

How is phonics taught?

Planning Stage

- How can I identify which letter sounds to focus on?
- What activities can I use to provide practice in the letter sounds?
- What activities can I use to introduce the letter sounds?
- How many letter sounds should I work on in each lesson?

What to do in phonics 'mini-lessons'?

- Teaching Stage

- 1 Identify two to three letter sounds to focus on from the shared reading book

Spellings of Vowel Sounds

Circle the most highly regular sound-spelling correspondences in each of these groups.

Sound	Letter	Examples
short a	a	am cat black
short e	e	egg tell bed
long a	a-e	head health wealth
short i	i	into live hill
short o	o	only many happy
short u	u	wash what watch
short o	o	off doll fax
short u	u	can won ton
short u	u	up but cup

Sound	Letter	Examples
long a	a-e	ate make name
long e	e	aim rail train
long i	ay	day May play
long o	oa	boat coat road
long u	ow	show slow pillow
long u	ue	duel fuel Tuesday
long u	u-e	cube tune cute

Sound	Letter	Examples
ar	ar	arm start far
oi	oi	oink coin boil
oy	oy	boy toy enjoy
short oo	oo	look book good
u	u	put push pussy
long oo	oo	drew flew grew
oo	oo	moon school top
ue	ue	blue glue true
u-e	u-e	use rule rude
ai	ai	always talk salt
au	au	August caught taught
aw	aw	saw paw claw
or	or	fork horse sport
oi	oi	loud about house
ow	ow	owl cow town
a	a	ago away alone
er	er	water father farmer

You may consider teaching the most highly regular sound-spelling correspondences first.

The most highly regular sound-spelling correspondences are:

- short a : a long a : a-e
- short e : e long e : e
- short i : i long i : i-ay
- short o : o long o : oa
- short u : u long u : ue

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English Section
Education Department

English Letter Sounds

Letter	Sound	Examples
a	short a	am cat black
a	short o	wash what watch
a	schwa uh	ago away alone
a-e	long a	ate make name
ai	long a	aim rail train
ai	or	always talk salt
ar	ar	arm start far
aw	or	saw paw claw
ay	long a	day May play
b	b	ball bird crab
c	hard c (k)	car come music
c	soft c (s)	cent cinema once
ch	ch	chair child which
d	d	door ride said
e	short e	egg tell bed
e	long e	eve me she
ea	short e	head health wealth
ea	long e	eat clean sea
ee	long e	see street tree
er	schwa uh	water father farmer
ew	long oo	drew flew grew
ew	long u	few new dew
f	f	fell after leaf
g	hard g	go again big
g	soft g (j)	giant larger George
h	h	head here home
i	short i	into live hill
ie	long i	pie tie die
i-e	long i	five side kite
j	j	jam jelly January
k	k	keep take talk
l	l	like milk kneel
m	m	mother some ham
n	n	not under own
ng	ng	song sing bring
o	short o	off doll fox
o	short u	son won ton
oa	long o	boat coat road
o-e	long o	bone nose smoke
oi	oi	oink coin boil
oo	short oo	look book good
oo	long oo	moon school too
or	or	fork horse sport
ou	ou	loud about house
ow	long o	snow slow pillow
ow	ou	owl cow town
oy	oi	boy toy enjoy
p	p	picture open jump
ph	f	phone photo graph
qu	qu	queen quick quiet
r	r	round three friend
s	s	so sister bus
s	z	as was his
sh	sh	ship should fish
t	t	to late rabbit
th	voiced th	this they with
th	unvoiced th	thin thick teeth
ti	short oo	put push pussy
u	short u	up but cup
ue	long oo	blue glue true
ue	long u	duel fuel Tuesday
u-e	long oo	use rule rude
u-e	long u	cube tune cute
v	v	van over give
w	w	walk awake work
wh	w	what where when
x	x	exit next box
y	y	yes year young
y	short i	only many happy
y	long i	cry why reply
z, zz	z	zero zoo buzz

In each mini-lesson:

Steps	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce and model read the target letter sound ■ Develop awareness of onsets and rimes ■ Develop awareness of syllables, if necessary ■ Conduct practice activity/activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Frame and model read the target letter sound ◆ Uncover other letters and model read the rime and/or onset ◆ Build a class word tree/train/wall ◆ Collect more words with the same letter sound, onset and/or rime ◆ Circle small words & use analogy ◆ Read rhymes, funny sentences & jazz chants ◆ Sing songs ◆ Play phonics game

2 What to try out?

2.1 Framing of target letter sounds in shared reading books

2.2 Developing word trees/trains/walls for target letter sounds, onsets or rimes

2.3 Collecting more words with the same letter sounds, onsets or rimes from other sources

2.4 Circling small words

2.5 Playing phonics games

2.5.1 E.g. bingo, board games, IT...



Development of phonological awareness

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- [What is phonological awareness?](#)
- [Why is phonics taught?](#)
- [When is phonics taught?](#)
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won/der/ful



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◆ Planning stage

How can I identify which letter sounds to focus on?

What activities can I use to provide practice in the letter sounds?

What activities can I use to introduce the letter sounds?

How many letter sounds should I work on in each lesson?



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In each mini-lesson ...

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- ◆ What to try out?
 - ~ Framing of target letter sounds in shared reading books

"Who will help me
make the bread?"
asked the Little Red Hen.

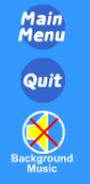
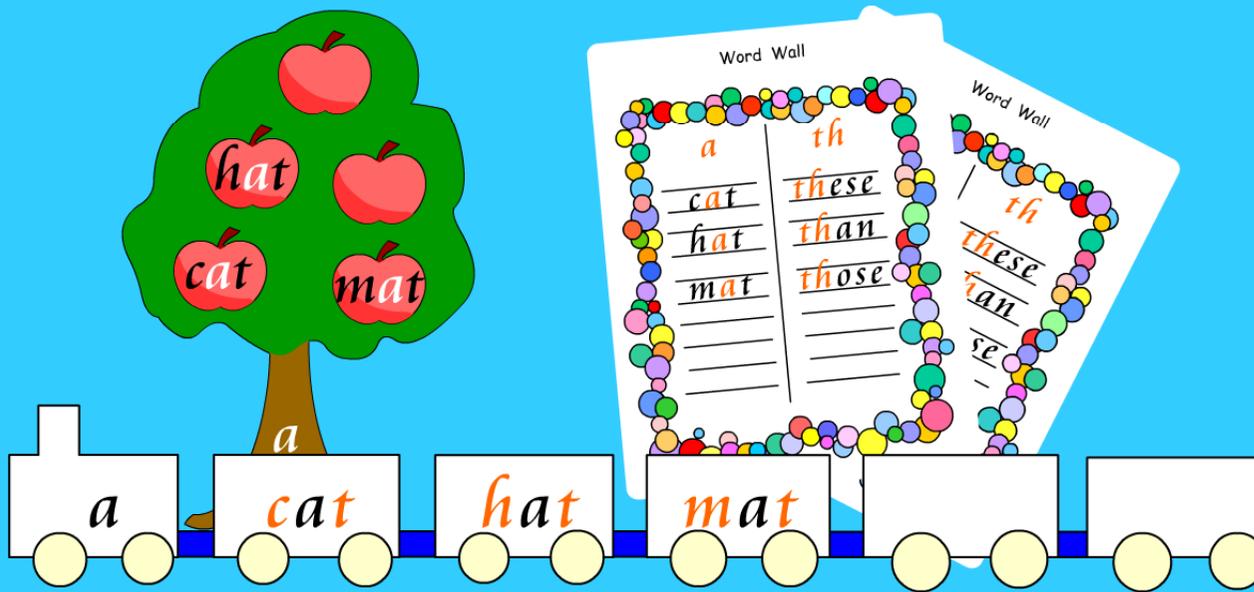


"Not !!" said the duck.
"Not !!" said the cat.
"Not !!" said the dog.
"Then I will do it myself,"



How is phonics taught?

~ Developing word trees/trains/walls for target letter sounds, onsets or rimes

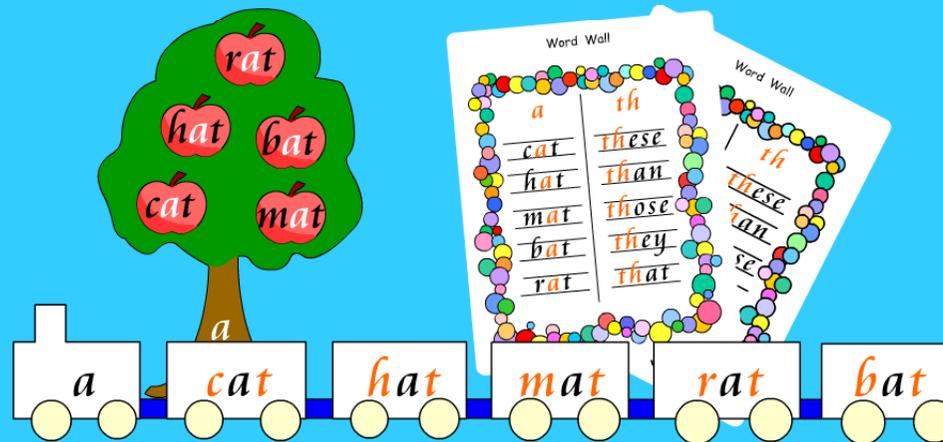


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~ Collecting more words with the same letter sounds, onsets or rimes from other sources



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~ Circling small words

cup

chair

sofa



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~ **Playing phonics games**
e.g. bingo, board games, IT ...



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Activities to develop phonological awareness

Activity 1 Framing the target [letter sound](#)

1. Frame the identified [letter sound](#) in the shared reading book.
2. Model read the target [letter sound](#) and invite learners to read it after you.
3. Uncover the whole word or part of the word to show learners how to say it, e.g. make: **m** → make.
4. Repeat Steps 1, 2 and 3 several times to give learners more practice.
5. Invite learners to come out and frame the same [letter sound](#) in other words in the same book. Encourage them to repeat Step 3 to recognize the letter-sound relationship.

Activity 2 Identifying, collecting and displaying words with the same target [letter sound](#), using a [word tree](#)/a [word wall](#)/a [word spinner](#)/a [word train](#)

1. Highlight a word from the shared reading book with the target [letter sound](#).
2. Ask learners to read out the word and then the target [letter sound](#).
3. Display the letter sound using a suitable tool, e.g. a [word tree](#) to highlight a middle sound; a [word spinner](#) to highlight an initial sound.
4. Use a bright colour to write or underline the target [letter sound](#) on the tool.
5. Invite learners to find other words with the same target [letter sound](#) to display on the tool.
6. Display the tool in the classroom for some time for learners' reference.

7. Encourage learners to put more words on the tool, using other words with the same target [letter sound](#) from the coursebook or other sources.

Activity 3 Building words by adding onsets

1. Frame the identified rime in a shared reading book. Put the word in your word holder, or write it on the board.
2. Ask several learners to read the rime.
3. Ask learners what letter should be added to the rime to make the whole word in the book. e.g. **ook** → **look**.
4. Uncover the whole word in the story.
5. Ask several learners to read the whole word.
6. Ask learners what sounds need to be added to the rime to make other words that you say aloud

e.g. **ook** → **book**
→ **cook**

7. (For more phonologically aware learners) Ask learners to remember other words from the story or coursebook with the same rime. Write the words on the board.
8. Ask learners to tell you what is the same in all of the words.
9. Write the words on cards. Underline the target sounds in the words on the cards.
10. Display the words using a suitable tool, e.g. a [word wall](#), a [word spinner](#), etc.

Activity 4 Building words by adding rimes

1. Frame the identified onset in a shared reading book. Put the word in your word holder, or write it on the board.
2. Ask several learners to read the onset.

3. Ask learners to guess the word from the context of the sentence and to tell you the second part of the word you framed, e.g. "**ook**".

4. Ask learners to tell you what they should add to the onset you gave them to make other words in the story with the same rime, e.g. you say "**b**", learners say "**ook**". Each time write the complete word on the board. As you point to the rime, read it aloud and then read aloud the whole word.

5. Display the words using a suitable tool, e.g. a [word wall](#), a [word spinner](#), etc.

Activity 5 Looking for small words

1. Call learners' attention to some words which have "small words" hidden in them. Help them to use the hidden small words to work out the pronunciation of the bigger words.

2. For example, most young learners may find it difficult to pronounce the word "**Gingerbread**". Invite them to find and circle the small words "**in**" and "**bread**" in this word. Make sure that they can pronounce the small words properly. Encourage them to apply their knowledge of phonics if necessary. Teach them to pronounce the word in this sequence:

in → Gin → Ginger → Gingerbread

3. Encourage learners to use this method to work out the pronunciation of unknown words and spelling of new words.

Activity 6 Cutting words into syllables

1. Call learner's attention to some words which contain two or more syllables. Tell them that there is a good method to help them work out the pronunciation and spelling of these words more easily.

2. For example, most young learners find it difficult to pronounce and spell the word "**wonderful**". Model read the word and ask learners to listen, read after you and count the number of syllables in this word. Read aloud

each syllable and invite learners to cut the word into 3 parts,

e.g. **won/der/ful.**

3. Encourage learners to use this method to help them learn the pronunciation of unknown words and spelling of new words.

Activity 7 Using analogy

1. Cover a word with the target sound in the shared reading book. This should be an item that has just been learnt and is easy to predict from the context,

e.g. **duck** in "Not I, " said the **duck**.
(in the storybook "The Little Red Hen")

2. Stop at the covered word, e.g. **duck** and ask learners to guess what word would fit the meaning.

3. Uncover just the onset of the word, e.g. **d** to check if learners' guess is correct. If necessary, re-read the sentence and ask learners to guess again.

Further practice activities and games

Bingo

Learners are each given a card with some words written in grids. Teacher reads out long and short vowel sounds at random. Learners have to cross out the words which contain the sounds. The first person to cross out all the words wins the game.

What's the message?

Learners work in groups. Each group is given a short note in which the initial consonant sounds of some key words are missing. Learners have to fill in the appropriate sounds and work out the message.

Let's go shopping!

A pack of cards with letters representing the consonant and/or vowel sounds is prepared. Teacher tells learners to work in groups. Each group is given a shopping basket and pretends that they go to a supermarket to buy things. Teacher picks out one card at a time and reads out the sound on the card. Each group thinks of as many items containing the sound as possible. Then learners write the word or draw a picture of the word on another card to put in the basket. The group with most items is the winner.

Phonics board game

Learners work in groups of 6 to practise some target letter sounds introduced in the previous sessions. Each group is given a game board and a set of picture cards. In turns they throw a dice, draw a card, read it aloud and go to the nearest box with the target letter sound. This game helps learners apply their knowledge of letter-sound association and practise their phonics skills in an interesting context.

Word hunt

Learners are given grids with letters and asked to hunt (look for) and circle some target words. This game becomes a word association activity when teachers invite learners to look for words which are related, e.g. food, animals, etc. In the process, learners can also apply their phonics skills by associating sounds with letters.