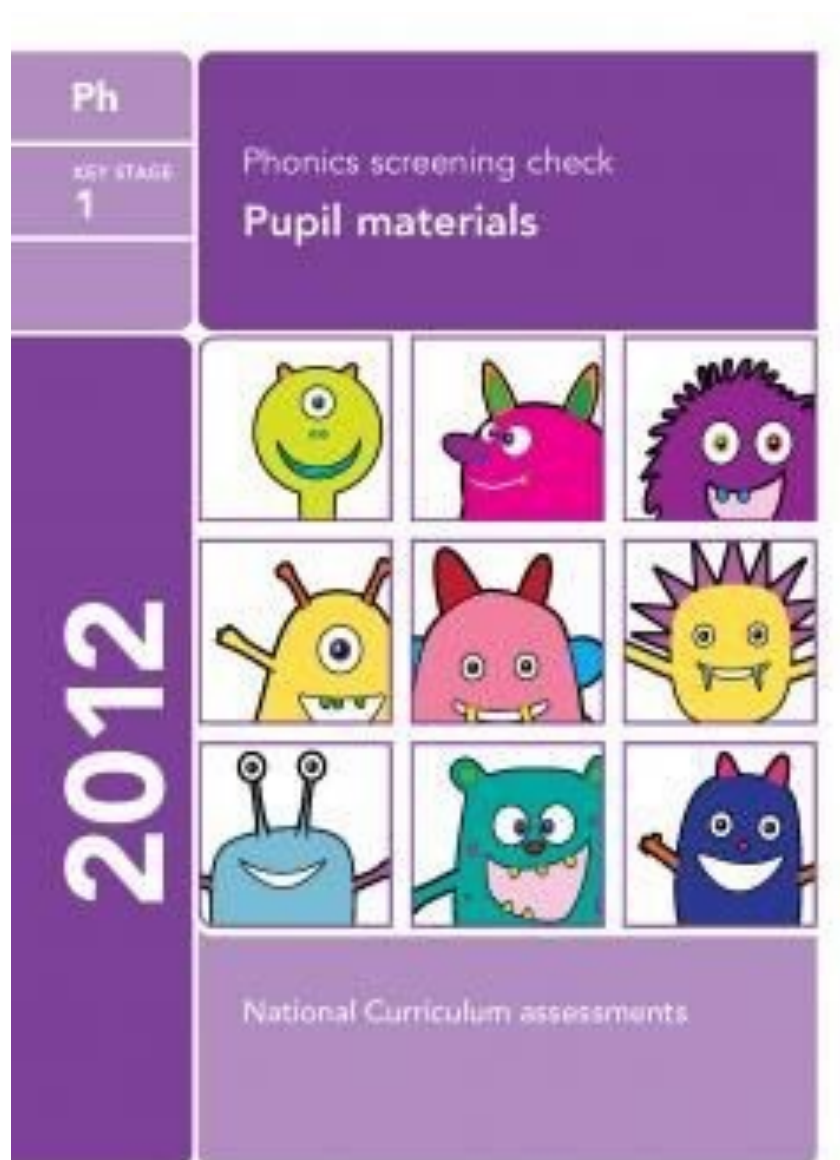
Be patient here! It is not uncommon for children to correctly read a word and then 30 seconds later be unable to read it. Go through the process from the beginning, sound it out, blend it together and in time they will recognise high frequency words.

Don't forget to give them positive praise for their effort!

What is Phonics Screening check (England)?

The Phonics Screening Check is a compulsory assessment that all children in Year 1 in England must take. It is used to assess a student's phonic decoding skills. To pass a student must correctly read around 32/40 words correctly.

The 40 words in the check are split into sections progressing from simple word structures to trickier words with five or six letters.



The often confusing thing about the screening check is that 20/40 of the words that children are expected to read are ‘nonsense words’, alien words that have no meaning. This is so that the check tests a child’s skills in phonetically decoding words exclusively and to ensure they don’t just know the word in the check by memory. The aim of the check is to ensure children have the skills they need to learn new words in the future.

Sample: Answer sheet

YEAR 1 **Phonics**

Screening check: Answer sheet

First name	
Last name	

Screening check responses: Please tick the appropriate box for each word. The use of the comment box is optional.

Section 1				Section 2			
Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment	Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
tax				voe			
bim				jound			
vap				terg			
uif				fape			
gack				snemp			
chom				blurst			
tord				spron			
thazz				stroft			
blan				clay			
steck				slide			
hild				newt			
quemp				phone			
shin				blank			
gang				trains			
week				strap			
chill				scribe			
grit				rusty			
start				finger			
best				dentist			
hooks				starling			

Total correct

The check is administered by your child's teacher during the designated phonics screening week in the Summer term. The words are the same all across the country. Schools are sent the screening check through the post in a sealed box and teachers are not allowed to open the test until the start of that week. Your child will be scored against a national average which has been 32/40 since 2012. The mark will be told to schools at the end of June and can be released to parents if requested. Individual children's results will not be published.

Perhaps the most important thing to take away from all this is to not stress out, and certainly don't let your child feel anxious about the check in anyway. If your child can read, this check is easy.

ReadwithPhonics.com

Read with Phonics is made by teachers to help children learn to read through the method of phonics. Each game reinforces the method of phonics by sounding out and blending every word used. Together with colourful graphics, Read with Phonics incorporates classroom methods of teaching into fun, interactive games that can compliment any phonics program used in schools.



Play online or on a tablet, Read with Phonics is free to download on iOS, Android and Amazon.

Available across all platforms

Learn how to read anytime, anywhere. Whether on the way home from school, or on the sofa at the weekends.

