

Phonics



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- Phonics is taught in six phases from Year R to Year 2.
- The children work through the phases at their own pace, so may be at a different place to their friends and peers.
- Start with Phase 1 and work through until you find an activity that your child can't do independently.



Phonics

Phonics: Useful resources

- Click on the picture to visit the websites.



- Online phonics games and activities.



- More information about teaching and learning phonics.



- Phonics books for children to read.



Phonics: Useful resources

- Songs for each grapheme
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2HYM9VXz9k&safe=true>)
- Alphablocks
(https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_qs3c0ehDvZkbiEbOj6Drg?safe=true)
- Tricky words
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvMyssfAUx0&safe=true>)



Phase 1

- Phase 1 focuses on essential reading skills and is broken into 7 areas.
- It runs alongside the other phases, so make sure to do some of these activities even if your child is working in a different Phase!



Phase 1: General sound discrimination - environmental

- In this aspect, children explore the sounds they can hear in their everyday environment and begin to talk about their properties (loud, quiet, low, high).
- To support this, you could: go on a listening walk and make a list of everything you hear, go on a sound hunt and tick off specific sounds (e.g. birds singing, car horns, water dripping etc.), drum on different items using a stick and compare the sounds (and maybe record them to listen to later and see if they can match the sound to the item), make a shaker, play animal noise matching games etc.
- <https://new.phonicsplay.co.uk/resources/phase/1> - Sound Starters and Welcome to the Zoo are great games to play on the computer too.



Phase 1: General sound discrimination - instrumental sounds

- Instrumental sounds are the next area to explore.
- If you have instruments at home, you can play a variety of games including: playing an instrument inside a bag and seeing if your child can work out which one it was, playing music along to a story (we would recommend Bear Hunt as a super story for this), following instructions to make the sound louder or quieter etc.
- If you don't have instruments at home, you can make some! Rice in a pringles tube, a fork in an empty can etc. are all great examples of this.



Phase 1: General sound discrimination - body percussion

- When your child has learned to make sounds using instruments, they can move on to making different sounds with their body.
<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-t-2545943-body-percussion-powerpoint> is a great resource to help start this, and as your child develops confidence they can use the body percussion cards found at <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-t-21091-composing-body-percussionpatterns-resource-pack> to make their own patterns.
- Use lots of 'sound language' such as "loud, quiet, soft, high and low" to explore the sounds they make.
- It is also key here to learn some action songs such as head, shoulders, knees and toes or wind the bobbin up. You could listen to other songs and think of actions or body percussion noises to play along with them too.



Phase 1: Rhythm and rhyme

- This is a very tricky area which many children struggle with. Encourage your child to repeat back a simple clapped rhythm (no more than 4 claps), then move onto a spoken rhythm (just “ba dum dum da” etc, no words are needed).
- Introduce the idea of rhyming as words that sound the same at the end, and play games such as silly soup. To play silly soup, you need a bowl and some pictures or objects that rhyme (you can just draw them!) Sing the song “We’re making lots of silly soup, we’re making soup that’s silly, we’re going to put it in the fridge to make it nice and chilly.” Then choose one item and put it in the bowl. Encourage your child to choose a rhyming picture and add it in. To start with, all of the pictures can rhyme, then move onto a mixture and praise them when they find a rhyming word.



Phase 1: Rhythm and rhyme

- As your child develops through their understanding of rhyme, you can also play rhyming bingo (give them a card with pictures on (e.g. a dog, a hat and some jam) then say a word (mat) and ask them to cross off the rhyming picture. This stage often takes a long time to master, and that is okay.
- As they progress through, you can start making up silly rhyming stories. Start off by saying “I saw a man whose name was Pat. He was wearing an orange...” then allow them to choose from hat and wig. You can also play a game where your child finds the odd one out in a series of words (dog, frog, tree, log – which one does not rhyme?)
<https://new.phonicsplay.co.uk/resources/phase/1> Cake Bake and Hickory Dickory Dock are great computer games to play.



Phase 1: Alliteration

- This aspect focuses on the initial sounds of words. Start off by playing games such as silly soup and putting objects that start with the sound /s/ ('sss' like a snake, not 'ess').
- You can also play Bossy Ben (any cuddly toy will do) who only wants to be given things that start with a certain sound. This game is fun because Ben can do something really funny when he gets the right object, and children are keen to get it right next time as well.
- You can move on to I-Spy type game, but it is essential to use the pure sound, not the letter name. More support about using pure sound can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCI2mu7URBc>. There is a sound known as a 'schwa' which is that 'uh' sound that a lot of us tend to put on the end of letters (such as buh, kuh, luh). If children pronounce sounds with a schwa, it makes reading far more difficult and can be very detrimental.

<https://new.phonicsplay.co.uk/resources/phase/1> Super Smoothie is a great computer game for this.



Phase 1: Voice sounds

- This area aims to start to distinguish between different vocal sounds. To start with, explore how their mouth moves and makes shapes by looking in the mirror and pulling funny faces. Make different mouth movements with children – blowing, sucking, tongue stretching and wiggling. Practising these movements regularly to music can be fun and helps children with their articulation.
- Then show children how they can make sounds with their voices, for example: make your voice go down a slide make your voice bounce like a ball, sound really disappointed, buzz like a bumble bee, hiss like a snake, be a clock – be a steam train etc. As they begin to enjoy this more, they can add the sound effects into stories whilst you read them.



Phase 1: Oral blending and segmenting

- This aspect is about hearing discrete letter sounds. Start off with blending (pushing sounds together into a word.) You can play Metal Mike, who is a robot who will only speak in robot language. When he asks for toys or objects, he will say 's-o-ck'. Your child needs to squash the sounds together and realise that he is asking for a sock. Make sure your words only have 3 sounds, although you can move onto 4 if your child is very secure. Mike can also be bossy sometimes and tell your child to touch their 'h-ea-d' or 'f-eet' too.
- Then you can move on to asking your child to be Metal Mike – perhaps you could even make a special robot hat. They have to use their robot voice to segment the sounds in a word and say what they can hear. Most children will be able to hear the first sound more easily than others – be patient, they will then probably hear the last sound and the middle sound will come with time!



Phase 1: Other activities

- ICW games (Information Carrying Words). An information carrying word is an important word which needs to be understood in a sentence; for example, in 'the teddy has a hat' a child needs to understand the word 'teddy' and 'hat'. You can play games to support this. Start off with 2 ICWs – have a doll, a teddy, a car and a train. Say “give teddy the train”. You can move onto 3 ICWs when your child has mastered this – have a teddy, a doll, a red car, a blue car, a red train and a blue train (make sure the colours match, otherwise there will be no need for the child to understand that they must choose a car or a train, they will just go by the colour). Say “Give the doll a red train. Then 4 ICWs (e.g. a big teddy, a small teddy, a big doll, a small doll, a red car, a blue car, a red train, a blue train.) “Give big teddy the blue car.”
- Sing nursery rhymes to your child and make mistakes. See if they can spot when you make a mistake (don't make it easy by changing your tone or face). For example, Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you eat.”
- Give instructions to your child when they are drawing a picture, such as “give him an orange hat” “now draw a blue nose.” Make this harder by having multiple steps such as “draw an orange hat and put a blue flower on top.”



Phase 1: Other activities

- Thumbs up / thumbs down – say something and ask your child to put their thumbs up if it is true, or down if it is a trick. This could be “milk is red,” “cats can bark”, “spaghetti grows on trees”, “bananas are yellow” etc.
- Give your child an instruction, but they must wait until you say “go”. Start off with a quick “ready, steady, go!” Then slow it down, and eventually you could say a crazy word instead of “go” and see if they are actually listening.
- Play Simon Says with your child – they often find this very difficult!
- Make a pretend shop (just from things you have in the house) and give your child a verbal list of what you want to buy. Start off with 2 items, then extend and see how many they can remember.
- Play the “What’s missing game” – put some items on a tray, cover it, take one away and see if they can remember what is missing. You can use as many or as few items as you want, and extend it by taking away multiple items. This helps develop memory and recall which is essential for reading!

