

ELS Essential Letters and Sounds

developed by Knowledge Schools Trust

Phonics Parent Workshop



Getting all children to
read well, quickly.

What are we going to cover?

- What is Phonics?
- What is Essential Letters and Sounds?
- Key Vocabulary
- Progression and the phases of Phonics
- How we teach phonics
- Supporting your child with reading at home

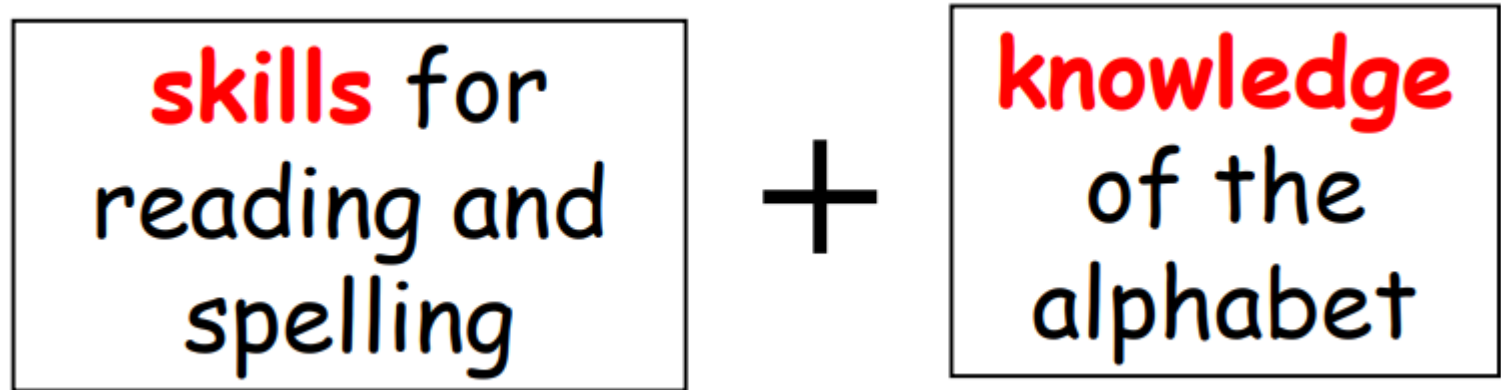
What is Phonics?

Phonics is a method for teaching beginners to **read** and **pronounce words** by learning to associate **letters** or **groups of letters** with the **sounds** they represent.

Phonics develops a child's ability to **hear, recognise and use the sounds** within words and **blend** them together to form a word.

Phonics help your child become a good **reader** and **writer**.

Phonics is all about using ...



Children are taught the correspondence (links) between sounds and the graphemes (spelling patterns) that represent them. (GPC: grapheme: phoneme correspondence)

They will also be taught other skills, such as whole-word recognition (harder to read and spell words (tricky), book skills and a love and enjoyment of reading.

The English language has:

26 letters



44 sounds

Over 100 ways to spell those sounds!!



It is one of the most complex languages to learn to read and spell.

What is ELS?

Getting all children to read well, quickly

Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen phonics programme. It was validated by the Department for Education in the June 2021. Validation means that the DfE have assured that ELS met the criteria for an effective systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme.

Systematic Synthetic Phonics teaches children how to read through the act of decoding and blending.

It teaches children the link between the sounds of our language (phonemes) and the written representation of these sounds (graphemes), or the spellings of the sounds contained within the English language.

Key Vocabulary

Phoneme: the smallest single identifiable sound in a word.

For example, in the word 'cat' there are three phonemes c/a/t.

Grapheme: how a phoneme is written down. There can be more than one way to spell a phoneme. For example, the phoneme 'ay' is spelt differently in each of the words 'way', 'make', 'fail', 'great', 'sleigh' and 'lady'.

Digraph: two letters making one sound. For example, /sh/ in the word '**sh**op'.

Trigraph: three letters making one sound. For example, /igh/ in the word '**nigh**t'.

Split digraph: two vowel letters split but are split by one or more consonants. For example, /a-e/ in the word '**ca**e'.

Segmenting – Breaking a word into its constituent sounds in order to spell them, e.g. ‘frog, f – r – o – g’

Blending – Putting together the sounds in a word in order to read it, e.g. ‘f – r – o – g, frog

Harder to Read and Spell words - words that children will find harder to read and spell as they will not have been taught the relevant GPCs

ELS Progression

Phase 1*	Phase 2	Phase 3**
<p><i>Nursery/Pre-School</i></p> <p>Seven aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental sounds • Instrumental sounds • Body percussion • Rhythm and rhyme • Alliteration • Voice sounds • Oral blending 	<p><i>Reception Autumn 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 23 new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) • 12 new harder to read and spell (HRS) words 	<p><i>Reception Autumn 2, Spring 1 and Spring 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 29 new GPCs • 32 new HRS words • Revision of Phase 2

Phase 4**	Phase 5 including alternatives and lesser-known GPCs	Beyond Phase 5
<p><i>Reception Summer 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral blending • No new GPCs • No new HRS words • Word structures – cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc • Suffixes • Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3 	<p><i>Reception Summer 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Phase 5 for reading • 20 new GPCs • 16 new HRS words <p><i>Year 1 Autumn 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs • 2 new GPCs • 9 new HRS words <p><i>Year 1 Spring 1 and 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds • 49 new GPCs • 4 new HRS words • Oral blending • Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4 	<p><i>Year 1 Summer, Year 2 and Key Stage 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With ELS, phonics teaching does not stop at the end of Year 1, but continues as children move through the school, with links being made between their GPC knowledge and spelling • Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling • Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum

Phase 1

This phase is divided into seven strands:

Aspect 1: Environmental Sounds Children are exposed to a variety of sounds in the environment, being encouraged to copy them.

Aspect 2: Instrumental Sounds Children are encouraged to listen to and make sounds using different instruments.

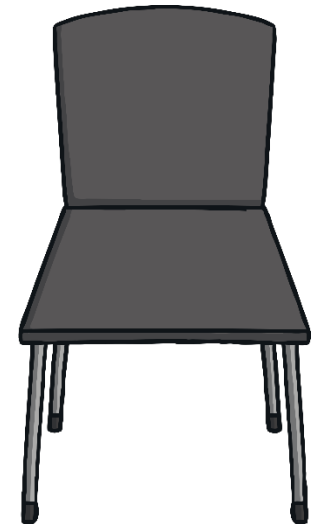
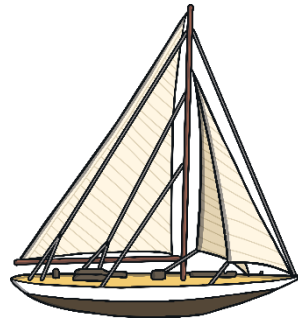
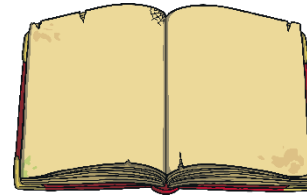
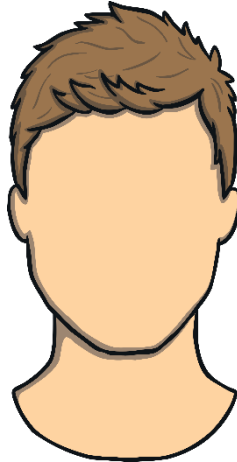
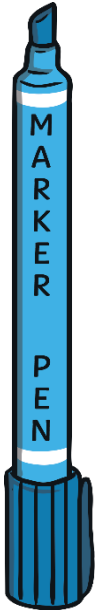
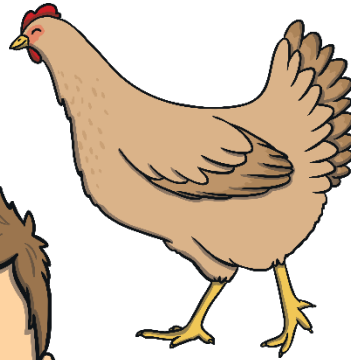
Aspect 3: Body Percussion Children use their body to accompany songs and rhymes, for example by clapping and tapping.

Aspect 4: Rhythm and Rhyme Children are exposed to a range of books and rhymes. Children are encouraged to join in with repeated refrains and rhymes.

Aspect 5: Alliteration Children are encouraged to listen to initial sounds within words. They are asked to think of other words beginning with the same sound.

Aspect 6: Voice Sounds Children are asked to create different mouth movements and say a range of sounds.

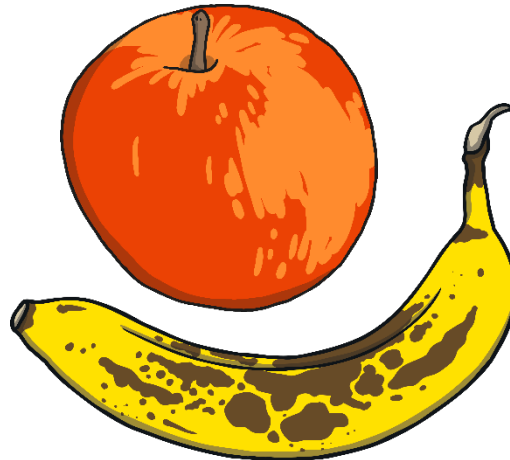
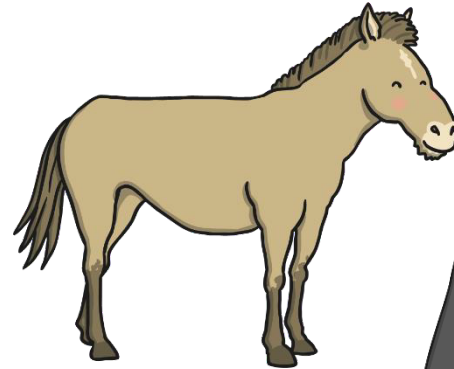
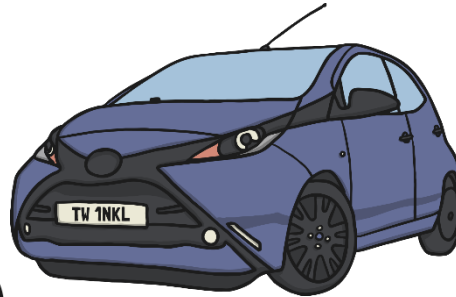
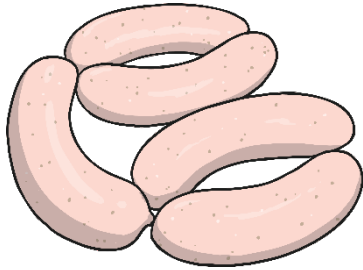
Find the Rhymes



Find the Initial Sounds

Can you find three things beginning with 's'?

How many things begin with 'h'?



Phase Two

In Phase 2, children begin to learn some letter sounds and to match them to graphemes.

Most of the first sounds are single-letter sounds but there are also several digraphs, where one sound is represented by two letters, e.g. 'ck', 'll', 'ss'.

Children also begin to blend the sounds to make words. By the end of Phase 2, children will be able to read some 'vowel-consonant' (vc) and 'consonant-vowel-consonant' (cvc) words, e.g. up, in, cat, pin.

V = vowel

C = consonant

Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5
s a t p	n m d	g o c k	ck e u r	b f,ff l,ll ss

Phase Three

Phase 3 usually lasts around 12 weeks. Children are taught another 25 graphemes.

The final single-letter sounds are taught, together with more consonant digraphs (e.g. zz, qu) and several vowel digraphs (e.g. ai, ee, igh).

Children also continue to learn how to blend and segment CVC words using the new sounds, e.g. tail, sheet, night – note that these words still only have three sounds.

Children will then move on to blending and segmenting two-syllable words such as cooker, eating, broken.

Harder to read and spell words also continue to be taught.

Set 6	Set 7
j v w x	y <u>z,zz</u> <u>qu</u>
Digraphs	Trigraphs
<u>ch</u> <u>sh</u> <u>th</u> ng <u>ai</u> <u>ee</u> <u>oa</u> <u>oo</u> <u>ar</u> or <u>ur</u> ow oi <u>er</u>	<u>igh</u> ear air <u>ure</u>

Phase 3

Below are some examples of the words your child will be reading in this phase:

ship **cook** **fork** **high** **beard** **chair**

Frequent practise allows your child to become more fluent.

Useful Tip

It is important children quickly learn to recognise digraphs and trigraphs as one sound, rather than as separate letters.

E.g. rain should be read as r-ai-n not r-a-i-n

Phase 4

The purpose of this phase is to consolidate the sounds already taught. Children are also exposed to adjacent consonants (consonant blends and consonant clusters) and multisyllabic words.

Useful Tip

It is important children learn to read words without blending as soon as possible. Children progress from blending out loud, to blending in their head before reading on sight. The sooner they can read on sight, the quicker their fluency will improve.

Phase Five

The purpose of this phase is to broaden a child's knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. When spelling words, children will now need to choose the appropriate graphemes to represent phonemes.

They will learn strategies to help them choose the correct grapheme for spelling.

Children will be reading with more and more fluency, no longer needing to 'sound out' most familiar words.

New Graphemes for Reading:

ay	ou	ie	ea	oy	ir	ue
aw	wh	ph	ew	oe	au	
a-e	e-e	i-e	o-e	u-e		

Pronouncing pure sounds

We must use pure sounds when we are pronouncing the sounds and supporting children in reading words.

c a t **not** **cuh a tuh**

If we mispronounce these sounds, we will make reading harder for our children.

These are videos where you can hear the correct pronunciation of the sounds.



Pronunciation

PHASE 2

<https://vimeo.com/641445921>

PHASE 3

[Phase 3 Pronunciation \(vimeo.com\)](#)

PHASE 5

[Phase 5 Pronunciation \(vimeo.com\)](#)

How to blend sounds to read words

<https://youtu.be/vqvvqMtSNswo>

Harder to Read and Spell words - words that children will find harder to read and spell as they will not have been taught the relevant GPCs

the

no

his

she

Pre-Writing Skills

It is essential that a child begins to write when they are ready. In order to prepare your child there are many activities that can be done in various settings, including at home.

Writing readiness can be defined in a number of ways:

- hand and finger strength
- upper limb strength
- hand dominance
- pencil grasp
- hand-eye coordination

Pencil grip.....

TYPICAL PENCIL GRASP DEVELOPMENT FOR HANDWRITING

10 Months
Pincer Grasp



12-15 Months
Palmar Supinate Grasp



2-3 Years
Digital Pronate Grasp



3-4 Years
Quadrupod Grasp



3-4 Years
Static Tripod Grasp



5-6 Years
Dynamic Tripod Grasp



How do we teach phonics?

- We teach phonics every single day from the first days of Reception in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- We begin by introducing a defined group of grapheme-phoneme correspondences that enable children to read and spell many words early on
- We teach children to read printed words by identifying and blending individual phonemes, from left to right
- We teach children to apply the skill of segmenting spoken words into their phonemes for spelling and that this is the reverse of blending phonemes to read words

Teaching strategies

Drum roll

We use this when introducing a new grapheme/ spelling. This should be a two- to three-second drum roll on the children's laps.

Me, then you

First, we show how to do/say something. Then they copy us, before repeating this by themselves. We repeat these steps, reducing our modelling as children's fluency and independence increases

Robot arms When sound-talking a word (orally segmenting it into the phonemes within the word), we use robot arms to physically make the link between the separating of the sounds. This assists children in hearing the separate sounds within the word

Mnemonics and Rhymes to Support ELS

RECEPTION/PRIMARY 1 AUTUMN 1: PHASE 2

s – snake – **swerve** around the snake

a – ant – **around** the head, down the body

t – teacher – **down** her body and cross her shoulders

p – parrot – **down** his body, around his face

i – inventor – **down** her body, spot her idea

n – nest – **down** the bird and over her nest

m – meerkat – **meerkat**, mound, mound

d – duck – **over** his back and around the tail, up his neck and down to his feet

g – goat – **start** at his ear, around the face and down the beard

o – ostrich – **around** the ostrich's body

c – camel – **curl** around the camel's back

k – kid – **down** the body, up the arm, down the leg

ck – a camel and a kid – **the** camel stood **by** the kid

e – elephant – **around** the head and down the trunk

u – umbrella – **under** the umbrella and down to the tip

r – runner – **down** her body, up over the arm

ss – two snakes – **sunbathing** snakes

h – heron – **from** his head to his feet, up and over his back

b – bike – **down** the person and around the wheel

f – fox – **over** the ear, down to the tail and across the jaw

ff – two foxes – **two** foxes facing forwards

l – ladder – **down** the long ladder

ll – two ladders – **ladders** in a line

Plus: words with /s/ at the end (sits, fits, cats, bats)

WEEKLY LESSON STRUCTURE FOR TEACHING NEW PHONEMES AND GRAPHEMES

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Review	Review	Review	Review	Review newly taught sounds for the week, previously taught graphemes and harder to read and spell (HRS) words
Teach new sound	Teach new sound	Teach new sound	Teach new sound	
Practise	Practise	Practise	Practise	Practise - reading and writing words
Use the Apply sound-specific sheet	Use the Apply sound-specific sheet	Use the Apply sound-specific sheet	Use the Apply sound-specific sheet	Apply - reading decodable books and writing phrases and sentences
Review	Review	Review	Review	

Year 1/Primary 2 – Autumn 2

1.	au, ey, a-e, e-e
2.	i-e, o-e, u-e, c
3.	y, al, Review Y1:4
4.	Review Y1:5
5.	Assessment and Review Y1:6
6.	Review Y1:7

Supporting your child with reading at home

Decodable books



Decodable books encourage children to segment words using decoding strategies rather than guessing from pictures or predicting from other cues.

They are introduced once beginner readers have learned some simple grapheme–phoneme correspondences and can blend from left to right.

Closely-matched decodable books enable children to practise decoding skills based on their secure phonics knowledge, in context, whilst building comprehension and fluency, ensuring confidence and success for all children.

In **ELS**, an essential part of learning to read is that children re-read words and sentences that they can decode (sound out) until they are fluent (read with ease and precision). By reading texts several times, children have the greatest opportunity to achieve this fluency.

To best support us in teaching your child how to read, we ask that you read the decodable text provided by the school **4 times** across the week.

Spending 10 minutes a day reading with your child will hugely support them in their journey to becoming an independent reader.

We want them to practise reading their book working on these skills

- decode
- fluency
- expression

We will be changing children's books once a week on **Fridays**, this allows your child to re-read each text several times building their confidence and fluency. This is especially important as they begin to learn that the sounds within our language can be spelt in different ways.

The texts sent home are carefully matched to the teaching taking place in school. Your child will be practising what they have been taught in school with you at home.

Books that are not yet decodable for the children will be a sharing book. These books are there for you to read with your child, helping us to instil a love of reading from the very beginning of their reading journey.

These could be read together with your child reading the words they are able to decode or could be read to your child.

Your child will also visit our school library and bring a book home to share.

Link to Oxford Owl for support

[Essential Letters and Sounds - Oxford Owl](#)

There are few things more wonderful for a child than listening to a bedtime story at night.



HERE'S THE IMPACT OF READING 20 MINUTES PER DAY!

A student who reads

20:00

minutes per day

will be exposed to
1.8 MILLION
words per year
and scores in
90th PERCENTILE
on standardized tests

A student who reads

5:00

minutes per day

will be exposed to
282,000
words per year
and scores in
50th PERCENTILE
on standardized tests

A student who reads

1:00

minute per day

will be exposed to
8,000
words per year
and scores in
10th PERCENTILE
on standardized tests

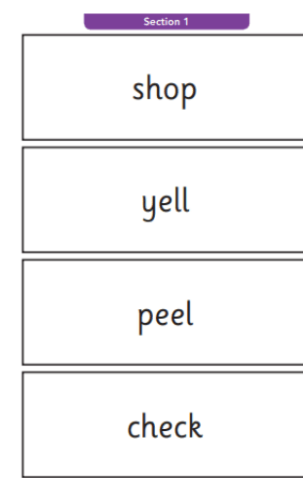
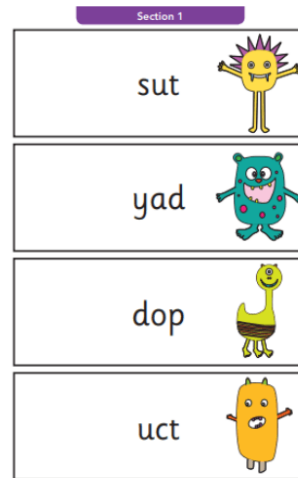
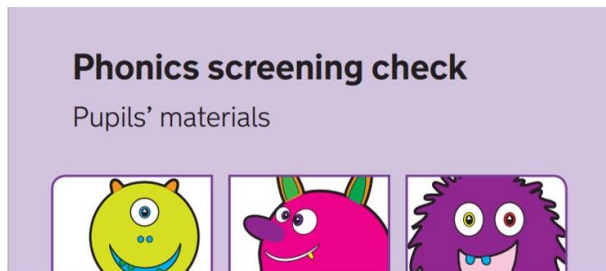
Sources: Nagy, Anderson, and Harris, 1987

The Year 1 Phonics Check

In June, all year 1 children are expected to complete the year 1 phonics screening check.

The aim is to check that a child is making progress in phonics. They are expected to read a mixture of real words and 'nonsense' words.

If a child has not reached the expected standard, we give additional support to help the child to make progress in year 2.



Questions

