

Understanding Phonics

Helping your child to read, write
and spell.



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Understanding Phonics:

At Colyton Primary, children take part in daily phonics sessions in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. These are fun sessions involving lots of speaking, listening and games, where the emphasis is on children's active participation. They learn to use their phonic knowledge for reading and writing activities.

From a very early stage, children develop awareness of different sounds in spoken language. They develop understanding that spoken words are made up of different sounds (**phonemes**) and they learn to match these phonemes to letters (**graphemes**). Phonics is about children knowing how letters link to sounds (**graphemes to phonemes**), for example, **c** as in 'cat'.

They will learn that most sounds (**phonemes**) can be spelled in more than one way. For example, the **f** sound can be written as **f** as in 'fan' or **ff** as in 'puff' or **ph** as in 'photo'.

They will learn that most letters and combinations of letters (**graphemes**) can represent more than one sound. For example, the grapheme **ea** can be read as /ee/ as in leaf or /e/ as in bread.

Good phonics knowledge and skills help your child to read words fluently and spell words, but they need to understand what they are reading and understand the processes and purposes for writing too. Your help is vital here. At Colyton Primary we use a systematic phonics programme called **Letters and Sounds**. Letters and sounds consists of 6 phases which children will work through at their own rate. This handbook explains these phases and I hope that this will enable you to support your child in their progression in phonics.

Useful Websites;

Teachers TV – Early Reading and Phonics - <http://www.teachers.tv/video/27626>

Letters and Sounds - <http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>

Pronouncing the Phonemes - <http://www.getreadingright.com/Pronouncephonemes.htm>

Phonics games - <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/index.htm>

Key Stage 1 Phonics Screening:

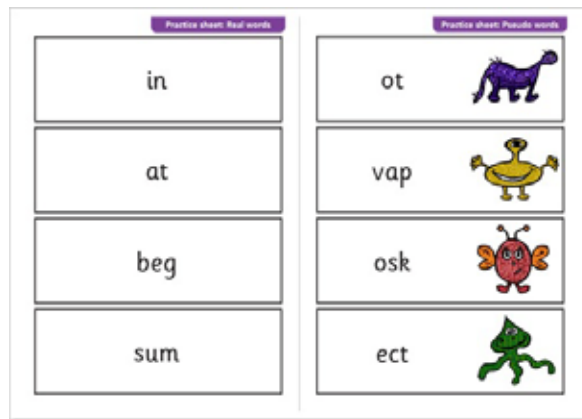
At the end of the summer term in Year 1 your child will be assessed on their ability to decode phonics. This check is to assess the ability/progress of a child's phonics in Year 1.

The phonics screening check is a short and simple assessment of phonic decoding. It consists of a list of 40 words, half real words and half non-words, which Year 1 children read to a teacher. If a child does not meet the current 32 out of 40 words then they will have the opportunity to retake the screening check in Year 2.

Video of expectations for children in screening test:

<http://education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/keystage1/a00200415/phonics>

Please read the following information about Letters and Sounds and the Phases that your children will learn through. If you have any questions or would like further information on how to support your child's learning please don't hesitate to ask your child's teacher.



Phonics in Key Stage 2:

In Key Stage 2 all children will continue to learn how to spell through a variety of teaching approaches including, reciting, investigating and applying their understanding.

Further to this some children will continue letters and sounds or specific phonics in Key Stage 2 if it is felt that they have not yet got a secure understanding or may be experiencing difficulty in reading and/or writing because they have missed or misunderstood a crucial phase of systematic phonics teaching

In their day-to-day learning some children may:

- experience difficulties with blending for reading and segmenting for spelling
- show confusion with certain graphemes and related phonemes
- have difficulty segmenting longer words containing adjacent consonants
- demonstrate a general insecurity with long vowel phonemes. For example, children generally know the most common representation of a phoneme, for example /ai/ as in *train*, but require more explanation and practice about the alternative spellings for any particular phoneme.

These children will continue with phonics to target the specific areas of letters and sounds that they have not understood or need more practice with.

Definitions

blend — to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap

digraph — two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.

vowel digraphs comprise of two vowels which, together, make one sound, e.g. ai, oo, ow

split digraph — two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in make or i-e in site

trigraph — three letters making one sound.

grapheme — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')

grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) — the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondences'

mnemonic — a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a snake shaped like the letter 'S'

phoneme — the smallest single identifiable sound, e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)

segment — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word 'cat' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/

VC, CVC, CCVC — the abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, which are used to describe the order of letters in words, e.g. am, ham, slam.

Letters and Sounds

Phase 1 (Before school- Reception)



This paves the way for systematic learning of phonics it consists of activities that will help children to listen attentively to sounds around them, such as the sounds of their toys and to sounds in spoken language. A wide range of nursery rhymes and songs as well as good book being read to and with the children increases the number of words they know.

Phase 2 (Reception)



In this phase children will continue practising what they have learned from phase 1 and will be taught the phonemes (sounds) for the letters (graphemes) shown. They will learn which phoneme is represented by which grapheme and that a phoneme can be represented by **more than one letter**, for example, /ll/ as in **b-e-ll**. They may be using pictures or hand movements to help them remember these.

Saying the sounds

Your child will be taught how to pronounce the sounds

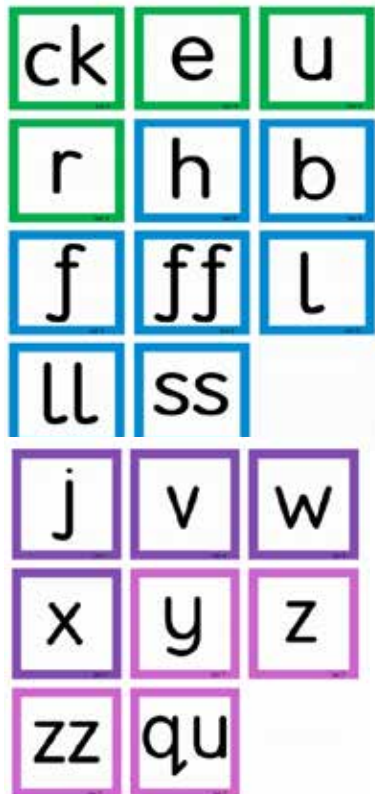
(phonemes) correctly to make blending easier. Sounds should be sustained where possible (e.g. sss, fff, mmm) and, where this is not possible, 'uh' sounds after consonants should be reduced as far as possible (e.g. try to avoid saying 'buh', 'cuh').

Teachers help children to look at different letters and say the right sounds for them such as— **c-a-t = cat**. The separate sounds (phonemes) are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word, and are then merged together into the whole word. The merging together is called **blending** and is a vital skill for reading.

Children will also learn to do this the other way around – **cat = c-a-t**. The whole word is spoken aloud and then broken up into its sounds (phonemes) in order, all through the word. This is called **segmenting** and is a vital skill for spelling.

VC and CVC words

C and V are abbreviations for 'consonant' and 'vowel'. VC words are words consisting of a vowel then a consonant (e.g. am, at, it) and CVC words are words



consisting of a consonant then a vowel then a consonant (e.g. cat, rug, sun). Words such as tick and bell also count as CVC words – although they have four letters, they have only three sounds. For example, in the word bell, **b** = consonant, **e** = vowel, **ll** = consonant.

Now the children will be seeing letters and words, as well as hearing them. They will be shown how to make whole words by putting the letters together. These will be simple words made up of two phonemes, for example, am, at, it, or three phonemes, for example, cat, rug, sun, tick, bell.

Tricky words

They will also learn several tricky words:
the, to, I, go, no.

Tricky words are words that do not sound out in the expected way such as **the** so it doesn't make **t-h-e** as we would expect it make **th –uh**. There are different ways we can learn tricky words.

These are some good ideas:

- 1) Look at the part of the words that does not make the sound we expect.
- 2) Look, Cover, Write and Check. Look at the word to see which bit is tricky. Ask the child to try writing the word in the air saying the letters. Cover the word over and see if the child can write it correctly. Check to make sure.
- 3) Mnemonics. The initial letter of each word in a saying gives the correct spelling of a word. For example, laugh – **L**augh **A**t **U**gly **G**oat's **H**air.

High Frequency Words:

High frequency words are the words that appear most often in printed material. It is important for children to learn to recognise these by sight and to be able to spell them.

Phase 2 HFW

a	an	as	at	if	in
is	it	of	off	on	can
dad	had	back	and	get	big
him	his	not	got	up	mum
but	the	to	l	no	go
into					

Ways you can support your child at home:

Sound-talking

Find real objects around your home that have three phonemes (sounds) and practise 'sound talk'. First, just let them listen, then see if they will join in, for example, saying:

'I spy a p-e-g – peg.'

'I spy a c-u-p – cup.'

'Where's your other s-o-ck – sock?'

'Simon says – put your hands on your h-ea-d.'

'Simon says – touch your ch-i-n.'

Magnetic letters

Use magnetic letters on your fridge, or for use with a tray. Find out which letters have been taught – have fun finding these with your child and place them on the magnetic surface.

Making little words together

Make little words together, for example, it, up, am, and, top, dig, run, met, pick. As you select the letters, say them aloud: 'a-m – am', 'm-e-t – met'.

Breaking words up

Now do it the other way around: read the word, break the word up and move the letters away, saying: 'met – m-e-t'.

Spelling is harder than reading words – praise, don't criticise. Little whiteboards and pen and magic boards, are a good way for children to try out spellings and practise their handwriting.

Your child might be trying to use letters from their name to write; this shows that they know that writing needs real alphabet letters. Make an alphabet poster.

Getting ready for writing

Teachers will model how to form letters (graphemes) correctly, so that children can eventually acquire a fluent and legible handwriting style. These skills develop over a long period of time. A child's ability to form a letter correctly is a separate skill from phonics. Holding a pen or pencil needs considerable co-ordination and practice in making small movements with hands and fingers.

Writing in lower-case letters

We shall be teaching lower-case letters, as well as capital letters. As most writing will be in lower-case letters it is useful if you can use these at home. A good start is for your child to write their name correctly, starting with a capital letter followed by lower-case letters.

Using their whole body

For handwriting children need to be well co-ordinated through their whole body, not just their hands and fingers. Games that help co-ordination include throwing balls at a target, under-arm and over-arm, and bouncing balls – also skipping on the spot, throwing a Frisbee, picking up pebbles from the beach and throwing them into the sea. Have fun!

Hand and finger play

Action rhymes such as 'Incy wincy spider', 'One potato, two potato' and 'Tommy Thumb' are great fun and get their hands and fingers moving. Playing with salt dough or clay really helps strengthen little fingers, as does cookery and using simple toolkits.

Hand–eye co-ordination

Pouring water into jugs and cups of different sizes, sweeping up with a dustpan and brush, cutting, sticking, tracing, threading beads, completing puzzles, peeling off stickers and sticking them in the right place – these all help hand–eye co-ordination.

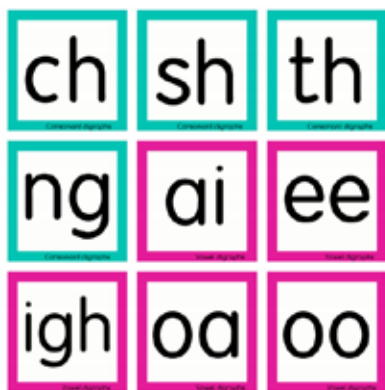
Pencil hold

The 'pincer' movement needs to be practised. This is important as it enables children to hold a pencil properly as they write. Provide them with kitchen tongs and see if they can pick up small objects. Move on to challenging them to pick up smaller things, for example, little cubes, sugar lumps, dried peas, lentils, first with chopsticks, then with tweezers.

Ask children to peg objects to a washing line.

Provide plenty of different types of pen and pencil; hold their hand to practise the correct grip.

Phase 3 (Reception)



The purpose of this phase is:

- To teach more graphemes, most of which are made of two letters, for example, 'oa' as in **boat**
- To practise blending and segmenting a wider set of CVC words, for example, **fizz, chip, sheep, light**.
- To learn all letter names and begin to form them correctly.
- To read more tricky words and begin to spell some of them, **were, there, little, one**.

- To read and write words in phrases and sentences.
- To learn CVC words containing graphemes made of two or more letters

Here are some examples of words your children will be reading:
tail, week, right, soap, food, park, burn, cord, town, soil

Tricky words

The number of tricky words is growing. These are so important for reading and spelling:

he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all.

High Frequency Words:

Phase 3 HFW

will	that	this	then	them	with
see	for	now	down	look	too
he	she	we	me	be	was
you	they	all	are	my	her

Ways you can support your children at home



Sing an alphabet song together.

Play 'I spy', using letter names as well as sounds.

Continue to play with magnetic letters, using some of the two grapheme (letter) combinations:

r-ai-n = rain blending for reading **rain** = **r-ai-n** – segmenting for spelling

b-oa-t = boat blending for reading **boat** = **b-oa-t** – segmenting for spelling

h-ur-t = hurt blending for reading **hurt** = **h-ur-t** – segmenting for spelling

Pairs

Play 'Pairs', turning over two words at a time trying to find a matching pair. This is especially helpful with the tricky words: **the**, **to**, **no**, **go**, **I**.

Phase 4 (Reception)

Children continue to practise previously learned graphemes and phonemes and learn how to read and write:

- CVCC words: tent, damp, toast, chimp

For example, in the word 'toast', t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant.

- CCVC words: swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon

For example, in the word 'cream', c = consonant, r = consonant, ea = vowel, m = consonant.

Tricky words

They will be learning more tricky words and continuing to read and write sentences together.

said, so, do, have, like, some, come, were, there,
little, one, when, out, what

High Frequency Words:

Phase 4 HFW

went	It's	from	children	just	help
said	have	like	so	do	some
come	were	there	little	one	when
out	what				

Ways you can support your children at home:

Practise reading and spelling some CVCC and CCVC words but continue to play around with CVC words. Children like reading and spelling words that they have previously worked with, as this makes them feel successful.

Write up captions and phrases for your child to read and write, for example, a silver star, clear the pond, crunch crisps. Write some simple sentences and leave them around the house for your child to find and read.

Look out for words in the environment, such as on food packaging, which your child will find easy to read, for example, lunch, fresh milk, drink, fish and chips, jam.

Work on reading words together, for example, a street name such as Park Road, captions on buses and Lorries, street signs such as bus stop.

Phase 5 (Year 1)



In phase 5 children will:

Be taught further graphemes for reading

- 'ay' in day/play, 'ir' in girl/dirt.
- 'ou' in out/ round/, 'ea' in eat/ read, 'au' in Paul.

Be taught alternative pronunciations for graphemes

- 'ow' in cow or blow,
- 'ch' in chin/ school or chef, 'ou' in out/shoulder or you.



e.g. phoneme 'a' spelt as 'ai in rain, 'eigh' in eight, 'ey' in they, 'ei' in vein 'ay' in stay and a-e in cake....

- Recognise graphemes in reading words.
- Practice reading and spelling of high-frequency (common) words.
- Practice reading and spelling two-syllable and three-syllable words.
- Practice reading and writing sentences.
- begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words.

For example;

糕, 糕, 糕, 糕, 糕, 糕 in words such as **treasure**.

- Teach reading and spelling the words **oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked**.
- Teach spelling the words **said, so, have, like, some, come, were, there**.
- Teach reading the words **water, where, who, again, thought, through, work, mouse, many, laughed, because, different, any, eyes, friends, once, please**.
- Teach spelling the words **little, one, do, when, what, out**.

High Frequency Words

Phase 5 HFW

don't	old	I'm	by	time	house
about	your	day	made	came	make
here	saw	very	put	oh	their
people	Mr	Mrs	looked	called	asked
could					

Letters and sounds: High Frequency words Checklist

(Next 200 common words in order)

water	away	good	want	over
how	did	man	going	where
would	or	took	school	think
home	who	didn't	ran	know
bear	can't	again	cat	long
things	new	after	wanted	eat
everyone	our	two	has	yes
play	take	thought	dog	well
find	more	I'll	round	tree
magic	shouted	us	other	food
fox	through	way	been	stop
must	red	door	right	sea
these	began	boy	animals	never
next	first	work	lots	need
that's	baby	fish	gave	mouse
something	bed	may	still	found
live	say	soon	night	narrator
small	car	couldn't	three	head
king	town	I've	around	every
garden	fast	only	many	laughed
let's	much	suddenly	told	another
great	why	cried	keep	room
last	jumped	because	even	am
before	gran	clothes	tell	key
fun	place	mother	sat	boat
window	sleep	feet	morning	queen
each	book	its	green	different
let	girl	which	inside	run
any	under	hat	snow	air
trees	bad	tea	top	eyes
fell	friends	box	dark	grandad
there's	looking	end	than	best
better	hot	sun	across	gone
hard	floppy	really	wind	wish
eggs	once	please	thing	stopped
ever	miss	most	cold	park
lived	birds	duck	horse	rabbit
white	coming	he's	river	liked
giant	looks	use	along	plants
dragon	pulled	We're	fly	grow

Ways you can support your children at home with reading.

Teach lots of nursery rhymes – each one tells a different story.

Enjoy and share books together – buy or borrow books that will fire their imagination and interest. Read and reread those they love best.

Make time to read with your child throughout their time in school – PLEASE continue reading to your child, even when they are reading independently. This is very important – your child needs to practise their reading skills every day, and needs the support of an interested adult. Grandparents, older brothers or sisters can help, too.

Let them see you reading – grown-ups can share their magazines about their favourite sport or hobby.

Read with your child – ask your child to attempt unknown words, using their phonic skills and knowledge. Make sure they **blend** all through the word.

Talk about the meaning of the book, too – take time to talk about what is happening in the book, or things that they found really interesting in an information book. Discuss the characters and important events. Ask them their views. Provide toys, puppets and dressing-up clothes that will help them to act out stories.

Explain the meaning of words (vocabulary) that your child can read but may not understand, for example, flapped, roared.

Listen to story tapes.

Teach your child some action rhymes – ‘Heads, shoulders, knees and toes’, ‘Here we go round the mulberry bush’, ‘We all clap hands together’. Use tapes and CD-ROMs of nursery rhymes to sing along to.

Read simple rhyming books together – leave out a rhyming word now and then, and see if your child can work out the missing word. If not, you say it.

Ways you can support your children at home with writing:

Magic writing boards are great fun for children, both little and larger versions. It won't be long before they will be trying to write their names!

Write with your child – 'think aloud' so they can hear the decisions you are making as you write. Make sure the writing is for a purpose, for example, a birthday message, a shopping list, an address.

Talk about the words they see in everyday life – food packaging, signs in the supermarkets, captions on buses and lorries, messages on birthday cards and invitations.

Write a shopping list together.

Send an email to a family member or a friend – your child says the message, you write it!

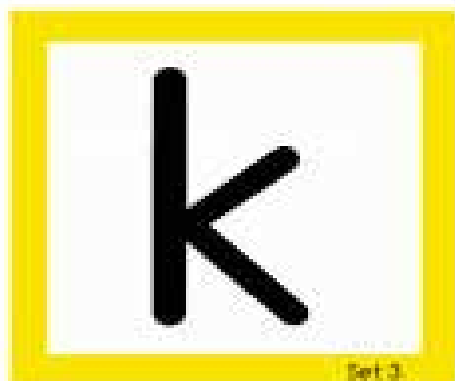
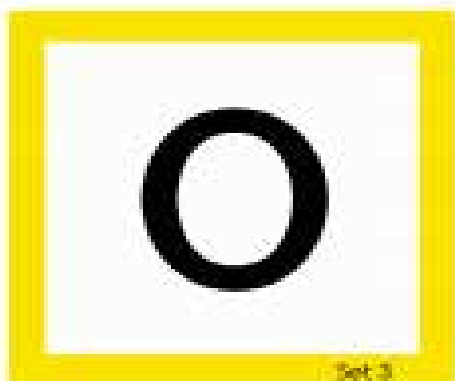
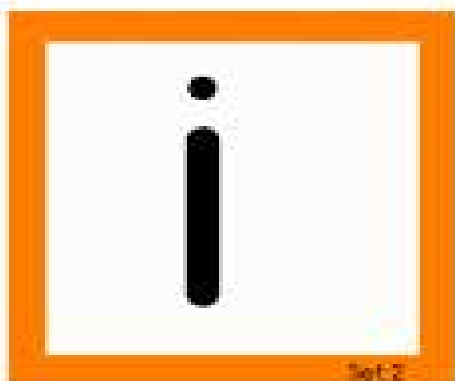
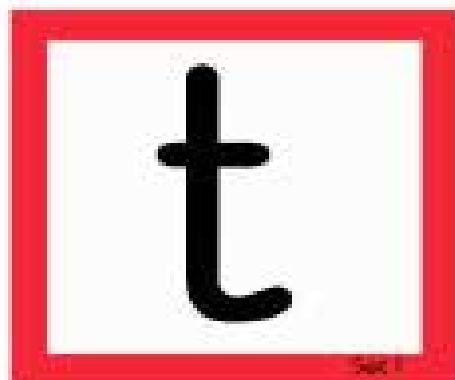
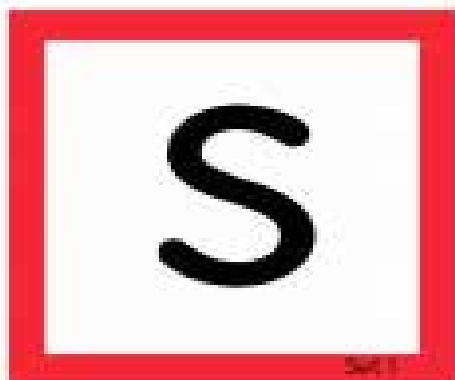
Provide your child with a shoe box full of things to write with – writing tools of various sizes and thicknesses: gel pens, crayons, glitter pens, rainbow pencils, old birthday cards, coloured paper, sticky tape to make little books. Rolls of wallpaper can be attached to a table or wall to provide a large canvas for their writing and drawing.

Praise them for their play writing – those early squiggles and marks show that your child is beginning to understand writing.

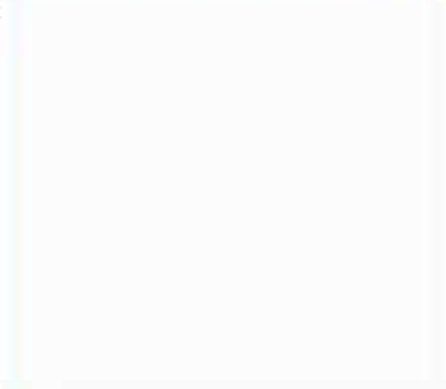
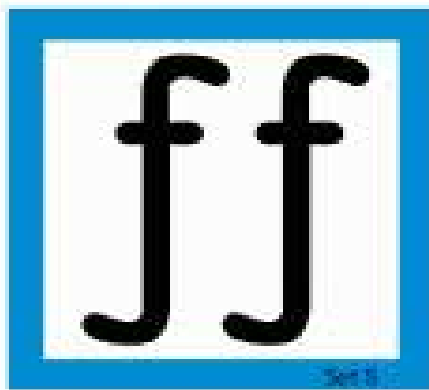
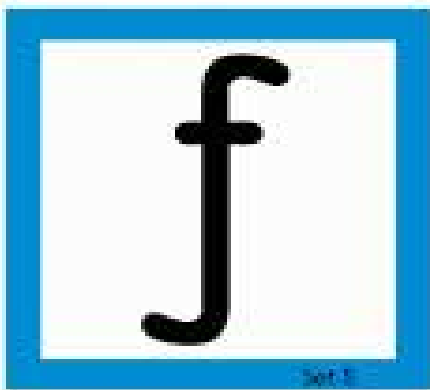
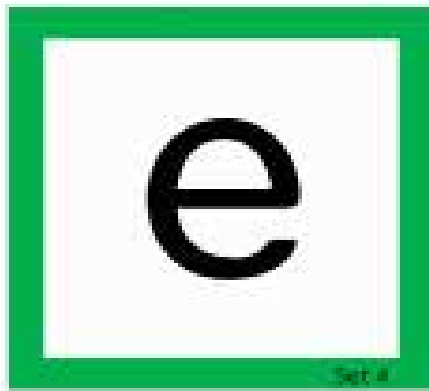
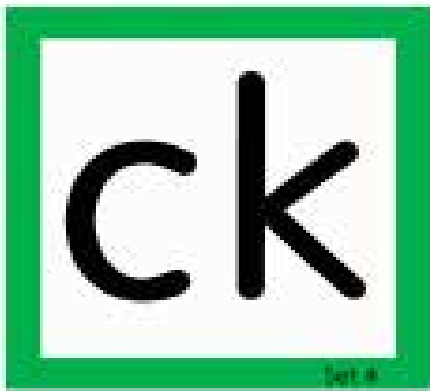
Ways you can support your children at home: what to do if your child is reluctant to read or write at home
Relax!

Appendix:

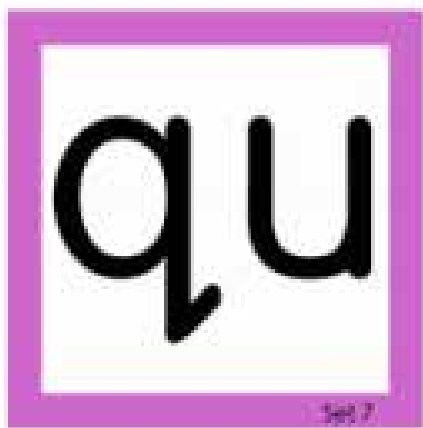
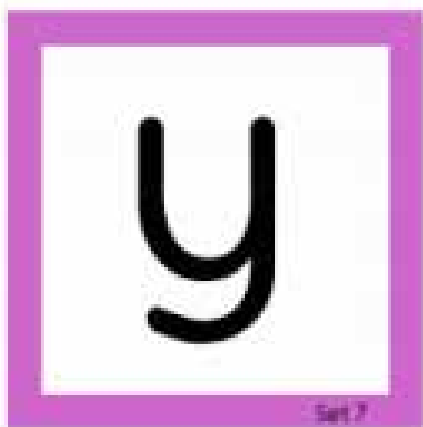
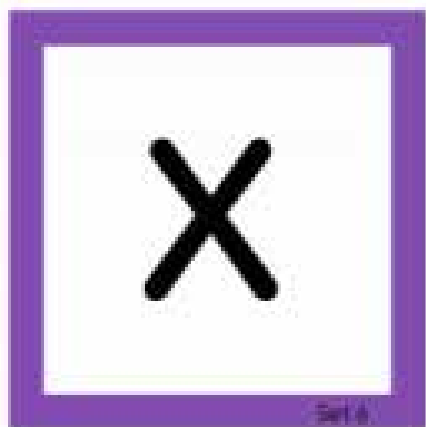
Phase 2 – Flash Cards



Phase 2 – Flash Cards



Phase 2 – Flash Cards



Phase 3 – Flash Cards

ch

Consonant digraphs

sh

Consonant digraphs

th

Consonant digraphs

ng

Consonant digraphs

ai

Vowel digraphs

ee

Vowel digraphs

igh

Vowel digraphs

oa

Vowel digraphs

oo

Vowel digraphs

Phase 3 – Flash Cards

ar

Vowel digraphs

or

Vowel digraphs

ur

Vowel digraphs

ow

Vowel digraphs

oi

Vowel digraphs

ear

Vowel digraphs

air

Vowel digraphs

ure

Vowel digraphs

er

Vowel digraphs

Phase 5 – Flash Cards



44 Phonemes Chart

s sat	t tap	p pan	n nose	m mat	a ant	e egg	i ink	o otter
g goat	d dog	ck click	r run	h hat	u up	ai rain	ee knee	igh light
b bus	f farm	l lolly	j jam	v van	oa boat	oo cook	oo boot	ar star
w wish	x axe	y yell	z zap	qu quill	or fork	ur burn	ow now	oi boil
ch chin	sh ship	th think	th the	ng sing	ear near	air stair	ure sure	er writer