

# Progression in phonics: materials for whole-class teaching

**to be replaced  
by OUP**

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# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>About this book</b>	9
<b>Step 1</b>	12
<b>Steps 2–7</b>	14
<b>Phonic activities at each Step</b>	17
<b>Instructions and bank of materials for activities</b>	18
Jingles	18
Pebble Game	18
Tray Game	18
Match Me	20
Circle Swap Shop	20
Jump in the Hoop	21
Mood Sounds	21
Letter Formation	21
Phoneme Frame	22
Which of Two (or more)?	23
Quickwrite	24
North, South, East and West (NSEW)	24
Flashcards	25
Sock Puppets	25
Noisy Letters	25
Croaker	26
Alien Game	27
Finish It	27
Fans	28
Full Circle Game	29
Sound Buttons	30
Cube Game	30
Silly Questions	31
Phoneme Count	32
Washing Line	33
Bingo	33
Rhyming Word Generation and Word Sort	34
Split Digraph	36

# CD-ROM – Guidance and instructions

The enclosed CD-ROM provides training to support the teaching of phonics. It is appropriate for all teachers who wish to learn more about the phonemic system but it is also a preparation for teaching interactive 'whole class' phonics.

The photocopiable masters (PCMs) referred to in the text of this book are available in Adobe Acrobat format (Acrobat Reader also included) on the enclosed CD-ROM. However, we recommend that where possible teachers copy PCMs from the original print of the book *Progression in Phonics*, a copy of which should be available in every school and Initial Teacher Training establishment.

The CD-ROM is divided into three main sections:

- ◆ Phonics for reading and spelling;
- ◆ Principles of the phonics code;
- ◆ Teaching phonics.

In each section an idea or concept is explained using text, sound, animation and video. In order to trigger the sounds, animations and video, click the appropriate icons. There are also on-screen activities and games to complete in some sections, where you can put your knowledge to the test. Each section should take about 10 minutes to work through, plus 5 minutes to complete each activity.

The small sphere at the bottom of the screen gradually moves from left to right for you to track your progression through each section. The tabs on the left of the screen give an indication as to how much information is contained on each page.

You can jump to another section before completing the current one by pressing the MENU button. You can quit the CD-ROM at any time using the QUIT button available in the menu, or by pressing the ESC key on your keyboard.

## Minimum system requirements

**PC** Windows 95, Pentium 133Mhz, 16Mb RAM, 16 × CD-ROM, 16 Bit Sound card, 800 × 600 (Super VGA) Graphics Display.

**Mac** PowerPC 120Mhz, 16Mb RAM, 16 × CD-ROM, 800 × 600 display.

## Getting started

For maximum running efficiency, it is recommended that the contents of this CD-ROM be copied onto your hard drive. This will occupy approximately 250Mb of disk space, and will allow for smoother playback of video and sound.

## To copy this CD-ROM onto your hard drive

**PC** Double click the icon for your CD-ROM drive within Windows Explorer or from My Computer on the Desktop. A list of the contents of the CD-ROM will appear on your screen. Whilst holding down the 'CTRL' key on your keyboard drag both the 'Data' folder and the 'Start\_PC.exe' icon with the left mouse button to your desktop, or to a folder on your hard drive.

**Mac** Double click the icon labelled 'Phonics' on your desktop. A window of the contents of the CD-ROM will appear on your screen. Drag both the 'Data' folder and the 'Start\_Mac' icon to your desktop, or to a folder on your hard drive.

## To run the program

If you copied the contents of the CD-ROM onto your hard drive:  
Locate where you copied the 'Start\_PC.exe' icon (PC users) or 'Start\_Mac' icon (Mac users) to your hard drive.  
Double click the 'Start\_PC.exe' icon or 'Start\_Mac' (Mac users).

If you are running the CD-ROM from the CD-ROM drive:

**PC** Double click the icon for your CD-ROM drive within Windows Explorer or from My Computer on the Desktop. Double click the 'Start\_PC.exe' icon

**Mac** Double click the icon labelled 'Phonics' on your desktop. Double click the 'Start\_Mac' icon.

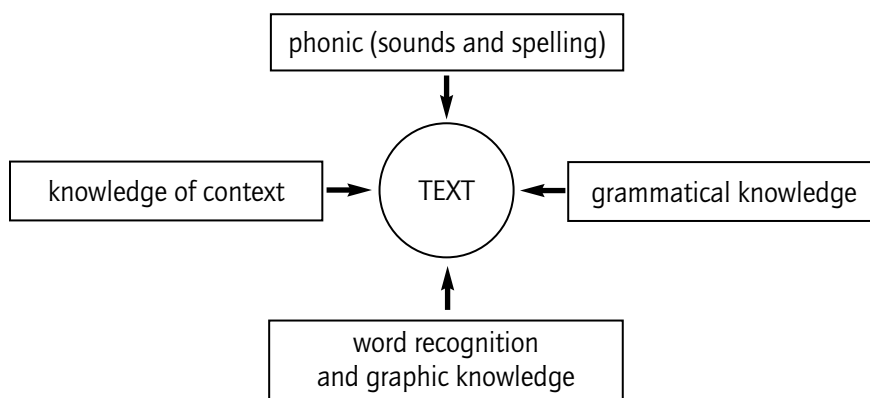
# Introduction

## 1. Rationale

It is widely accepted that successful reading depends on learning to use a range of strategies. The reader uses these as 'cues' to get to the meaning by predicting the text, checking and cross-checking, identifying and correcting errors. Reading is by no means a passive process; it involves searching, problem-solving, active prediction and an ability to bring past knowledge and experience to bear. This picture is familiar enough. It is built into the National Curriculum orders for reading, and forms the background against which successful literacy teaching has been developed over the past 10 years.

We can represent this as a set of searchlights, each shedding light on the text:

### The reading searchlights model



Successful teaching equips children with as many of these 'searchlights' as possible. Each sheds a partial light but, together, they make a mutually supporting system. The fewer the searchlights the reader can switch on, the more dependent he/she is on a single one and if that one should fail, the reader will be stuck. The more searchlights we can teach children to switch on simultaneously, the less they will need to rely on a single one and the less it will matter if one fades or goes out. Thus, successful reading is often described in terms of *maximising redundancy* i.e. having as much information available from as many searchlights for as much of the time as possible. As children learn to read, they need to be taught how to draw on all this knowledge and orchestrate it so that each searchlight or 'cue' is used to reinforce and check the others.

Most primary teachers understand the importance of teaching children to predict and check their reading by reference to the context and grammar of what they are reading. They need to check whether their reading makes sense and, if it does not, to re-check it, identify errors and try to correct them. These strategies are essential to comprehension. They also provide necessary support for learning to decode words i.e. to build them up from their spelling/sound patterns. The importance of comprehension has, rightly, been given much emphasis throughout the primary years. Comprehension must always be the primary purpose of reading. As pupils become more efficient decoders, the importance of context and grammar increase, so that by the time they reach Years 5 and 6, almost all the teaching of reading and writing should focus on the meaning and structure of texts.

This general model of reading strategies is well known but it is not straightforward for, depending on what is being read, some searchlights may be brighter than others. Where texts are familiar and predictable, children can often rely heavily on contextual and grammatical knowledge, paying relatively little attention to the sounds and spellings of words. They may make progress in the

early stages by reading and re-reading familiar texts. Because this story language and its context are predictable, children can get by with very limited phonic strategies and quickly become over-dependent on remembering or guessing their way through the text.

However, these young readers often meet problems later when faced with unfamiliar and more complex texts because they have learned to be over-dependent on contextual cues as the predominant strategy for reading. As the familiarity of the text diminishes, they need to rely more on their ability to decode individual words. This is a difficulty that often manifests itself early in Key Stage 2 in two ways. Firstly, too many pupils hit problems with more extended reading, and handling information and text-books needed to support work across the curriculum. Secondly, they have significant spelling problems because they have inadequate knowledge of the sound/spelling system. These problems, which need to be tackled in Key Stage 2, are often rooted in earlier work, where the need for systematic teaching of phonics, spelling and vocabulary can easily be obscured.

The National Literacy Strategy stresses the importance of teaching children to tackle texts from both ends, from the text 'down', so to speak, and from sounds and spellings 'up'. The balance is essential to get all the 'searchlights' switched on for pupils. It is reflected in the structure of the teaching objectives and in the structure of the Literacy Hour, where the class teaching time is organised to provide time both for working with shared texts and for the focused teaching of phonics and spelling.

### **The arbitrariness of the spelling system**

The importance of systematic teaching of phonics and spelling needs to be underlined, not least because it is often treated with suspicion. Young children do not learn to discriminate the sounds of words automatically. Still less do they automatically understand the common conventions for representing them in writing. This is a skill, tied to our particular way of writing our language, with 26 letters to represent the 44 phonemes. Not all languages are represented in this way. Japanese children, for example, do not need to break their spoken language down into phoneme/spelling patterns because it is not written alphabetically.

Much of our contemporary spelling system was simply decided upon by Dr Johnson when he regularised it in the first major dictionary. The way our language is represented is thus arbitrary and, for most children, very hard to 'discover'. Like learning to form letters correctly or learning the correct fingering for the recorder, these things need to be taught. Some children might work them out for themselves and others will certainly learn from home or through other means but many will either fail to learn or will misconstrue the rules. Just like incorrect letter formation these misconstructions are very difficult to 'unlearn' or correct later.

Most beginning readers will have, at best, only limited knowledge of how spelling patterns are used to represent words. The alphabetic nature of our spelling system does not reveal itself to children simply through repeated exposure to books. Beginning readers are likely to treat written words as images, each differentiated by its overall shape and pattern, rather than as letter strings corresponding to sounds. It is essential, therefore, that children learn from the outset that: words have to be 'spelt', not merely 'drawn', that they are composed of letters set out in particular combinations to correspond with spoken sounds, and which letter combinations correspond with which sounds.

### **The power and economy of the spelling system**

It is worth reflecting on the fact that everything that is said or written in contemporary English is encoded in approximately 44 sounds (phonemes) and

represented by 26 letters in about 140 letter combinations. The power and economy of such a representational system is second to none. The phonic work in the NLS Framework is built around this basically simple idea. Children should learn to identify the phonemes in their spoken language and learn how each of these phonemes is commonly spelt. Some phonemes will correspond to a single letter while others, for example the long vowel phonemes, will have several common spellings using one or more letters. Through phonics, we should be teaching children to:

- ◆ identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness);
- ◆ recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme–grapheme correspondence);
- ◆ blend phonemes into words for reading;
- ◆ segment words into phonemes for spelling.

This systematic teaching gives children the essential key to the writing code and moves them a long way into fluent reading by enabling them to recognise words by their common spelling patterns.

It also greatly facilitates their independent writing by providing the basic rules for most regularly spelt words. In writing, of course, children need to select the appropriate spelling from a range of phonologically 'logical' options to encode words (e.g. 'chews' instead of 'choose' or 'chuse'). Teachers should therefore expect an early growth of autonomy in writing together with a rapid growth in the proportion of correctly spelt simple words or 'logical' errors and an equally rapid decrease in random spelling errors. As children move through KS1 to KS2, the emphasis in the teaching objectives shifts from the teaching of phonics for reading to more focused teaching of spelling strategies, conventions and rules, to build upon the children's established phonic knowledge.

## 2. What the evidence tells us about teaching of phonics

The NLS is based on a detailed scrutiny of research and its implications for classroom teaching. It also draws heavily on the past decade of inspection evidence from Ofsted and from evidence of successful teaching in primary schools in the UK and abroad. From all this evidence it is clear that:

- ◆ traditional approaches to phonics instruction i.e. teaching the sounds that match letters and letter combinations is inefficient and often confusing because of the many hundreds of correspondences involved. The most effective phonics instruction teaches children to identify phonemes in spoken language first, then to understand how these are represented by letters and letter combinations (graphemes);
- ◆ phonemic awareness (i.e. the ability to segment and blend phonemes), linked to knowledge of the letter–sound correspondences is a very strong predictor of reading and spelling success. Where this is systematically taught, most children score well on tests of reading and spelling ability;
- ◆ phonics can be taught in appropriate and motivating ways and that where it is engaging and enjoyable children will learn it more effectively;
- ◆ if children are left to guess or invent the alphabetic code without direct and systematic teaching, their progress is likely to be inhibited and the likelihood of failure for a substantial number of children is increased;
- ◆ children can learn this early and fast i.e. most of it by the end of Year 1 and there are substantial benefits in early reading facility and writing confidence when this learning is accomplished without delay;
- ◆ a further major benefit of this early learning is that it releases mental capacity for attention to higher order skills of comprehension and composition with consequences for the early growth of competence e.g. through access to print, vocabulary growth and decontextualised thinking.

### 3. What the NLS framework says about the teaching of phonics

The NLS gives a clear priority to the teaching of phonemic awareness tied closely to knowledge of the sound-spelling relationships and to the teaching of correct letter formation. The NLS Framework is absolutely clear that at KS1 there should be a strong emphasis on the systematic teaching of phonics. The underpinning principles, set out in Section 1 of the Framework, are that pupils should be taught to:

- ◆ discriminate between the separate sounds in words;
- ◆ learn the letters and letter combinations most commonly used to represent these sounds;
- ◆ read words by sounding out and blending the separate phonemes;
- ◆ spell words by segmenting the phonemes and using their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to represent the phonemes.

In the Reception year (YR) the Framework expects all children to be able to:

- ◆ hear and identify initial, final and dominant sounds in words;
- ◆ read the letters that represent those sounds for all letters a-z plus ch, sh and th;
- ◆ write each letter in response to each sound;
- ◆ identify and write initial and final phonemes in CVC words.

In Year 1, i.e. from statutory school age, the NLS expects children to:

- ◆ discriminate all three phonemes in CVC words, to blend phonemes into words for reading and to segment words into phonemes for spelling;
- ◆ to spell the three phonemes in CVC words;
- ◆ to do the same for CCVC and CVCC words;
- ◆ to learn the common alternative spellings of 'long' vowel phonemes.

Phonics can and should be taught in interesting and active ways that engage young children's attention, and that are relevant to their interests and build on their experiences. There are good grounds for expecting children to learn these basic decoding and encoding skills rapidly. Fifteen minutes a day of regular teaching will enable most children to understand most of the key objectives in about four terms. This should ensure that the essential skills, knowledge and understanding are established by the start of Y2, and enable teachers to move children rapidly into independent reading and writing. By the end of Year 1 the teaching of phonics should be substantially accomplished with a small number of alternative vowel phoneme spellings that may need further teaching.

### 4. Phonic skills, knowledge and understanding

Phonics consists of the skills of segmentation and blending, knowledge of the alphabetic code and understanding of the principles which underpin how the code is used in reading and spelling.

#### **Segmentation and blending**

*Segmentation* means hearing the individual phonemes within a word; for instance the word 'crash' comprises four phonemes – 'c-r-a-sh'. In order to spell, a child must segment a word into its component phonemes and choose a letter or letter combination (e.g. 'sh') to represent each phoneme.

*Blending* means merging phonemes together to pronounce a word. In order to read an unfamiliar word phonemically, a child must attribute a phoneme to each letter or letter combination in the word and then merge the phonemes together to pronounce the word.



## The alphabetic code

The phonemic system is a system of sounds represented by letters or combinations of letters. Starting from phonemes and learning the letters which can be used to represent them is a logical approach to mastering the alphabetic code. There are four principles underlying the phonemic system.

◆ **Sounds/phonemes are represented by letters**

◆ **A phoneme can be represented by one or more letters.**

There is not a simple one-to-one correspondence in our alphabetic code. There are not enough letters to represent all the phonemes so some are used in combination such as sh, th, ee etc.

◆ **The same phoneme can be represented/spelled in more than one way.**

This is very common particularly among the vowels, for instance, rain, may, lake. On the surface this appears to present problems in spelling accuracy but in fact most vowel spellings have a particular position in words either at the end (ay) or preceding a consonant (ai). Even the spellings which appear interchangeable e.g. ai and a-e are more often than not associated with particular consonants. For instance, words ending in -ake and -ate are common; those ending in -aik and -ait, rare.

◆ **The same spelling may represent more than one sound.**

Examples of this are the ea in mean and deaf, the ow in crown and flow, the ie in field and tried. So, in theory there could be two pronunciations for the word 'tried'. On the whole this does not present a problem for the reader as one pronunciation results in a word and the other does not. Where two words have the same spelling such as 'read' (present tense) and 'read' (past tense), the sense of the text guides the reader to the correct pronunciation.

To sum up, there are approximately 44 phonemes in English represented by 26 letters in about 140 combinations. The consonant and vowel phonemes and their most common representations are listed below:

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### Vowel phonemes and their more usual graphemic representations

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vowels	representative words	vowels	representative words
/a/	cat	/oo/	look, would, put
/e/	peg, bread	/ar/	cart, fast ( <i>regional</i> )
/i/	pig, wanted	/ur/	burn, first, term, heard, work
/o/	log, want	/or/	torn, door, warn ( <i>regional</i> )
/u/	plug, love	/au/	haul, law, call
/ae/	pain, day, gate, station	/er/	wooden, circus, sister
/ee/	sweet, heat, thief, these	/ow/	down, shout
/ie/	tried, light, my, shine, mind	/oi/	coin, boy
/oe/	road, blow, bone, cold	/air/	stairs, bear, hare
/ue/	moon, blue, grew, tune	/ear/	fear, beer, here

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**Note:** phonemes are shown between slashes / /

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## Consonant phonemes and their more usual graphemic representations

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consonant phonemes	representative words	consonant phonemes	representative words
/b/	<b>b</b> aby	/s/	<b>s</b> un, mouse, <b>c</b> ity, <b>sc</b> ience
/d/	<b>d</b> og	/t/	<b>t</b> ap
/f/	<b>f</b> ield, <b>ph</b> oto	/v/	<b>v</b> an
/g/	<b>g</b> ame	/w/	<b>w</b> as
/h/	<b>h</b> at	/wh/	<b>wh</b> ere (regional)
/j/	<b>j</b> udge, <b>g</b> iant, barge	/y/	<b>y</b> es
/k/	<b>c</b> ook, <b>qu</b> ick, mix, <b>Ch</b> ris	/z/	zebra, please, <b>i</b> s
/l/	<b>l</b> amb	/th/	<b>th</b> en
/m/	<b>m</b> onkey, <b>comb</b>	/th/	<b>th</b> in
/n/	<b>n</b> ut, <b>kn</b> ife, <b>gn</b> at	/ch/	<b>ch</b> ip, watch
/p/	<b>p</b> aper	/sh/	<b>sh</b> ip, mission, <b>ch</b> ef
/r/	<b>r</b> abbit, <b>w</b> rong	/zh/	treasure
		/ng/	<b>ring</b> , sink

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### Teaching phonics

Children should become proficient in applying the skills of segmenting and blending to the alphabetic code in order to spell and read. The skills and knowledge can be acquired simultaneously so that as children are learning the earliest steps in segmentation (hearing the phoneme in the initial and final position in a word) they will be learning some of the letters which represent those phonemes. Learning to hear the medial vowels and the letters which represent them allow children to segment words for spelling and blend words for reading. The following is a suggested progression for learning the phonic skills and knowledge:

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### Progression in phonic skills and knowledge

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Step	skill in:	knowledge of letters:
1	hearing and discriminating general sounds, speech sounds and patterns	
2	hearing phonemes /s/, /m/, /k/, /t/, /g/, /h/, in initial position	s, m, c, t, g, h
3	hearing phonemes /s/, /m/, /k/, /t/, /g/, in final position	ss, ck, l, n, d, k, sh, ch
4	♦ hearing phonemes /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, in medial position; ♦ CVC blending and segmenting, reading and spelling	a, e, i, o, u, f, qu, b, r, j, p, th, ng
5	C(C)V(C)C blending and segmenting, reading and spelling	v, w, x, y, z
6	CVC blending and segmenting, reading and spelling	ai, ee, ie, oa, oo, or, ir, oi, ou
7	CVC blending and segmenting, reading and spelling	ay, a-e, ea, igh, y, i-e, ow, o-e, oe, ew, ue, u-e, oy, ow, er, ur, aw, air, ear, oo

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## 5. Teaching phonics in the literacy hour

Throughout KS1, phonics should be the main focus of the 15-minute word level slot in the Literacy Hour. Other word level objectives can be met in the context of shared and guided reading activities but this is not the case with the focused teaching of phonics. Much of this teaching will need to be done away from texts through direct teaching using activities of the kind shown in this booklet. Although the structure of the phonic code can sometimes be revealed through poems and word-play texts, in most texts phonic patterning occurs too randomly to be discerned. Most good quality stories, for example, in Big Books, will not repeat sound patterns with sufficient regularity to serve this purpose. Most focused phonics teaching should therefore be done through play, games and activities and then *applied* alongside other reading cues to meaningful reading of appropriately matched, good quality texts in other parts of the Literacy Hour, particularly in shared and guided sessions with the teacher.

Although much of this teaching will necessarily be taught away from the text, it should relate to texts in three important ways:

- ◆ by using particular words from texts as starting points for instruction and investigation;
- ◆ by using patterned texts which exemplify particular phonemic structures e.g. rhyming, alliterative, assonant, onomatopoeic patterns;
- ◆ most importantly, through the application of phonic strategies to texts in shared and guided reading.

In shared and guided reading you should teach children to check that words they have decoded make sense and if they do not, to re-check them against their own vocabulary knowledge. In addition, by decoding unknown words and checking them back against grammar and context, or asking what they mean, children also extend word knowledge rapidly. You should demonstrate these processes of reading, checking for sense and re-reading through Shared Reading and teach them as independent strategies in Guided Reading. When reading, children will also encounter words which they cannot decode either because they are too difficult or, as in a few cases, ambiguous\*. They may, nevertheless, be able to read them by predicting from grammar and context using minimal phonic knowledge. When this happens, teach them to re-visit the word and check out its spelling. This will reinforce their decoding skills and help them learn new or alternative spellings.

### Using texts

When choosing texts for shared and Guided Reading, you need to consider opportunities to model and practise the phonic skills that you have been teaching (e.g. CVC, CCVC words etc.). The text should provide an appropriate level of challenge but one which enables children to apply their new knowledge successfully. The books should always have a sensible grammatical structure and a lively and interesting content to engage and support the learning.

### Teaching the other elements in the word level objectives

#### *High frequency words*

The high frequency words listed in the back of the Framework are not intended to be taught by rote. They are included because they represent a high proportion of the words children are likely to meet in the early stages of reading. Many of these words are phonically regular and thus perfectly decodable. A proportion are irregular and will need to be taught as 'tricky' words'. You should use this list as a checklist to ensure that all the regular words can be decoded, as children learn the relevant phonic skills. You should teach children to recognise the other words as they encounter them in Shared and Guided Reading.

\* A few spelling patterns represent more than one phoneme e.g. ow as in grown and town. They are easily clarified by referring to whether the word makes sense in terms of its place in the sentence or as part of the text.

***Handwriting***

Make use of opportunities in your 15-minute phonic sessions to demonstrate and emphasise correct letter formation but don't allow this to deflect you from the main purpose of the phonic teaching. You will need to find other times outside the Hour to concentrate on teaching and practising handwriting.

# About this book

This book outlines progression in teaching and learning phonics in seven steps which are linked to the objectives in the National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching. Activities for whole-class teaching are suggested for each step and instructions and materials for these activities are provided so that phonics may be taught in a lively, interesting and interactive manner.

step	skill	knowledge of
1	hearing and discriminating general sounds, speech sounds and patterns	
2	hearing phoneme in initial position	simple letter–sound correspondences and some consonant digraphs, e.g. ch, ll, ck, ng
3	hearing phoneme in final position	
4	CVC segmenting and blending	
5	CCVC segmenting and blending	
6 & 7	CVC segmenting and blending	vowel digraphs and trigraphs

Steps 1 and 2 occur throughout nursery and into the first term in Reception. Children who have no nursery experience may need an accelerated Step 1 at the beginning of Reception. When children can hear phonemes in initial position and have acquired some letter–sound correspondences (Step 2) they have achieved a launching pad from which it is possible to timetable future learning in phonics for the majority of children. A suggested time allocation for Steps 3–6 is included in the chart on pages 14–15. It is not possible to give such a clear indication in Step 7. Children might take about 5 weeks to acquire the rest of the vowel digraphs and trigraphs for reading. They will take longer to be secure in spelling.

## Teaching

The earliest step (Step 1) outlines the activities which nursery and young Reception children do which positively influence their later ability to learn phonics.

Steps 2–7 define learning objectives and the activities are divided into three sections:

- 1 hearing and saying,
- 2 identifying phonemes and spelling,
- 3 recognising letters and reading.

A range of activities is suggested for each of these sections in each step. It is not necessary to do all the activities, but some from each of the three sections should be included so that children have experience in the aural/oral skills of segmenting and blending, as well as learning the phoneme–grapheme correspondences and combining all of these in reading and spelling.

## The activities

The activities in this book are designed for use in the 15-minute section of the Literacy Hour devoted to phonics. To provide variety for the children there are three sorts of teaching activity:

**Demonstration (D)** in which the teacher either demonstrates/models to the class or manages an activity, perhaps by manipulating a puppet,

**Show me (S)** in which all the children are expected to answer using a mechanism such as fan or whiteboard while they remain seated,

**Get up and go (G)** in which many of the children, sometimes all, move from their places in order to respond to the teacher's questions.

In each of the three sections try to provide variety for the children by choosing at least one **Demonstration** activity, one **Show me** and one **Get up and go**. On most days there will be time to carry out two activities. As the children get used to those activities which can be repeated at a number of different steps, it will be possible to include three activities within the time.

For 15 minutes in the Literacy Hour children can practise the skills and learn new phonic knowledge in a stimulating and interactive manner. It is important, however, that these skills are not isolated from reading and writing. In Shared and Guided Reading and Writing children use the skills acquired in these 15 minutes when they orchestrate the reading or spelling strategies. Opportunities should be given for children to practise reading the types of words CVC, CCVC etc during shared and guided reading, which they are learning in the 15 minutes allowed for phonics. For a class at Step 4, texts which include unfamiliar CVC words, for example, should be chosen for both shared and guided reading so that children may be given the opportunity to learn how their new skill of blending CVC words operates in the process of reading. Similarly in shared writing, children can contribute words which they can spell and should be expected, in their independent writing, to spell such words correctly.

## Teaching points

### ***Differentiation***

The activities in this book are designed for the whole class. Experience has shown that even where there are differences in the children's ability most children learn from them. Providing different oral questions for children who are not quite at the stage of the majority, and for those for whom the activity is 'surplus to requirements', is dependent on teachers knowing the phonemic ability of all the children in their classes. Developing this skill will be the subject of future materials.

### ***Handwriting***

The activities in this book are organised so that practising handwriting the letters which are being learned within the hour can take place outside the hour itself.

### ***Pronouncing phonemes***

There is a list of the phonemes in the English language on pages 5 and 6. Some consonants are difficult to pronounce without adding an extra sound, e.g. b, d and g tend to emerge as buh, duh and guh. Try to reduce this extra sound as much as possible. The letters c as in cat, p and t should be pronounced without the voice, just using air. Almost all others can be pronounced as continuing sounds, e.g. ssssss, fffffff, mmmmm, nnnnn, shshshsh.

### ***Recommended phrases***

Identification and writing:

'How can we write/show/spell/represent this phoneme (sound)?'

Recognition and reading:

'What sound/phoneme can this/these letter(s) represent?' or

'Tell/give me a sound/phoneme for this/these letter(s).'

Children love using technical words. The word 'phoneme' is more specific than the word 'sound'.

### *Classroom assistants*

These activities are designed to be managed by the class teacher alone. However, in YR and Y1, classroom assistants are often available during the Literacy Hour. Their role during the whole-class teaching in phonics is immensely useful.

They can:

- ◆ join in and keep the pace up;
- ◆ model responses;
- ◆ run the activity side by side with the teacher (e.g. in rhyme generation, two adults writing words are quicker than one);
- ◆ ask a searching question if he/she thinks some children haven't quite understood;
- ◆ note which children appear secure in their knowledge and which are not;
- ◆ support an individual child;
- ◆ take notes of individuals, or observe a teaching strategy to prepare for a similar session with a smaller group who need additional help.

# Step 1

Much activity in early years' settings prepares children for 'phonics': listening to stories and joining in with sound effects, music, rhythm and rhyme, dancing, PE. We can capitalise on activities which may be designed for other purposes in order to get children to *really* listen and to discriminate between sounds. Early phonics consists of general sound discrimination, speech sound discrimination, rhythm and rhyme and alliteration (playing with words which start with the same phoneme).

## General sound discrimination

Play a variety of games where children listen to sounds and guess what they are.

### *Environmental*

- ◆ Can children recognise particular sounds inside and outside the room: sounds such as vehicles, birds singing, animal sounds, other children/adults speaking, and machines? (The song 'Listen, children' from *Bobby Shaftoe, Clap Your Hands* Sue Nicholls, A & C Black 1992, is a perfect vehicle for this idea.)
- ◆ Listen to everyday sounds made behind a screen such as water being poured, splashed, shaken in a bottle, or paper being torn, screwed up, flapped.

### *Instrumental*

- ◆ Can children recognise the difference between a shaker and a drum? To find out, let one child play an instrument whilst hiding behind the screen and ask the other children to guess which instrument is being played. Whichever instruments are hidden, have a matching set in front of the children to aid their identification of the sound. Let the guessing child play the matching instrument to confirm the guess.
- ◆ Extend the game by singing a song, e.g. 'One sound can be heard' from *Bobby Shaftoe, Clap Your Hands* whilst the hiding child plays his or her instrument. This time the listening children have to concentrate very carefully, discriminating between their own singing and the instrument being played.

### *Body percussion*

- ◆ Sing songs in which children have to add claps, knee pats, foot stamps or move in some way. Play the hiding game described above with children using body percussion instead of playing instruments.
- ◆ Add body percussion sounds to nursery rhymes, performing the sounds in time to the beat. Change the body sound with each musical phrase or sentence.
- ◆ Encourage the children to be attentive and to know when to add sounds, or move and when to be silent or still.

### *Rhythm*

- ◆ Sing or chant nursery rhymes and encourage the children to move in an appropriate way, e.g. rock gently to the beat of *See Saw Marjorie Dore*, *Bye Baby Bunting*; march to the beat of *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* and *The Grand old Duke of York*; skip to the beat of *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*.

## Speech sound discrimination

- ◆ Play games where children use their voices in different ways and explore a variety of sounds.
- ◆ Give opportunities for children to discriminate between the different voices they have when singing, speaking, shouting, whispering, growling, squeaking, being silly, etc.
- ◆ Perform chants using the different types of voices.
- ◆ Play the hiding game with different children using their different voices. Can the listeners guess who it is?



- ◆ Create opportunities for children to explore other sounds that they can make with their voices:
  - Make your voice go down a slide – Wheee!
  - Make your voice bounce like a ball – Boing, Boing. (Let them show you with their hands too.)
  - Find out someone has been telling tales – aw.
  - Sound really disappointed – oh.
  - Look astonished – ooooooo!
  - Relax into a chair like an old man – ahahahahaha, or shout in terror – ahahahahah!
  - Hiss like a snake – ssssssssss.
  - Keep everyone quiet: shshshshsh, or be a steam train coming to a halt – ch-ch-ch-ch-shshshshshshsh.
  - Gently moo like a cow – mmmmmmmm.
  - Be an old woman who is hard of hearing – e . . . e . . . e.

You can concoct sounds that suggest all the phonemes in the language.

- ◆ Use picture cards of animals. As each card is held up ask the children to make the sound of the animal with their voices.
- ◆ Put the animal cards into an order and create an 'animal chain' of sounds.
- ◆ Pass small toy animals around the circle, singing 'pass the animals round and round' to the tune of *London Bridge is Falling Down*. When the singing stops, the leader asks 'Who has got rabbit/dog/pig?' and the child with that animal has to make the appropriate animal sound.
- ◆ Encourage children to use voices or instruments to add sounds to stories such as *Bear Hunt*, or make up stories with the children about their favourite animals and then add sounds.

## Rhythm and rhyme

As children chant and sing rhymes, skipping to the beat, they gradually acquire a repertoire of rhymes and they start to imitate. They might talk to their toys: 'eensy-weensy'; ]munching wunching'. They do this because they like the sound or feel of the sound on their tongues. They could not, at this stage, do it to order. For reading and spelling, children need to be able to recognise when two words rhyme and produce a rhyming string of words. There is a lot we can do to increase children's conscious awareness of rhyme, for example changing the words of a well known rhyme; making up rhyming couplets and leaving the final word for children to supply (there is a good illustration of this in the *NLS Training Pack module 2 video* in Gordon's reception class); playing rhyme tennis; matching objects which rhyme; and finding the odd-one-out – the word which doesn't rhyme in a group of three. When children can supply a list of rhyming words and non-words, after being given a start, they can be considered to be well on the way to grasping rhyme, e.g. adult says cat, mat sat. . . and the child continues fat, pat, mat, rat, hat etc. However, children may well be into Step 2 of this progression of activities before they can do this.

## Alliteration

Singing rhymes and songs which have alliterative lines such as *Sing a Song of Sixpence* and playing with jingles (e.g. Can you count the candles on the cake?) or tongue-twisters, help to tune children's ears to the relationships between the sound structures of words. Ultimately children need to be able to isolate the initial phoneme from the rest of the word, e.g. to be able to say that 'sausage' begins with 's'. This is the learning objective of Step 2, but has its roots firmly in Step 1.

Step 2	Activities	Learning Objectives	Type	Page	PCM
<p><b>NLS Framework references</b> YR: 1b, 2a, 2b, 2d, 4c</p> <p>Learning objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to be able to continue a rhyming string</li> <li>to hear and say phonemes /s/, /m/, /k/, /t/, /g/, /h/ in initial position</li> <li>to know phoneme-grapheme correspondences: s, m, c, t, g, h</li> </ol> <p>Time scale: not possible to determine</p>	<p><b>Hearing and saying</b> Jingles Pebble Game Tray Game Match Me Circle Swap Shop Jump in the Hoop</p> <p><b>Identifying phonemes and writing</b> Letter Formation Which of Two (or more)? NSEW</p> <p><b>Recognising letters and reading</b> Mood Sounds Flashcards Sock Puppets Noisy Letters</p>	2	D	18	–
		1	S	18	–
		2	S	18	–
		2	S	20	–
		2	G	20	–
		2	G	21	–
		2	D/S	21	–
		2/3	S	23	3
		2/3	G	24	5–35
		3	D	21	–
		3	D	25	36–52
		3	D/S	25	–
		3	G	25	36–52

Step 3	Activities	Learning Objectives	Type	Page	PCM
<p><b>NLS Framework references</b> YR: 1b, 1c, 2e</p> <p>Learning objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to hear and say phonemes in final position</li> <li>to consolidate previously learned phoneme-grapheme correspondences recognising that some alter in final position, e.g. ss, ck</li> <li>to know more phoneme-grapheme correspondences: l, n, d, k, sh, ch</li> </ol> <p>Time scale: 2–3 weeks</p>	<p><b>Hearing and saying</b> Tray Game Circle Swap Shop Croaker Alien Game</p> <p><b>Identifying phonemes and writing</b> Letter Formation NSEW Finish It</p> <p><b>Recognising letters and reading</b> Flashcards Sock Puppets Noisy Letters</p>	1	S	18	–
		1	G	20	–
		1	D	26	–
		1	D	27	–
		2/3	D/S	21	–
		1/2/3	G	24	5–35
		1/2/3	S	27	–
		3	D	25	36–52
		3	D/S	25	–
		3	G	25	36–52

Step 4	Activities	Learning Objectives	Type	Page	PCM
<p><b>NLS Framework references</b> YR: 2b, 2c, 2e, 4c Y1 T1: 4, 5, 6</p> <p>Learning objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to hear and say phonemes in medial position (/a/, /e/, /l/, /o/, /u/)</li> <li>to know more phoneme-grapheme correspondences (a, e, i, o, u and f, qu, b, r, j, p, th, ng)</li> <li>to segment to spell CVC words</li> <li>to blend to read CVC words</li> </ol> <p>Time scale: 5–6 weeks</p>	<p><b>Hearing and saying</b> Croaker Match Me Circle Swap Shop</p> <p><b>Identifying phonemes and writing</b> Letter Formation Phoneme Frame Which of Two (or more)? Quickwrite Fans Full Circle Game Washing Line</p> <p><b>Recognising letters and reading</b> Flashcards Sock Puppets Sound Buttons Cube Game Silly Questions Phoneme Count Bingo</p>	1	D	20	–
		1	S	20	–
		1	G	26	–
		2	D/S	21	–
		3	D/S	22	1 & 2
		1/2	S	23	3 & 4
		2/3	S	24	1 & 2
		2/3	S	28	53–5
		2/3	G	29	5–35
		2/3	G	33	–
		2	D	25	36–52
		2	D/S	25	–
		2/4	D	30	–
		2/4	G	30	–
		2/4	S	31	64–70
		2/4	G	32	93–5
		1/4	D	33	108 & 109

Type means type of activity Demonstration, Show me or Get up and go  
Page is the page number where the instructions for the game are given  
PCM shows the pages of the photocopy masters related to the activity

PROGRESSION IN PHONICS

Step 5	Activities	Learning Objectives	Type	Page	PCM
<p><b>NLS Framework references</b> YR:1 2b, 2c Y1 T2: 3</p> <p>Learning objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to hear phonemes within consonant clusters</li> <li>to know more phoneme-grapheme correspondences (v, w, x, y, z)</li> <li>to segment to spell words containing consonant clusters in initial position (CCVC) and final position (CVCC)</li> <li>to blend to read words containing consonant clusters in initial position (CCVC) and final position (CVCC)</li> </ol> <p>Time scale: 3–4 weeks</p>	<p><b>Hearing and saying</b> Croaker</p>	1	D	26	–
	<p><b>Identifying phonemes and writing</b> Letter Formation</p>	2	D/S	21	–
	Phoneme Frame	3	D/S	22	1 & 2
	Which of Two (or more)?	3	S	23	3 & 4
	Quickwrite	3	S	24	1 & 2
	Fans	3	S	28	56 & 57
	Full Circle Game	3	G	29	5–35
	Washing Line	3	G	33	–
	<p><b>Recognising letters and reading</b> Flashcards</p>	2	D	25	36–52
	Sock Puppets	2	D/S	25	–
	Sound Buttons	4	D	30	–
	Cube Game	4	G	30	–
	Silly Questions	4	S	31	71–7
	Phoneme Count	4	G	32	96–101
	Bingo	1/4	D	33	110–13

Step 6	Activities	Learning Objectives	Type	Page	PCM
<p><b>NLS Framework references</b> Y1 T3: 1 Y2 T1: 1,2,3</p> <p>Learning objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to know one representation of each of ten vowel phonemes (digraphs ai, ee, ie, oa, oo, or, ar, ir, oi, ou)</li> <li>to segment to spell words containing vowel phonemes represented by more than one letter</li> <li>to blend to read words containing vowel phonemes represented by more than one letter</li> </ol> <p>Time scale: 3–4 weeks</p>	<p><b>Identifying phonemes and writing</b> Phoneme Frame</p>	1/2	D/S	22	1&2
	Quickwrite	1/2	S	24	1 & 2
	Fans	1/2	S	28	58–62
	Full Circle Game	1/2	G	29	5–35
	<p><b>Recognising letters and reading</b> Flashcards</p>	1/3	D	25	36–52
	Sound Buttons	1/3	D	30	–
	Silly Questions	1/3	S	31	78–84
	Washing Line	1/3	G	33	–

Step 7	Activities	Learning Objectives	Type	Page	PCM
<p><b>NLS Framework references</b> Y1 T3: 1 Y2 T1: 1,2,3,4 T2: 1,2 T3: 1,3</p> <p>Learning objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to segment to spell words containing vowel digraphs and trigraphs (ay, a–e, ea, igh, y, i–e, o–e, oe, ew, ue, u–e, oy, ow, er, ur, aw, air, ear, oo)</li> <li>to blend to read words containing the same vowel digraphs and trigraphs</li> </ol> <p>Time scale: not possible to determine</p>	<p><b>Identifying phonemes and writing</b> Phoneme Frame</p>	1	D/S	22	1 & 2
	Quickwrite	1	D	24	1 & 2
	Full Circle Game	1	D	29	5–35
	Rhyming Word Generation and Word Sort	1	S	34	–
	Split Digraph	1	G	36	5–35
	<p><b>Recognising letters and reading</b> Flashcards</p>	2	D	25	36–52
	Sound Buttons	2	D	30	–
	Cube Game	2	G	30	–
	Silly Questions	2	S	31	85–91
	Phoneme Count	2	G	32	102–7
	Washing Line	2	G	33	–
	Bingo	2	D	33	114–23



## Phonic activities at each Step

<b>Game</b>	<b>Steps</b>						
Jingles	2						
Pebble Game	2						
Tray Game	2	3					
Match Me	2	4					
Circle Swap Shop	2	3	4				
Mood Sounds	2						
Jump in the Hoop	2						
Letter Formation	2	3	4	5			
Phoneme Frame	4	5	6	7			
Which of Two (or more)?	2	4	5				
Quickwrite	4	5	6	7			
NSEW	2	3					
Flashcards	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sock Puppets	2	3	4	5			
Noisy Letters	2	3					
Croaker	3	4	5				
Alien Game	3						
Finish It	3						
Fans	4	5	6				
Full Circle Game	4	5	6	7			
Sound Buttons	4	5	6	7			
Cube Game	4	5	7				
Silly Questions	4	5	6	7			
Phoneme Count	4	5	7				
Washing Line	4	5	6	7			
Bingo	4	5	7				
Rhyming Word Generation and Word Sort	7						
Split Digraph	7						