



Teaching Children to Read

In order to teach children to read we use a resource called 'Letters and Sounds'. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven.

It is a systematic approach with six overlapping phases.

Phase 1 Letters and Sounds

Approx age: 3–4 | Nursery/Reception

Phase 1 supports children's developing speaking and listening skills and linking of sounds and letters. Activities are divided into seven groups:

- Environmental sounds.
- Instrumental sounds.
- Body percussion.
- Rhythm and rhyme.
- Alliteration.
- Voice sounds.
- Oral blending and segmenting.

Children should be encouraged to enjoy books from as early an age as possible. However, the focus of this phase is on listening to and repeating sounds, rather than on directly reading words.

Phase 2 Letters and Sounds

Approx age: 4–5 | First term of Reception

Phase 2 introduces simple letter-sound correspondences. As each set of letters is introduced, children are encouraged to use their new knowledge to sound out and blend words. For example, they will learn to blend the sounds **s-a-t** to make the word **sat**.

<p>Set 1: s, a, t, p at, a, sat, pat, tap, sap, as</p>	<p>Set 2: i – it, is, sit, pit, tip n – an, in, nip, pan, nap m – am, man, mat, map, Tim d – dad, and, sad, dim, Sid</p>	<p>Set 3: g – tag, gag, sag, gas, pig o – got, on, not, top, dog c – can, cot, cop, cap, cod k – kid, kit, Kim, Ken</p>
<p>Set 4: ck – kick, sack, dock, sick, pocket e – get, pet, ten, net, pen u – up, mum, run, mug, cup r – rip, ram, rat, rocket, carrot</p>	<p>Set 5: h – had, him, his, hot, hut b – but, big, back, bed, bus f, ff – of, if, off, fit, fog, puff l, ll – let, leg, lot, bell, doll ss – less, hiss, mass, mess, boss</p>	<p>Phase 2 tricky words: the, to, no, go, I, into</p>

Phase 3 Letters and Sounds

Approx. age: 4–5 | Reception

In Phase 3, children build on the letter-sound correspondences learned in Phase 2. They learn consonant digraphs (sounds made up of two letters together such as ‘ch’ or ‘ll’) and long vowel sounds (such as ‘igh’ or ‘ai’).

Set 6: j – jet, jam, jog, Jan v – van, vet, velvet w – wig, will, web x – fox, box, six	Set 7: y – yes, yet, yell z – zip, zig-zag zz – buzz, jazz qu – quit, quick, liquid	Consonant digraphs: ch – chip, chat, rich sh – shop, shed, fish th – thin, moth, that ng – ring, thing, song
Vowel digraphs and trigraphs: ai – rain, tail, aim ee – bee, leek, see igh – high, sigh, might oa – boat, toad, foal oo – boot, food, moon oo – book, wood, foot ar – park, art, car or – for, torn, fork ur – hurt, fur, surf ow – cow, owl, town oi – coin, boil, oil ear – dear, shear, year air – fair, pair, hair ure – sure, pure, manure er – dinner, summer, letter	Phase 3 tricky words: he, she, we, me, be, was, you, they, all, are, my, her	

Phase 4 Letters and Sounds

Approx. age: 4–5 | Reception

Children will consolidate their knowledge during this phase and they will learn to read and spell words which have adjacent consonants (for example, **trap**, **strong**, **milk** and **crept**).

Phase 4 tricky words:

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

Phase 5 Letters and Sounds

Approx. age: 5–6 | Year 1

Children will learn some new graphemes for reading. They will also be taught alternative pronunciations for known graphemes. For example, they have already learned **ow** as in cow and will now learn **ow** as in blow.

In addition, they will learn alternative spellings for known phonemes. For example, the sound /igh/ has been learned as the grapheme **igh** as in ‘night’, but can also be spelled **y**, **ie**, and **i-e**.

New graphemes for reading:

ay – day, play, crayon
ou – cloud, sound, about
ie – pie, tie, cried
ea – sea, meat, read
oy – toy, enjoy, boy
ir – bird, shirt, first
ue – blue, true, glue
aw – paw, claw, yawn
wh – wheel, whisper, when
ph – photo, dolphin, alphabet
ew – new, crew, flew
oe – toe, foe, tomatoes
au – Paul, launch, haul
a-e – make, game, snake
e-e – these, Eve, extreme
i-e – like, time, slide
o-e – home, bone, pole
u-e – rule, June, flute

Phase 5 tricky words:

oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked, could

Phase 6 Letters and sounds

Approx. age: 6–7 | Year 2

In Phase 6 children will read with increasing fluency. They will have learned most of the common letter-sound correspondences and can read familiar words automatically without needing to sound out and blend.

Children will work on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters, and so on.

