

# A Guide for Parents... Year One Phonics Screening Check

## What is Phonics?

Children begin to learn phonics (sounds) in Early Years both Nursery and Reception. Once children begin learning sounds, these sounds are used orally to identify and make words. They will then begin to learn the letters which make each of the sounds and these are used to read and spell words.

For this reason, the first initial sounds that are taught are 's', 'a', 't', 'p', 'i', 'n'. These can immediately be blended for reading to make simple CVC words (consonant, vowel, consonant) e.g. sat, pin. Children then develop segmenting for writing skills; breaking the word into sounds to spell it out.

## What is the Phonics Screening Check?

Children in Year 1 throughout the country will all be taking part in a phonics screening check during the same week in June. Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required result when in Year 1 or they have not taken the test before.

Headteachers should decide whether it is appropriate for each of their pupils to take the phonics screening check. The phonics screening check is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding and blending skills to an appropriate standard.

### What Happens During the Screening?

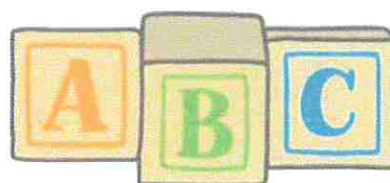
The test contains 40 words. Each child will sit one-to-one and read each word aloud to a teacher. The test will take approximately 10 minutes per child, although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace. The list of words the children read is a combination of 20 real words and 20 pseudo words (nonsense words).

### Pseudo Words (Nonsense Words)

The pseudo words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien. This provides the children with a context for the pseudo word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have. Pseudo words are included because they will be new to all pupils; they do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words.

### Reporting to Parents

By the end of the summer term all schools must report each child's results to their parents. They will also confirm if the child has met the standard threshold. Children who do not achieve the expected level will retake the test when they are in Year 2.



### How Are the Results Used?

Results from the check will be used by schools to analyse their own performance and for Ofsted to use in inspections.

**“ Read as much as possible to and with your child. ”**

### How Can I Help My Child at Home?

- Play lots of sound and listening games with your child.
- Read as much as possible to and with your child.
- Encourage and praise – get them to have a 'good guess'.
- If your child is struggling to decode a word, help them by encouraging them to say each sound in the word from left to right.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each one, e.g. /c/ in cat, /p/ in pat, /ng/ in sing, /ee/ in been.
- Discuss the meaning of words if your child does not know what they have read.

**Use robot arms, say what you see!**

# 1 What is the Phonics Screening Check?

The phonics screening check is a statutory reading check that all year 1 children take during a particular week in June. The check is designed to assess if each child has reached the age appropriate standard of decoding by the end of year 1.

# 2 How is the check administered?





The check is completed by the child on a 1:1 basis with a teacher. It usually takes 5-10 minutes for the child to complete. However, there is no time limit and the child can take as long as they need. The teacher can also allow the child a rest break if it is necessary. The children will have worked on similar activities in their phonics lessons and will be familiar with the format. The only difference will be that the teacher will be unable to help the children on this occasion.

# 3 What does the check consist of?

The check contains 40 words – 20 real and 20 pseudo words (nonsense words). The words are presented to the child in the form of a booklet with 4 large words per page.

The words gradually get more difficult from 2 and 3 'sound' words such as 'it' and 'vap', to longer words with more complex 'sounds', such as the a\_e sound in the word 'same'.

Below, are examples of how the words are presented to the children:

<div>ux </div>	<div>play</div>
<div>vap </div>	<div>fried</div>
<div>jigh </div>	<div>annoying</div>
<div>zear </div>	<div>steamy</div>
<b>example of Phases 2 and 3 pseudo words</b>	<b>example of Phase 5 real words</b>

The pseudo words are presented with a picture of an alien. This tells the child that this word will not make sense to them. It will instead be the name of the kind of alien. This has been added so that the child does not attempt to turn the words into real words.



## 4 Why use pseudo words?

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The ultimate aim of teaching phonics is that the child progresses from decoding each sound, to automatic recognition of words. However, even as adults, we still need to be able to decode unfamiliar words. The ability to decode unfamiliar words will help your child to read increasingly more difficult texts and will help them to develop their vocabulary. The pseudo words allow the teacher to be sure that the child is able to decode unfamiliar words and is not just reading words from memory.

## 5 What is the expectation?

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It is expected that, by the end of year 1, children are able to recognise the grapheme-phoneme correspondences up to the end of phase 5, segment words (split into sounds) and blend them back together to be able to read them.

(See Useful Terms for more information about phonic phases.)

For the last few years, the expected standard for the screening check has been set at 32 out of 40 words correctly decoded. However, this can change and the Department for Education does not release the 'pass' mark until a few weeks after the children have completed the check.

## 6 Do all children complete the check?

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It is expected that all year 1 children complete the screening check, unless they have no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondence (the way sounds link to letters). However, if a teacher feels a child is really struggling, they may choose to end the check before the end.

## 7 What about children with SEND?

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There is no time limit on the check and the teachers are able to edit the size of the text or the number of words presented to the child at once, if this is necessary. Coloured overlays can also be used as needed.

## 8 What happens if a child does not meet the expected standard?

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If a child does not meet the expected standard, the school are required to provide extra support for them in phonics. Children who do not meet the expected standard in year 1, complete the check again in year 2.

## What happens to the data?

You will be informed of your child's result shortly after the check is completed. The data collected from the check is used within school to provide assessment on the child's decoding skills. It is also a requirement that it is submitted to the Department for Education, where it is used to collate information about the standards in phonics across the country.

## How can you help?

- The most important thing you can do, to help support your child with their reading, is to read with them. Listening to your child read is important but reading to them is just as important. If they hear you read, they are hearing how to pronounce unfamiliar words and are developing new vocabulary.
- When you listen to your child read, allow them time to attempt to decode unfamiliar words themselves, before stepping in to help them. If you find your child is struggling to decode a word, you can help by pointing out the sounds (not the letters) in a word. For example, the word 'keep' would be 'k-ee-p' and 'light' would be 'l-igh-t'.
- When you listen to your child read, pick out a word from the book and ask them to say which graphemes (letters) are making a certain phoneme (sound). For example, the 'ee' sound (phoneme) in 'reaching' is represented by the letters (grapheme) 'ea'.
- When you are out and about, ask your child to read what traffic or shop signs say. Allow your child time to decode the words before stepping in to help.
- Practise speed reading (reading as quickly as possible) the graphemes your child is learning in school. Your child's teacher can help by giving you a list.
- If you have access to the Internet, there are many free phonics games the children can play.
- Keep reading activities short. It is much better to read little and often, than to read a lot infrequently!
- Stop before your child becomes bored and restless.

### Tips on pronouncing sounds:

When you were in school, you may have been taught that c says 'cuh' (or curly c) and t says 'tuh', etc. However, when sounding out in phonics, it is important that the children keep these sounds short and unvoiced (without the 'uh' on the end). It is easier to do this if you whisper the sounds.

This is important because if we voice the sounds, it can make sounding out the words difficult.





















For example, the word 'fluff' is 'f-l-u-ff' but if we add the voiced 'uh' on the end of each sound, it would be 'fuh-luh-u-fuh', or 'ferleruffer'!



## 11 Useful terms:

<b>Phoneme</b>	This is the smallest unit of sound in speech. For example, there are 3 phonemes in the word 'cat' (c-a-t) and in the word 'rain' (r-ai-n). There are 5 phonemes in the word 'steamy' (s-t-ea-m-y).
<b>Grapheme</b>	This is the letter or group of letters that represent a sound (phoneme). For example, 't', 'sh', 'ff' and 'igh'.
<b>Decode/decoding</b>	This is the process of seeing a written word and being able to read it aloud. Decoding is concerned with reading the words, rather than their meaning.
<b>Segmenting</b>	This is breaking the word down into individual sounds (spelling).
<b>Blending</b>	This is smoothly putting the sounds back together to read the word.
<b>Diagraph</b>	These are two letters representing one phoneme (sound). For example, 'ph', 'ee' and 'ng'.
<b>Spilt diagraph</b>	These are two letters representing one phoneme, but the letters are separated by another letter. For example, in the word 'game', the 'a' and 'e' make up the 'ay' phoneme but they are separated by the 'm'. You will see this written as 'a-e' or 'a_e'.
<b>Trigraph</b>	These are three letters representing one phoneme (sound). For example, 'igh', 'ear' and 'ure'.
<b>Phase 2</b>	Children begin to learn which letters represent which, using them to blend for reading and orally segment for spelling. They use simple 2- and 3- sound words. Graphemes taught – s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r, h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss.
<b>Phase 3</b>	Children continue to learn new graphemes, using them to blend for reading and segment for spelling. Graphemes taught – j, v, w, x, y, z, zz, qu, ch, sh, th, ng, ai, ee, ight, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air ure, er.
<b>Phase 4</b>	There are no new graphemes taught during this phase. Children are taught to blend and read longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. <b>'stamp'</b> , <b>'milk'</b> , <b>'train'</b> .
<b>Phase 5</b>	<p>In this phase, the children learn some new graphemes and some alternative ways to pronounce graphemes they already know.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New graphemes taught</b> – ay (day), ou (out), ie (pie), ea (pea), oy (boy), ir (girl), ue (blue), aw (saw), wh (when), ph (photo), ew (new), oe (toe), au (Paul), a-e (make), e-e (these), i-e (like), o-e (home), u-e (rule).</li> <li>• <b>Alternative pronunciations for graphemes</b> – i (find), o (cold), c (cent), g (giant), u (put – southern pronunciation), ow (blow), ie (field), ea (bread), er (her), a (what), y (very), ch (school, chef), ou (could, you).</li> </ul>

# Phonics Screening Practice List

Nonsense Alien Words			
yoop		lazz	
olf		quipe	
smeck		chirt	
jimp		scroy	
blies		faum	
blate		spreet	
dox		melp	
glisp		shound	
cripe		thoft	
jigh		frue	

# Phonics Screening Practice List

t

s

## Real Words

chain

mixer

drift

slide

pound

queue

jazz

newt

fuzzy

clown

crept

thump

fuel

knock

stroke

author

feeling

haystack

shortest

cabbage

b










e

r

a

h

# Phonics Screening Practice List

Nonsense Alien Words			
woid		shrop	
ump		quape	
proy		smizz	
yaup		blinch	
thisk		snoul	
phode		luft	
scund		whunkey	
froe		prinker	
spirl		thunk	
cobweeb		grelt	



# Phonics Screening Practice List

t

s

## Real Words

zoo

coin

sight

photo

l

cloud

skate

b

whip

flute

oyster

straw

a

burger

first

e

text

graph

handshake

script

h

shelf

glass

r





















drawing

haircut

# Phonics Screening Practice List

Real Words			
t	chill	blank	s
	start	scribe	
l	best	phone	b
	grit	rusty	
a	shin	dentist	e
	gang	starling	
h	week	day	r
	hooks	slide	
	strap	newt	
	trains	finger	

# Phonics Screening Practice List

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



Here is the order in which the letters are taught, and the phases:-

### Phase 1

- 1) tuning in to sounds
- 2) listening and remembering sounds
- 3) talking about sounds  
(so basically being aware that words are made of graphemes and phonemes).
- 4) orally sounding out words to identify and spell them.
- 5) Hearing words that start and end with the same sounds.

### Phase 2

Learning which letter makes which sound (one set taught per week):

Set 1: s a t p

Set 2: i n m d

Set 3: g o c k

Set 4: ck e u r

Set 5: h b f, ff l, ll ss

### Phase 3

Set 6: j v w x

Set 7: y z, zz qu

ch, sh th ng ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er

### Phase 4

No new graphemes

Practicing all the graphemes and blending them together to make words.

This phase includes learning to read and spell longer words.

### Phase 5

New graphemes:

ay (day) ou (out) ie (tie) ea (east) oy (boy) ir (girl) ue (blue) aw (saw)

wh (when) ph (photo) ew (new) oe (toe) au (Paul)

Split digraphs (where the sound is split by another letter)








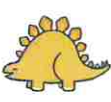





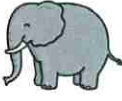









a-e (make) e-e (these) i-e (like) o-e (home) u-e (rule)

New pronunciations for known letters:


























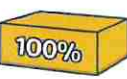

i (fin, find), o (hot, cold), c (cat, cent), g (got, giant), u (but, put (in south of England), ow (cow, blow), ie (tie, field), ea (eat, bread), er (farmer, her),

a (hat, what), y (yes, by, very), ch (chin, school, chef), ou (out, shoulder, could, you).











## Phase 2 Sound Mat

s 	a 	t 	p 	i 	n 	m 	d 
g 	o 	c 	k 	ck 	e 	u 	r 
h 	b 	f 	ff 	l 	ll 	ss 	

## Phase 3 Sound Mat

j 	v 	w 	x 	y 	z 	zz 	qu 
ch 	sh 	th 	ng 	ai 	ee 	igh 	oa 
oo 	oo 	ar 	or 	ur 	ow 	oi 	ear 
air 	ure  Pure	er 					



st  nest	nd  hand	mp  lamp	nt  tent	nk  ink	ft  gift	sk  tusk	lt  belt
lp  help	lf  shelf	lk  milk	pt  script	xt  text	tr  tree	dr  drawing	gr  grandpa
cr  crab	br  brush	fr  frog	bl  blackberry	fl  flag	gl  glasses	pl  plane	cl  clown
sl  sleep	sp  spade	st  starfish	tw  twins	sm  small	pr  printer	sc  scarf	sk  skunk
sn  sniff	nch  bench	scr  screw	shr  shrew	thr  thread	str  string	Phase 4 Blends and Clusters	
ay  crayon	ou  cloud	ie  tie	ea  beads	oy  boy	ir  girl		
aw  saw	wh  whistle	ph  elephant	ew  pew	ew  screw	oe  toe	au  haunted	ey  monkey
a-e  snake	e-e  concrete	i-e  slide	o-e  bone	u-e  flute	u-e  cube	Phase 5 Sounds	



Help your child with

# reading

## I spy

Play 'I Spy' games. Can you find words beginning with...? Can you find a picture of a ...? How many ... can you see?

## Ask questions

Ask questions about the story as you read it e.g. What is the story about? Why do you think they made that choice? Was it a good choice? Why did that happen? What do you think will happen next? What was your favourite part of the story? Why?

## Make it fun

Enjoy reading together. Give characters funny voices and engage with the pictures. Make a game out of finding words that rhyme or start with the same sound.

## Create

Use reading to inspire drawings or new stories.

## Be seen

Make sure you are seen reading. Keep books and magazines at easy reach.

## Get out

Go to your public library regularly. Find the books you loved as a kid to read together.

## Go online

Look online & in app stores for appropriate word & spelling games.

## Make space

Have a special place or a certain time when you read together.

## Read everything out loud.

Books, poems, nursery rhymes, newspaper & magazine articles, food labels... anything that is close to hand!



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# How to help your child learn to read

If your child has recently started school, you might be wondering how you can help them learn to read at home, or perhaps you are interested in knowing a bit more about what they are learning at school. Most parents of young children were taught to read using a different strategy to the one used today, which is why it can be hard to know what to do for the best. This guide provides some information and advice from a qualified teacher about the current reading strategy in schools.

The way children are taught to read these days is called phonics (or more recently, Letters and Sounds). There are some other useful words you might want to know like phoneme (the sound of each letter) and grapheme (what each letter looks like).

Phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (how it looks) are now taught in a special order, this is because education specialists have worked out that this is the best way to help children learn to read. The phonemes-graphemes are also split into groups called phases. This is to help teachers assess where children are with their phonics.

What differs now from when most of us were children, is the very short sounds that letters make. You may remember being taught "t" as a "ter" sound, now it has a very short and snappy "t" – if you whisper it, it's easier to make the sound. The two you may find particularly tricky to pronounce are l and n. With the "l" sound, pronounce as you would at the end of "Hull", more of an "ul" sound. With "n", don't be tempted to say "ner", it's very much a "n" on its own, like in "Euan". Another tricky one is "r", not "rer" as you might think, but more of a growling "rrr" sound. When you say a letter, think how it actually sounds in a word, for example "f" might come out as "fer" but in a word has a very short "f" sound, like in "fluff", if you think that "f" is said "fer" then this word would become "ferluffer".



# How to help your child learn to read

For quite a lot of letters, there is the temptation to put an “er” on the end, “h”, “j”, “t” being a few examples. It’s really important though that you keep the sounds really short, because if you think about it, when children are blending (which means putting the sounds together to make words), it won’t work if all the letters end with an “er” sound. Think of “cat”, with the way I was taught it when I was a child it would make sense to pronounce it “ceratter”, whereas with the short whispered sounds it’s far easier to blend the letters.

The vowel sounds (a, e, i, u and o) can be taught as you normally say them (a as in apple, e as in elephant, i as in igloo, u as in under, o as in orange), however there are some exceptions (e.g. child) but these will be addressed in school later on. There is also a list of tricky words that do not follow the normal pronunciation of other words.



# Help your child with **spelling**

## Different media

Provide different media for children to write and make marks with e.g. paint and paintbrushes, chunky markers on large paper, chalk on the pavement or patio, dry-wipe markers on the mirror or using fingers in shaving foam, or custard. You could also encourage children to explore making marks on a computer or tablet device.

## Flashcards

Have flashcards, letter tiles or similar items around for children to use to spell out words.

## Make a copy

Children could copy out the spelling list in alphabetical order or from shortest to longest.

## Grab a dictionary

Have a dictionary to hand for looking up unfamiliar words

## Narrow it down

Narrow down long lists and focus on 4 to 5 at a time.

## Get moving

Use physical activity - for each letter of the word get children to do a star jump, walk up or down a step, touch their toes etc.

## Games

Make the list into a game - try playing hangman, making word searches or coming up with crosswords.

## Shout out

Encourage your child to spell words out loud on long car journeys or when walking to school.

Encourage your child to read.

**Good readers are often good spellers!**