

Phonics

Phonics Terminology – A Family Guide

Please find below the terminology that is used by the adults and children in phonics sessions and when reading/ writing. We hope that you find this useful.

Phoneme: The smallest unit of sound in a word. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English (it depends on different accents). Phonemes can be put together to make words.

Grapheme: A way of writing down a phoneme. This could be one letter or a group of letters (i, ie, igh, i_e)

Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence (GPC): It is the relationship between sounds and the letter, or letters, that represent that sound. Knowing a GPC means being able to match a phoneme to a grapheme and vice versa.

Oral Blending: This involves hearing phonemes and being able to merge them together to make a word. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to blend written words.

Blending: This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and using knowledge of GPCs to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents and then merging these phonemes together to make a word. This is the basis of reading.

Oral Segmenting: This is the act of hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to segment words to spell them.

Segmenting: This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it, using knowledge of GPCs to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order. This is the basis of spelling.

Digraph: Two letters that work together to make one sound (e.g. ee)

Trigraph: Three letters that work together to make one sound (e.g. igh)