

An Introduction to Twinkl Phonics

for Parents and Carers

Here is some of the terminology you might hear as your child begins to learn phonics.

Phoneme - the smallest unit of sound in words

Grapheme - the written representation of a sound

GPC (Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence) - being able to match a phoneme with the correct grapheme and vice versa

Blending - joining individual speech sounds together to read a word

Segmenting - breaking down words into individual speech sounds to spell a word

Digraph - two letters making one sound, e.g. 'sh'

Trigraph - three letters making one sound, e.g. 'igh'

Split digraph - two letters making one sound which are divided by a consonant, e.g. the i_e sound in the word 'side'

Tricky/Common Exception Words - words that are not fully decodable, such as 'the' and 'was'

Sound buttons - circles or spots that can be written underneath a sound to support reading

Sound bars - lines that can be written underneath digraphs or trigraphs to show that the letters make one sound

Mnemonic - a visual prompt to help children remember a sound

What is Synthetic Phonics?

- Synthetic phonics is a method of teaching reading and writing in which words are broken up into their smallest units of sound or 'phonemes'.
- Children learn to associate a written letter or group of letters, known as 'graphemes', with each phoneme.
- Sounds are then joined or 'blended' together into words for reading or, conversely, whole words are broken down or 'segmented' into their sounds for writing.
- It is the UK's most preferred method of teaching phonics.
- Sounds are taught in a prescribed order starting with s, a, t, p, i, n, as this allows for the most words to be made from the start. Such as 'sat,' 'tap' and 'pin.'



What Is Taught and When?

Twinkl Phonics Level	Number of Teaching Weeks	Recommended Year Group (UK schools)	Age of Children
Level 1	36	nursery/preschool	3-4 years
Level 2	7	reception	4-5 years
Level 3	12	reception	4-5 years
Level 4	5	reception	4-5 years
Level 5	30	year 1	5-6 years
Level 6	30	year 2	6-7 years

Level 1:

By the end of Level 1, children will have had opportunities to:

- listen attentively;
- enlarge their vocabulary;
- speak confidently to adults and other children;
- discriminate different sounds including phonemes;
- reproduce audibly the phonemes they hear in words;
- orally segment words into phonemes.

These learning opportunities are presented through 7 Aspects.



Level 2:

By the end of Level 2, children will have had opportunities to:

- identify the phoneme when shown any Level 2 grapheme;
- identify any Level 2 grapheme when they hear the phoneme;
- orally blend and segment CVC words, such as 'sat' and 'pat';
- blend sounds to read VC words, such as 'if', 'am', 'on' and 'up';
- segment VC words into their sounds to spell them (using magnetic letters);
- read the tricky words (words that cannot be sounded out): the, to, I, no, go.



Level 3:

By the end of Level 3, children will have had opportunities to:

- say the phoneme when shown all or most Level 2 and Level 3 graphemes;
- find all or most Level 2 and Level 3 graphemes, from a display, when given the phoneme;
- blend and read CVC words (single-syllable words, consisting of three Level 2 and Level 3 graphemes) such as 'chop' and 'night';
- segment and make phonetically plausible attempts at spelling CVC words (single-syllable words, consisting of three Level 2 and Level 3 graphemes) such as 'paid' and 'seed';
- read the tricky words - he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are & spell the tricky words - the, to, I, no, go;
- write each letter correctly when following a model.

Level 4:

By the end of Level 4, children will have had opportunities to:

- give the phoneme when shown any Level 2 or Level 3 grapheme;
- find any Level 2 or Level 3 grapheme when given the phoneme;
- blend and read words containing adjacent consonants, as well as segment and spell words containing adjacent consonants, such as 'sand', 'bench' and 'flight';
- read the tricky words - some, one, said, come, do, so, were, when, have, there, out, like, little, what & spell the tricky words - he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, here, they, all, are;
- write each letter, usually using the correct formation;
- orally segment words into phonemes.

No new sounds are taught in Level 4.

Level 5:

By the end of Level 5, children will have had opportunities to:

- give the phoneme, when shown any grapheme that has been taught;
- for any given phoneme, write the common graphemes;
- apply phonics knowledge and skills as the primary approach to reading and spelling unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable;
- read and spell phonically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words, such as 'dolphin' and 'fantastic'
- read automatically all taught tricky and common exception words;
- accurately spell all the Level 2, 3 and 4 tricky words and most of the common exception words for reading;
- form each letter correctly;
- use alternative ways of pronouncing and representing the long vowel phonemes, e.g. 'ea' in 'beak', 'ee' in 'seed' and 'y' in 'happy'.

Level 6:

By the end of Level 6, children will have had opportunities to:

- read accurately most words of two or more syllables;
- read most words containing common suffixes;
- read most common exception words;
- read most words accurately, in age-appropriate books, without overt sounding and blending, fluent enough to allow them to focus on their understanding rather than on decoding individual words;
- sound out most unfamiliar words accurately, without undue hesitation;
- segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes, spelling many of these words correctly and making phonetically plausible attempts at others;
- spell most common exception words correctly.

At this stage, children can read hundreds of words automatically. They are now reading for pleasure and reading to learn, rather than learning to read.

Year 1 Phonics Screening 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. (Nonsense words can also be referred to as 'pseudo' or 'alien' words.)

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

Children who have not passed the check in year 1 will have the opportunity to retake it in year 2.

For more information, take a look at the [Twinkl Phonics Year 1 Screening Check Guide for Parents](#).

How You Can Help Your Child at Home

- Work on listening skills, taking turns and encouraging your child to look at you when you are speaking.
- Practise segmenting and blending words.
- Look for familiar sounds and words in the world around you. For example, in the supermarket, can your child find words on your shopping list? Can they recognise letters on street names or on car number plates?
- Practise the new sounds and graphemes your child brings home using the Parent Information Sheets. Remember to use 'pure' sounds (e.g. a very short and distinct 'p' and 't' instead of 'puh' and 'tuh') when pronouncing the sounds and model the correct letter formation as is taught in school.
- Support your child to complete any homework they bring home.
- Read to and with your child every day.
- Finally, remember to ask your child's class teacher if you are unsure about any aspect of your child's phonics learning. A consistent approach is very important.

Have fun!

Whole Scheme Sound Mat

a	e	i	o	u	ai	ee	igh	oa	oo
a	e ea	i	o	u oo o	ai ay a_e a	ee ea e_e e	igh i ie Le y	oa ow oe o	oo ue u_e ew
ar	or	ur	ow	oi	ear	air	ure	u_e	b
ar	or ore aw al ue	ur er ir	ow ou	oi oy	ear eer	air are ear	ure u	u_e ue u ew	b
c	ch	d	f	g	h	j	l	m	n
c ck	ch tch	d	f ff ph	g	h	j dge g ge	l el ll al le il	m mb	n gn kn
ng	p	qu	r	s	sh	t	th	th	v
ng	p	qu	r wr	s ss c	sh ch	t	th	th	v
w	x	y	z	zh	tion	ture			
w wh	x	y	z zz s	zh s	tion	ture			

Key
Level 2 Level 5
Level 3 Level 6

