

Phonics Guidance for Parents

What are Speed Sounds?

In phonics the individual sounds are called 'speed sounds'. Children need to read these sounds effortlessly.

Set 1 Speed Sounds

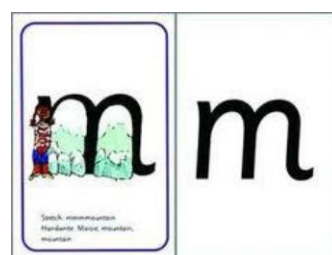
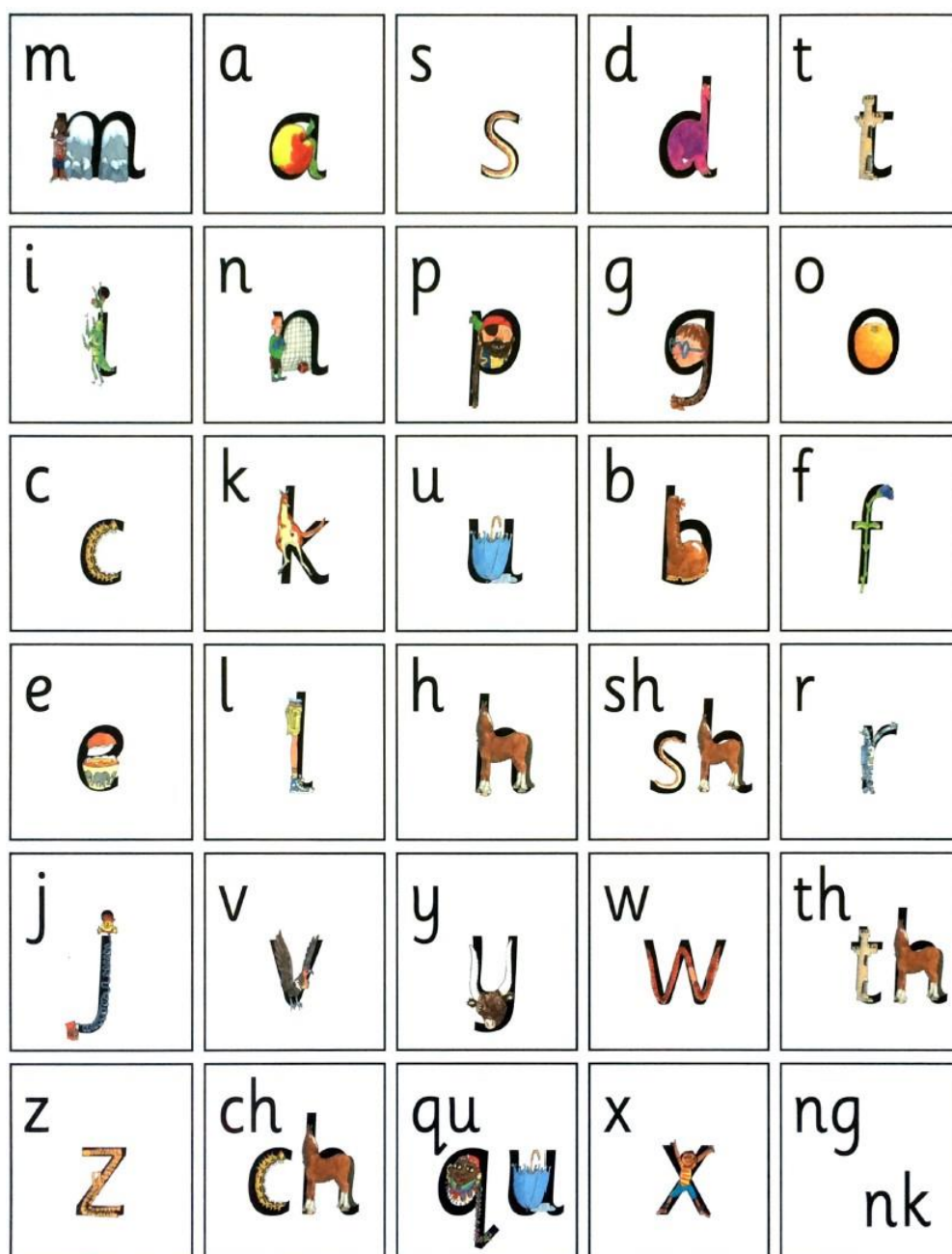
In F2, children will learn to read the Set 1 sounds by sight. Before starting to read, children need to learn to:

- Say the sound that is represented by each letter or groups of letters. (*speed sounds*)
- Know how to blend the sounds together in a word to read it e.g. c-a-t = cat. (*sound- blending*)

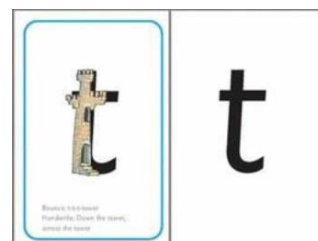
Children will also learn how to blend speed sounds together to read words e.g. c-a-t = cat. They will then move onto learning to Set 2 and Set 3 sounds.

To begin phonics, children learn a sound a day. We use pure sounds so that will be able to blend the sounds into words more easily. Letter-sound pictures are used to help children to learn these sounds quickly.

Set 1 sounds are taught in the following order alongside the accompanying pictures:



mmaisie
mmountain
represents 'm'



t-t-t-tower
represents 't'

Each sound also has an accompanying rhyme:

m	Down Maisie, then over the two mountains. Maisie, mountain, mountain.
a	Round the apple, down the leaf.
s	Slither down the snake
d	Round the dinosaur's back, up his tall neck and down to his feet.
t	Down the tower, across the tower.
i	Down the insects body, dot for the head.
n	Down Nobby and over the net.
p	Down the plait, up and over the pirates face.
g	Round the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.
o	All around the orange.
c	Curl around the caterpillar.
k	Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg.
u	Down and under the umbrella, up to the top and down to the puddle.
b	Down the laces, over the toe and touch the heel.
f	Down the stem and draw the leaves.
e	Slice into the egg, go over the top, then under the egg.
l	Down the long leg.
h	Down the horse's head, to the hooves and over his back.
sh	Slither down the snake, then down the horses head, to the hooves and over his back.
r	Down the robot's back, then up and curl.
j	Down his body, curl and dot.
v	Down his body, curl and dot.
y	Down a horn, up a horn and under the yak's head.
w	Down, up, down, up the worm.
th	Down the tower, across the tower, then down the horse's head, to the hooves and over his back.
z	Zig-zag-zig, down the zip.
ch	Curl around the caterpillar, then down the horse's head, to the hooves and over his back.
qu	Round the queen's head, up to her crown, down her hair and curl.
x	Cross down the arm and leg and cross the other way.
ng	A thing on a string.
ng	I think I stink.

To support children's letter formation, these rhymes are taught alongside the sound to help children with writing. Once children have learnt the first 5 sounds, they are taught to blend. When we say words in pure sounds we call it 'Fred Talk'. E.g. p-a-n, c-l-a-p. Fred is a 'frog' who says, reads and spells words in pure sounds. He never says the whole word - the children have to blend it for him. For example, Fred will say the sound r-a-t, and the children will say the word 'rat'.

Letter names are not used at this early stage.



How to Say the Speed Sounds

When teaching a speed sound, we either have to 'stretch' or 'bounce' it.

These first sounds should all be stretched slightly. Try to avoid saying uh after each one. E.g. /mm/ not muh, /ss/ not suh, /ff/ not fuh.

m – mmmmmountain (keep lips pressed together hard)

s – ssssnake (keep teeth together and hiss – unvoiced)

n – nnnnnnet (keep tongue behind teeth)

f – ffffflower (keep teeth on bottom lip and force air out sharply – unvoiced)

l – llllleg (keep pointed curled tongue behind teeth).

r – rrrrrrobot (say rrr as if you are growling)

v – vvvvvvulture (keep teeth on bottom lip and force air out gently)

z – zzzzzzig zzzzzag (keep teeth together and make a buzzing sound)

th – thhhhank you (stick out tongue and breathe out sharply)

sh – shhhh (make a shhh noise as though you are telling somebody to be quiet!)

ng – thinnnnngg on a strinnnnngg (curl your tongue at the back of your throat)

nk – I think I stink (make a piggy oink noise without the oi! nk nk nk)

These next sounds cannot be stretched. Make the sound as short as possible avoiding uh at the end of the sound.

t – (tick tongue behind the teeth – unvoiced)

p – (make distinctive p with lips – unvoiced)

k – (make sharp click at back of throat)

c – as above

h – (say h as you breathe sharply out – unvoiced)

ch – (make a short sneezing sound)

x – (say a sharp c and add s – unvoiced)

You will find it harder to avoid saying uh at the end of these sounds.

d – (tap tongue behind the teeth)

g – (make soft sound in throat)

b – (make a short, strong b with lips)

j – (push lips forward)

y – (keep edges of tongue against teeth)

w – (keep lips tightly pursed)

qu – (keep lips pursed as you say cw – unvoiced)

The short vowels should be kept short and sharp.

a: a-a-a (open mouth wide as if to take a bite of an apple)

e: e-e-e (release mouth slightly from a position)

i: i-i-i (make a sharp sound at the back of the throat – smile)

o: o-o-o (push out lips; make the mouth into o shape)

u: u-u-u (make a sound in the throat)

There is a video on the Ruth Miskin Training website which will show you how to pronounce all of the sounds correctly. <https://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/>



How to Practise Set 1 Speed Sounds

When you practise Set 1 'speed sounds' at home, you either have to *stretch* or *bounce* them.

Example of how to practise recognising a sound e.g. 'm' sound

- Sing and stretch mmmm as you press your lips together. Ask your son/daughter to do the same.
- Identify the 'm' sound on the sound mat. Show the picture of Maisie and the mountain and say mmmm. Ask your child to say mmmm.
- Point to the 'm' picture. Say mountain & ask your child to repeat it.
- Write the letter 'm' on some paper so your child can see that the picture looks like the letter. Model how to form the letter by saying the rhyme, "Maisie, mountain, mountain". Then say that you have formed 'm' (sound not the letter name).
- Ask your child to repeat 'm' and have a go at writing the letter by themselves.

Once your child knows a sound well, drop the bouncing/stretching to enable him or her to sound- blend. Also stop showing the picture prompt to avoid over-reliance.

How to Practise Sound-blending

Cut up a piece of paper into 5 parts and write the first 5 sounds on each piece to make sound cards. Put the cards m, a, t on the table and push them closer to each other as you say the sounds. Point to each card as you say the sounds.

Repeat a few times saying the sounds more quickly and then the word, with your child. Repeat with: mad, sad, dad, sat, at.

Silently make m-a-t with the Speed sound cards. Point to each letter and say the sounds. Then say mat. Ask your child to do the same.

Then put the cards back with the other cards (s and d) and ask your child to use the cards to spell the word 'mat'.

Now ask your child to 'sound out' the word and read the word by blending again. Repeat with: mad, sad, dad, sat, at.

Set 1 Green Words

'Green words' are words which children should be able to read independently as they are made up of the speed sounds already learnt. For each of the words, ask your son/daughter first to 'sound out' the word and then to blend the sounds together, e.g. m-a-t = mat.

The dots and dashes below each sound are called 'sound buttons'. A dot represents a single letter sound; a dash represents a digraph (two letters that make one sound) or a trigraph (three letters that make one sound).

This is the sequence for teaching the set 1 speed sounds and the corresponding green words.

Learn: m, a, s, d, t

Read: Green words set 1.1

at	mat	sat
mad	dad	sad

Learn: i, n, p, g, o

Read: Green words set 1.2

gap	pan	top
got	dog	pin
tip	pig	dig
sit	it	in
on	and	an

1. Learn: c, k, u, b

Read: Green words set 1.3

up	cup	mud
kit	bed	get
met	bin	bad
cat	can	cot

1. Learn: f, e, l, h, sh

Read: Green words set 1.4

hen	hit	had
fan	fat	log
shop	fun	lip
fish	ship	let

2. Learn: r, j, v, y, w

Read: Green words set 1.5

jet	wet	vet
yes	wish	web
yet	jam	yap
jog	win	yum
rat	red	run

Learn: th, z, ch, qu, x, ng, nk Read: Green words set 1.6

wing	chin	thick
chop	chat	quit
quiz	sing	thing
bang	this	thin
fix	six	zag
zip	fox	box

Learn: nk

Read: Green words set 1.7











stink	wink	back
skin	slid	slip
grin	prop	pram
from	clip	gran
hand	stand	stamp
flop	frog	jump

black	flag	think
skip	best	trip
blob	brat	drip
drop	blip	fluff
dress	huff	mess
test	trap	spit
stop	spot	strop




















Speed Sounds Set 2 and Set 3

Once children know all Set 1 sounds by sight and sound and use them to blend to read words, we start teaching Set 2 sounds, followed by Set 3 long vowel sounds. Children need to learn that most vowel sounds have more than one spelling and should recognise all Set 2 and Set 3 sounds by the end of Year 1.

Speed Sounds Set 2

ay  may I play?	ee  what can you see?	igh  ✓ fly high	ow  blow the snow	oo  poo at the zoo
oo  look at a book	ar  start the car	or  shut the door	air  that's not fair	ir  whirl and twirl

Speed Sounds Set 3

ea  cup of tea	oi  spoil the boy	ou  shout it out	oy  toy for a boy	
ā-e  make a cake	ī-e  nice smile	ō-e  phone home	ū-e  huge brute	aw  yawn at dawn
are  care and share	ur  nurse with a purse	er  a better letter	ow  brown cow	ai  snail in the rain
oa  goat in a boat	ew  chew the stew	ire  fire, fire!	ear  hear with your ear	ure  sure it's pure

Set 2 Sounds

When children learn their Set 2 sounds in school they will learn:

- The letters that represent a speed sound e.g. 'ay'
- A simple picture prompt linked to the 'speed sound' and a short phrase to say e.g. 'may I play'

There are 12 Set 2 'speed sounds' that are made up of two or three letters which represent just one sound, e.g. 'ay' as in play, 'ee' as in tree and 'igh' as in high. It is important that children do not pronounce these as 2 or 3 separate sounds. When children see the 'speed sound' letters together in a word, they must say just one sound for these letters.

When a sound contains two letters that makes just one sound e.g. 'sh', we call it a 'digraph'. When a sound contains three letters that make just one sound e.g. 'igh', we call it a 'trigraph'.

There are videos on Ruth Miskin's YouTube page to model how to say each sound correctly.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDe74j1F52zSCiOMSn3zQDSzgu9TrbQ1c>

How to Practise Set 2 Speed Sounds

When you practise Set 2 'speed sounds', you either have to stretch or bounce them.

Example of how to practise recognising a sound e.g. 'ay' sound

- Identify the 'ay' sound on the sound mat. Look at the picture and say aaay. Ask your child to say aaay.
- Stretch the sound and say the phrase, aaay, may I play? Repeat the phrase again.
- Cover up the picture and just look at the sound and say 'ay'.
- Use the green words set 2.1 and encourage your child to sound out and sound blend the words containing the speed sound they have just practised e.g. t-r-ay = tray.
- Point to each sound in the word as you say the sound e.g. p-l-ay or d-ay. Be sure you do not add an instructive 'uh' to the end of consonant sounds. Say 'p' not 'puh'.
- Repeat sounding out the word, getting faster each time.
- In the end your child should be able to read the green words without sounding or blending.

Once your child knows a sound well, drop the bouncing/stretching to enable him or her to sound- blend and remove the picture prompt.

Set 2 Green Words

'Green words' are words which children should be able to read independently as they are made up of the speed sounds already learnt. For each of the words, ask your son/daughter first to 'sound out' the word and then to blend the sounds together, e.g. s-l-ee-p = sleep.

The dots and dashes below each sound are called 'sound buttons'. A dot represents a single letter sound; a dash represents a digraph (two letters that make one sound) or a trigraph (three letters that make one sound).

This is the sequence for teaching the set 2 sounds and the corresponding green words.

Learn: ay Read: Green words set 2.1	2.1 <table><tr><td>play</td><td>may</td><td>say</td></tr><tr><td>day</td><td>way</td><td>spray</td></tr></table>	play	may	say	day	way	spray
play	may	say					
day	way	spray					
Learn: ee Read: Green words set 2.2	2.2 <table><tr><td>see</td><td>been</td><td>seen</td></tr><tr><td>three</td><td>green</td><td>sleep</td></tr></table>	see	been	seen	three	green	sleep
see	been	seen					
three	green	sleep					
Learn: igh Read: Green words set 2.3	2.3 <table><tr><td>high</td><td>light</td><td>bright</td></tr><tr><td>night</td><td>fright</td><td>might</td></tr></table>	high	light	bright	night	fright	might
high	light	bright					
night	fright	might					
Learn: ow Read: Green words set 2.4	2.4 <table><tr><td>blow</td><td>low</td><td>know</td></tr><tr><td>snow</td><td>show</td><td>slow</td></tr></table>	blow	low	know	snow	show	slow
blow	low	know					
snow	show	slow					
Learn: oo Read: Green words set 2.5	2.5 <table><tr><td>too</td><td>food</td><td>moon</td></tr><tr><td>zoo</td><td>pool</td><td>spoon</td></tr></table>	too	food	moon	zoo	pool	spoon
too	food	moon					
zoo	pool	spoon					
Learn: oo Read: Green words set 2.6	2.6 <table><tr><td>took</td><td>book</td><td>cook</td></tr><tr><td>look</td><td>shook</td><td>foot</td></tr></table>	took	book	cook	look	shook	foot
took	book	cook					
look	shook	foot					
Learn: ar Read: Green words set 2.7	2.7 <table><tr><td>car</td><td>part</td><td>hard</td></tr><tr><td>start</td><td>star</td><td>sharp</td></tr></table>	car	part	hard	start	star	sharp
car	part	hard					
start	star	sharp					
Learn: or Read: Green words set 2.8	2.8 <table><tr><td>sort</td><td>short</td><td>horse</td></tr><tr><td>sport</td><td>fork</td><td>snort</td></tr></table>	sort	short	horse	sport	fork	snort
sort	short	horse					
sport	fork	snort					
Learn: air Read: Green words set 2.9	2.9 <table><tr><td>fair</td><td>hair</td><td>chair</td></tr><tr><td>stair</td><td>air</td><td>lair</td></tr></table>	fair	hair	chair	stair	air	lair
fair	hair	chair					
stair	air	lair					
Learn: ir Read: Green words set 2.10	2.10 <table><tr><td>girl</td><td>bird</td><td>third</td></tr><tr><td>whirl</td><td>twirl</td><td>dirt</td></tr></table>	girl	bird	third	whirl	twirl	dirt
girl	bird	third					
whirl	twirl	dirt					
Learn: ou Read: Green words set 2.11	2.11 <table><tr><td>out</td><td>shout</td><td>loud</td></tr><tr><td>mouth</td><td>round</td><td>found</td></tr></table>	out	shout	loud	mouth	round	found
out	shout	loud					
mouth	round	found					
Learn: oy Read: Green words set 2.12	2.12 <table><tr><td>toy</td><td>boy</td><td>enjoy</td></tr></table>	toy	boy	enjoy			
toy	boy	enjoy					

Set 3 Sounds

After learning the Set 2 sounds, children will have learnt one way in which each long vowel sound is written. When learning their Set 3 speed sounds, children will be taught that there are more ways in which the same sounds are written, e.g. ee as in tree, and ea as in tea.

Reading Set 3 speed sounds will be taught for most of Year 1, and spelling the Set 3 speed sounds during Year 2. When your child learns their Set 3 sounds in school they will learn:

- The letters that represent a speed sound e.g. 'ea'
- A simple picture prompt linked to the 'speed sound' and a short phrase to say e.g. 'cup of tea'

There are 20 Set 3 speed sounds that are made up of two or three letters which represent just one sound, e.g. ea as in tea, ow as in cow, and are as in care. As before, it is important that children do not pronounce these as 2 or 3 separate sounds, they must say just one sound for these letters.

When a sound contains two letters that makes just one sound e.g. 'ea', we call it a 'digraph'.

When a sound contains three letters that make just one sound e.g. 'ure', we call it a 'trigraph'.

When a sound has two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated with the word e.g. 'a-e' (cake), we call it a 'split digraph'.

How to Practise Set 3 Speed Sounds

Only practise Set 3 speed sounds once your child's knowledge of the Set 2 'speed sounds' is secure, recognizing all of the Set 2 sounds and the letters that represent them without having to rely on the picture prompt.

Example of how to practise Set 3 speed sounds:

- Review the similar sound from the Set 2 cards e.g. show the ee, what can you see, sound say – ee
- Hold up the letter side of the new speed sound e.g. show the ea, cup of tea, sound say – ea ask your child to repeat the sound ea
- Show the pictures for each sound e.g. say the phrase ea, cup of tea. Repeat
- Show your child the written sound and the picture your son/daughter must say either ea, cup of tea

Some cards have three different spellings e.g. 'ir' in bird, 'ur' in burn, and 'er' in fern. It is important you do not introduce all the sounds together for the first time. For the 'ir' speed sound, practise 'ir' and 'ur' first and then practise 'er'.

Practise the Set 3 speed sounds in these groups. Those in bold are Set 3 sounds. Those not in bold, your son/daughter will have learnt in Set 2.

Please do not practice all the Set 3 green words until your son/daughter knows all their Set 2 sounds. Concentrate on one sound at a time and when they know it, move onto the next.

This is the sequence for teaching the set 3 sounds and the corresponding green words.

Learn: ea Read: Green words set 3.1	<table><tr><td>clean</td><td>dream</td><td>seat</td></tr><tr><td>scream</td><td>please</td><td></td></tr></table>	clean	dream	seat	scream	please	
clean	dream	seat					
scream	please						
Learn: oi Read: Green words set 3.2	<table><tr><td>join</td><td>voice</td><td>coin</td></tr></table>	join	voice	coin			
join	voice	coin					
Learn: a-e Read: Green words set 3.3	<table><tr><td>make</td><td>cake</td><td>name</td></tr><tr><td>same</td><td>late</td><td>date</td></tr></table>	make	cake	name	same	late	date
make	cake	name					
same	late	date					
Learn: i-e Read: Green words set 3.4	<table><tr><td>smile</td><td>white</td><td>nice</td></tr><tr><td>like</td><td>time</td><td>hide</td></tr></table>	smile	white	nice	like	time	hide
smile	white	nice					
like	time	hide					
Learn: o-e Read: Green words set 3.5	<table><tr><td>home</td><td>hope</td><td>spoke</td></tr><tr><td>note</td><td>broke</td><td>phone</td></tr></table>	home	hope	spoke	note	broke	phone
home	hope	spoke					
note	broke	phone					
Learn: u-e Read: Green words set 3.6	<table><tr><td>rude</td><td>brute</td><td>June</td></tr></table>	rude	brute	June			
rude	brute	June					
Learn: aw Read: Green words set 3.7	<table><tr><td>saw</td><td>law</td><td>dawn</td></tr><tr><td>crawl</td><td>paw</td><td>yawn</td></tr></table>	saw	law	dawn	crawl	paw	yawn
saw	law	dawn					
crawl	paw	yawn					
Learn: are Read: Green words set 3.8	<table><tr><td>share</td><td>dare</td><td>scare</td></tr><tr><td>square</td><td>bare</td><td>care</td></tr></table>	share	dare	scare	square	bare	care
share	dare	scare					
square	bare	care					
Learn: ur Read: Green words set 3.9	<table><tr><td>burn</td><td>turn</td><td>spurt</td></tr><tr><td>nurse</td><td>purse</td><td>hurt</td></tr></table>	burn	turn	spurt	nurse	purse	hurt
burn	turn	spurt					
nurse	purse	hurt					
Learn: er Read: Green words set 3.10	<table><tr><td>never</td><td>better</td><td>weather</td></tr><tr><td>after</td><td>proper</td><td>corner</td></tr></table>	never	better	weather	after	proper	corner
never	better	weather					
after	proper	corner					
Learn: ow Read: Green words set 3.11	<table><tr><td>how</td><td>down</td><td>brown</td></tr><tr><td>cow</td><td>town</td><td>now</td></tr></table>	how	down	brown	cow	town	now
how	down	brown					
cow	town	now					
Learn: ai Read: Green words set 3.12	<table><tr><td>paid</td><td>train</td><td>paint</td></tr><tr><td>rain</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	paid	train	paint	rain		
paid	train	paint					
rain							
Learn: oa Read: Green words set 3.13	<table><tr><td>goat</td><td>boat</td><td>road</td></tr><tr><td>throat</td><td>toast</td><td>coat</td></tr></table>	goat	boat	road	throat	toast	coat
goat	boat	road					
throat	toast	coat					
Learn: ew Read: Green words set 3.14	<table><tr><td>chew</td><td>new</td><td>blew</td></tr><tr><td>flew</td><td>drew</td><td>grew</td></tr></table>	chew	new	blew	flew	drew	grew
chew	new	blew					
flew	drew	grew					
Learn: ire Read: Green words set 3.15	<table><tr><td>fire</td><td>hire</td><td>wire</td></tr><tr><td>bonfire</td><td>inspire</td><td>conspire</td></tr></table>	fire	hire	wire	bonfire	inspire	conspire
fire	hire	wire					
bonfire	inspire	conspire					
Learn: ear Read: Green words set 3.16	<table><tr><td>hear</td><td>dear</td><td>fear</td></tr><tr><td>near</td><td>year</td><td>ear</td></tr></table>	hear	dear	fear	near	year	ear
hear	dear	fear					
near	year	ear					
Learn: ure Read: Green words set 3.17	<table><tr><td>picture</td><td>mixture</td><td>creature</td></tr><tr><td>future</td><td>adventure</td><td>temperature</td></tr></table>	picture	mixture	creature	future	adventure	temperature
picture	mixture	creature					
future	adventure	temperature					

Learn: cious, tious, tion Read: Green words set 3.18	delicious	suspicious	vicious
	scrumptious	precious	ferocious
	tradition	attention	celebration
	conversation	congratulation	exploration

Progression in Phonics

Year group expectations	New speed sounds to learn	Speed sounds to review
F2	Set 1 + blending	
	Set 2	Set 1 + blending
Year 1	Letter names	Set 1 and 2
	Set 3 – reading	Set 1 and 2
	Set 3 – reading and spelling	Set 1 and 2
Year 2		Set 1, 2 and 3

Red Words

Some everyday words in English have tricky spellings and can't be read by blending e.g. you can't blend the words 'said' or 'does'. These are sometimes called high frequency words, tricky words, or red words. These words just have to be learned by sight and flashcard-type games are a good way to practise these. These are the red words that children should be able to read by the end of the phonics programme.

I	wall	two	walk	bought
of	some	could	for *	daughter
my *	there	would	have *	wear
to	so *	anyone	little *	oh
the	what	over *	when *	Mr
no *	they	does	sister *	Mrs
your	do	through	why *	I've
said	old *	once	down *	It's
you	was	here	know *	don't
he *	one	son	out *	asked
are	saw *	you're	look(ed) *	into
me *	watch	humans	very *	
go *	school *	whole	came *	
baby	small	should	about *	
paint *	by *	come	house *	
all	who	many	how *	
like *	tall	mother	now *	
want	brother	father	people	
call(ed)	I'm	water	talk	
we *	their	great	love	
be *	any	above	buy	
her *	fall	where	worse	
she *	were	someone	thought	
washing	other	another	caught	

* = 'Red for a While' Words (once grapheme is taught they become green words)

Complex Speed Sounds Chart

Once children are secure with recognising all sets of speed sounds, they are introduced to the Complex Speed Sounds Chart. This shows how the same sound can be spelt in alternative ways e.g. 'ay' as in play, 'a-e' as in cake, and 'ai' as in rain are all shown within the same sound box. Learning these alternative spellings will be the main focus in Year 2.

Consonant sounds

f	l	m	n	r	s	v	z	sh	th	ng
ff	ll	mm	nn	rr	ss	ve	zz	ti		nk
ph	le	mb	kn	wr	se		s	ci		
					c		se			
					ce					

b	c	d	g	h	j	p	qu	t	w	x	y	ch
bb	k	dd	gg		g	pp		tt	wh			tch
	ck				ge							
	ch				dge							

Vowel sounds

a	e	i	o	u	ay	ee	igh	ow
	ea				<u>a-e</u>	y	<u>i-e</u>	<u>o-e</u>
					ai	ea	ie	oa
						e	i	o
							y	

oo	oo	ar	or	air	ir	ou	oy	ire	ear	ure
<u>u-e</u>			oor	are	ur	ow	oi			
ue			ore		er					
ew			aw							
			au							

Year 1 National Phonics Screening Check

The National Phonics Screening Test was introduced in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils. It is a short, statutory assessment to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. The test is usually completed in June in Year 1.

How is the check structured?

It comprises of a list of 40 words that the children are required to read. The list is a combination of both real and nonsense words which rely purely on using phonics to decode. The nonsense words are words that have been made up and will be shown with a picture of an imaginary creature to help them. During the assessment, the children will be sitting with a teacher one to one reading the words. It should take between 5-10 minutes. The children will largely be unaware of it being a test as they have already participated in some practice ones.





















What are nonsense words?

Your child will be told during the check which words are nonsense words (words that he/she will not have seen before). Your child will be familiar with this because we already use nonsense words when teaching phonics in school. Nonsense words are important to include because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to all children. Children cannot read the nonsense words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills. Pupils who can read nonsense words should have the skills to decode almost any unfamiliar word.

What happens if a child struggles with the screening check?

All children are individuals and develop at different rates. The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children need extra help with phonic decoding. Following the data from the test, we will then provide extra support and intervention work for the children who did not pass.

Real Words	
chill	blank
start	scribe
best	phone
grit	rusty
shin	dentist
gang	starling
week	day
hooks	slide
strap	newt
trains	finger

Nonsense Alien Words	
steck 	bim 
hild 	vap 
quemp 	spron 
geck 	blurst 
ulf 	voo 
chom 	snemp 
tord 	fape 
thazz 	jound 
blan 	stroft 
tox 	terg 

Example test words

Top 10 Tips for Learning Speed Sounds

1. Saying sounds correctly

This is really important when you are helping your child to learn the sounds. Just remember not to add an uh to the end of the consonant sounds – so say mmm not muh, lll not luh, etc. because then later it's easier to blend the sounds together to make words. If you're not sure then visit <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDe74j1F52zSCiOMSn3zQDSzgu9TrbQ1c>

2. Linking sounds to letters

Encourage your child to make a link between the sound and the written letter shape. Start with the sounds in your child's name and then look out for them in signs.

3. Sounds represented by more than one letter

Some sounds are represented by more than one letter such as sh in ship, ch in chat, th in thin, qu in quick and ng in sing. When you're out and about point out examples of these to your child too. You might see them in posters, signs, or leaflets.

4. Practise, practise, practise

Build up a knowledge of the letters and sounds quite quickly with your child and keep practising so that it becomes automatic. Keep reminding 'Do you remember when we were talking about the sound ch...?', or 'Oh look! There's a big t (sound) on that poster!'.

5. Putting sounds together to read simple words

Say the sounds c-a-t to read cat, sh-o-p to read shop and s-t-r-ee-t to read street. If your child gets stuck and is struggling to blend the sounds, say the sounds yourself, quickly, until your child can hear the word! Only beginner readers need to sound out every word as they read all the time. But, they will still need to work out new and long words.

6. Tricky words

Some everyday words in English have tricky spellings and can't be read by blending. Imagine trying to read the word said or does by blending each letter! These are sometimes called high frequency words, tricky words, or red words. These words just have to be learned by sight and flashcard-type games are a good way to practise these.

7. Phonics books

RWI phonics books contain mostly words that children can read by sounding out to get them off to a good start with independent reading. After your child has read a page, you can read it aloud again, to make sure that the story is enjoyed and understood.

8. Using pictures

Pictures are great for sharing and talking about a story (which is really important too!) but don't encourage your child to use pictures to guess the words that they don't already know.

9. Writing letters

Teach your child how to write the letters as the letter sounds are learned. And don't forget to show your child how to hold the pencil correctly too!

10. Common sense...

Lots and lots of books! Carry on sharing and reading lots and lots of stories and information books to and with your child. Praise and hugs! Most importantly, remember that your child will learn much faster with encouragement, praise and hugs.

How to Help Your Child Learn to Read Through Phonics

- Read their RWI phonics book with them each day. With all books, encourage your child to sound out unfamiliar words and then blend the sounds together from left to right. Once your child has read an unfamiliar word, you can talk about what the word means and help them to follow the story.
- Try to make time to read with your child every day. Grandparents and older brother or sisters can help too. Encourage your child to blend all the sounds in a word themselves.
- Practise reading the set 1 sounds on the sound mat. You can then highlight these sounds when you read with your child.
- Practise reading some of the example real and nonsense words attached. This is a similar format to how the words will appear in the screening check.
- Immerse them in a love of reading. Share books and magazines with them, take them to the library to choose books, read to them regularly, point out words and sentences around you.
- Word games like 'I-spy' can also be an enjoyable way of teaching children about sounds and letters. You can also encourage your child to read words from your shopping list or road signs to practise phonics.
- Create your own nonsense words with your child using the speed sounds and then see if they can decode the words accurately.
- There are some example phonics lessons on the Ruth Miskin Training YouTube page. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDe74j1F52zSCiOMSn3zQDSzgu9TrbQ1c>
- There are some guidance documents to support home reading on the Ruth Miskin Training website. <https://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/>

