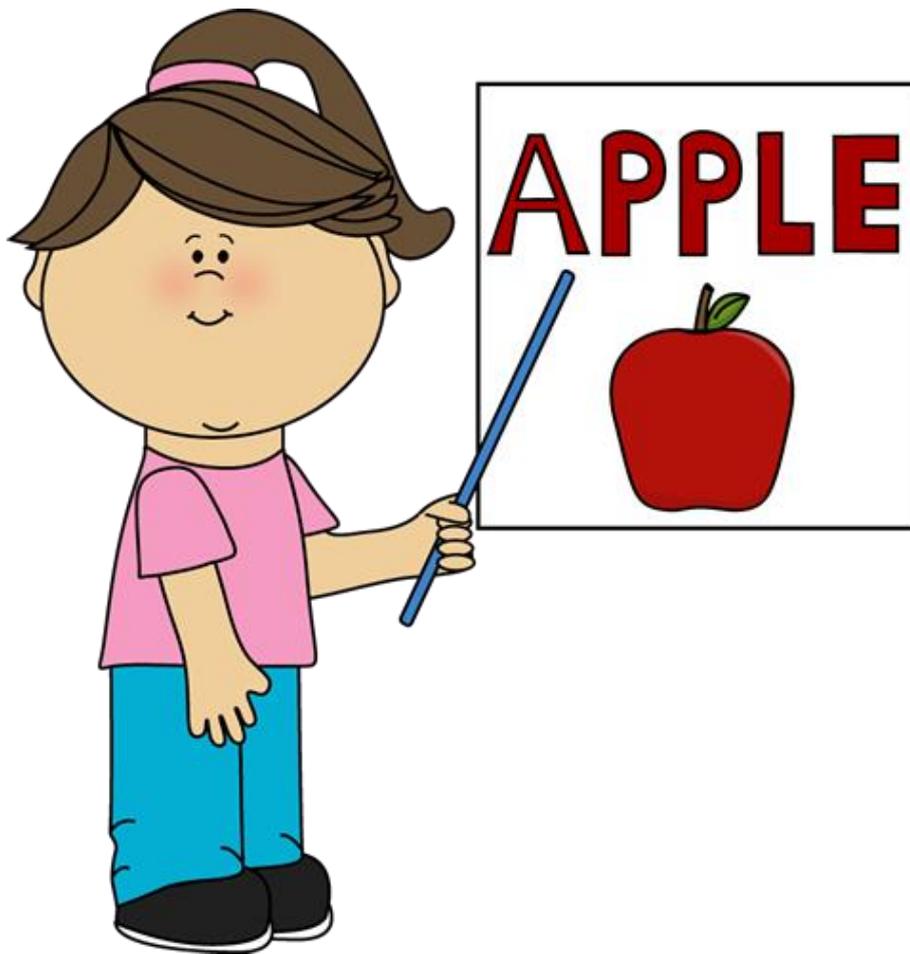


Castor C.E. Primary School



Phonics Information for parents



What are the phonic phases?

The Letters and Sounds Programme is broken down to teach phonemes in a certain order and those groups of phonemes are put into phases. At the same time whole words that cannot be broken down phonetically, (we call them “tricky words”) are taught to the children.

Phase 1 is taught in Nursery, looking at environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting. This phase is intended to develop children’s listening, vocabulary and speaking skills.

Phases 2 – 6 are taught throughout FS/KS1 and will be discussed in each year group.

Reception

The children are introduced to the formal teaching of phonics, beginning to learn **Phase 2** sounds. They learn the sounds that the letters make – “phonemes”. There are 44 phonemes in total but Phase 2 focuses on learning the 19 most common single letter sounds. These phonemes are split into sets:

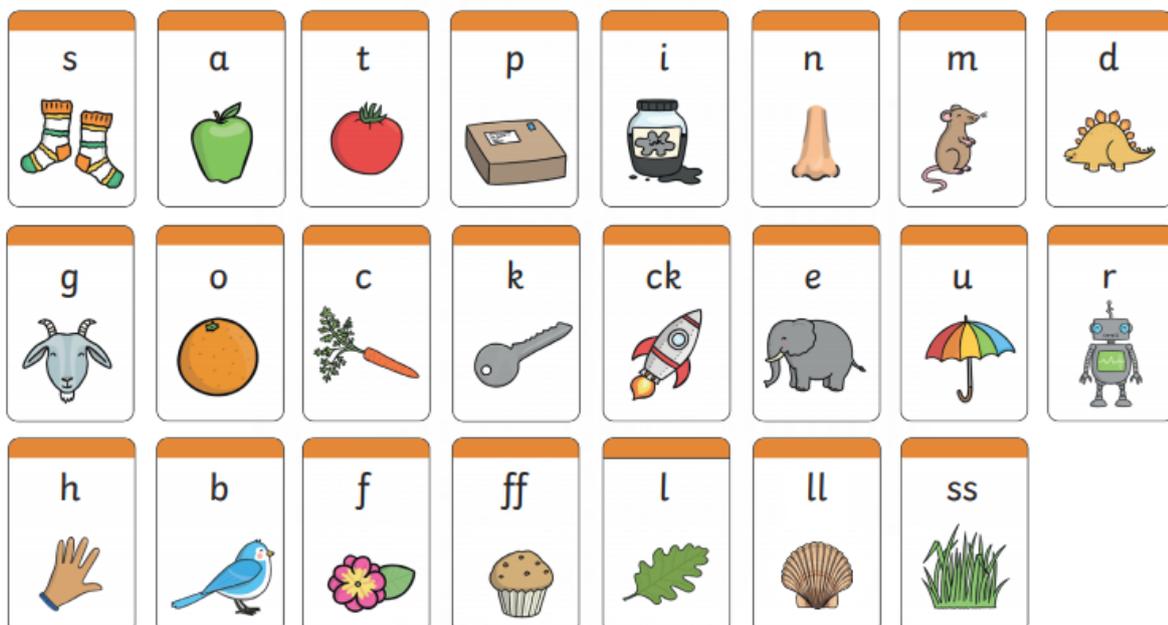
Set 1: s a t p

Set 2: i n m d

Set 3: g o c k

Set 4: ck e u r

Set 5: h b f ff l ll ss



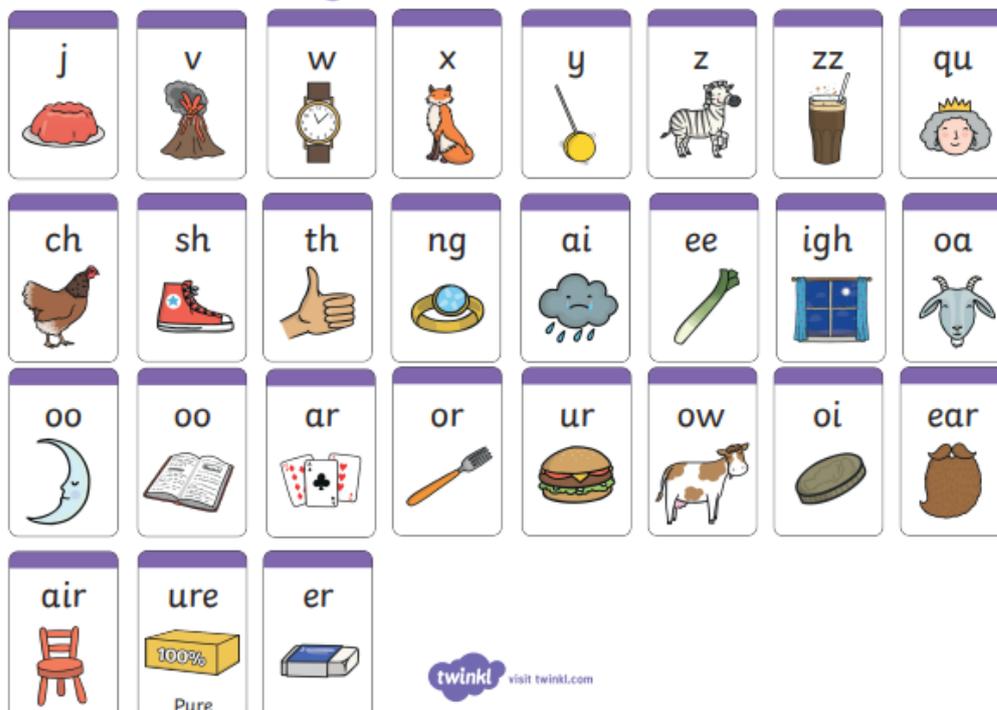
By the end of Phase 2 children should be able to read some vowel-consonant (vc) and consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) words, and be able to segment them to spell. They also learn some high frequency 'tricky words' like 'the' and 'go.' This phase usually lasts about six weeks.

The lesson are taught in a routine 4 part lesson: Revisit/Review, Teach, Practise, Apply. The children soon learn the expectations of phonics, understanding skills such as segmenting and blending. During this phase some children will be ready to read a phonically de-codable reading book.

Phase 3

Phase 3 introduces children to the remaining, more difficult phonemes. There are around 25 of these, mainly made up of two letters such as /ch/, /ar/, /ow/ and /ee/. These are called 'digraphs'. They are also taught 'trigraphs' made up of three letters such as /ear/, /ure/ and /air/.

Alongside this, children are taught to recognise more tricky words, including 'me,' 'was,' 'my,' 'you' and 'they'. They also learn the names of the letters, as well as the sounds they make. We use the letter names to spell tricky words, as well as spelling digraphs and trigraphs with them. Activities might include learning mnemonics (memory aids) for tricky words, practising writing letters on mini whiteboards, using word cards and singing songs like the Alphabet Song. Phase 3 takes most children around 12 weeks. By the end, they should be able to say the sound made by all, Phase 2 and 3 graphemes, blend and read CVC words made from these graphemes, read 12 new tricky words and form letters correctly when given an example to copy.



Phase 4

No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants (ccvc, cvcc, ccvcc) words e.g. swim, clap, jump. They practise reading and spelling two syllable words as well as reading and writing sentences. They also learn more tricky words, including 'have,' 'like,' 'some,' 'little'. Children should now be blending confidently to work out new words. They should be starting to be able to read words relying on their memory, rather than having to sound them out. They should also be able to write every letter correctly formed. This phase usually takes four to six weeks, and most children will complete it around the end of Reception.

Year 1

Phonics in Year 1 usually begins by consolidating previous phonics learning in Reception with a brief review of Phase 4. The class then move on to the next phase.

Phase 5 generally takes children the whole of Year 1.

Children learn new graphemes (different ways of spelling each sound) and alternative pronunciations for these: for example, learning that the grapheme 'ow' makes a different sound in 'snow' and 'cow'.

They should become quicker at blending, and start to do it silently.

They learn about split digraphs such as the a-e in 'name.' They will start to choose the right graphemes when spelling as they are given spelling rules to follow, and will learn more tricky words, including 'people,' 'water' and 'friend'. They also learn one new phoneme: /zh/, as in 'treasure.'

By the end of Year 1, children should be able to:

Say the sound for any grapheme they are shown.

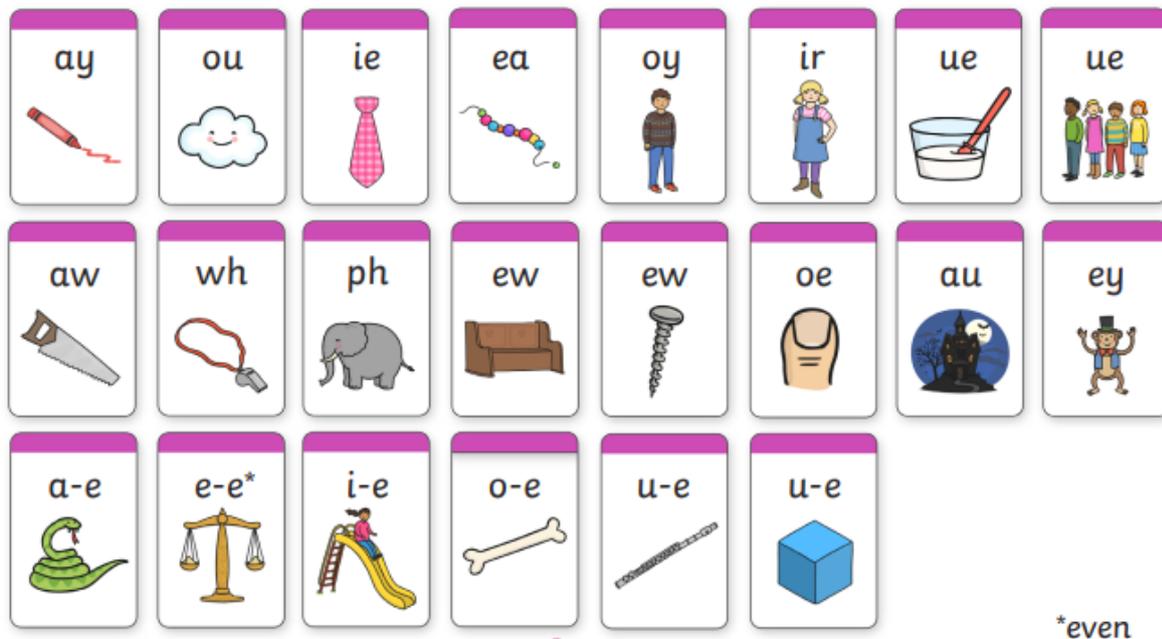
Write the common graphemes for any given sound (e.g. 'e,' 'ee,' 'ie,' 'ea').

Use their phonics knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words of up to three syllables.

Read all of the 100 high frequency words, and be able to spell most of them.

Form all letters correctly.

Towards the end of Year 1, all children are given a Phonics Screening Check to ensure they have mastered the appropriate knowledge. This check focuses on segmenting and blending words that do not make sense, showing their understanding of phonemes. As part of phonics lessons, the class practise “Alien words” developing this skill throughout the year.



Year 2

Throughout Year 2, children will continue to apply their phonics knowledge from Phases 1-5 whilst moving onto Phase 6. They will have already learnt the most frequently occurring grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs) in the English language. They will be able to read many familiar words automatically. When they come across unfamiliar words they will, in many cases, be able to decode them quickly and quietly using their well-developed segmenting and blending skills. With more complex unfamiliar words, they will often be able to decode them by sounding them out.

At this stage children should be able to spell words correctly, although some will still be phonetic spellings at times. In Phase 6 the main aim is for children to become fluent readers and more accurate at spelling.

What are “Tricky words”?

Tricky words are words that cannot be ‘sounded out’ but need to be learned by sight. They don’t fit into the usual spelling pattern. In order to read simple sentences, it is necessary for children to know some words that have unusual or untaught spellings and to be able to read them on sight. Children also need to be able to spell them.

| Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 | Phase 5 |
|---------|---------|-------------|---------|
| the | he all | said there | oh |
| to | she are | have little | there |
| I | we my | like one | people |
| no | me her | so when | Mr |
| go | be | do out | Mrs |
| into | was | some what | looked |
| | you | come | called |
| | they | were | asked |
| | | | could |

What are Common Exception words?

Exception words are words in which the English spelling code works in an unusual or uncommon way. They are not words for which phonics ‘doesn’t work’, but they may be exceptions to spelling rules, or words which use a particular combination of letters to represent sound patterns in a rare or unique way.

Some exception words are used very frequently, and are taught as ‘tricky words’ which is why children are introduced to them very early on in their learning.

Year 1 and 2 Common Exception Words

| Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | |
|--------|-------|--------|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| the | they | one | door | gold | plant | clothes |
| a | be | once | floor | hold | path | busy |
| do | he | ask | poor | told | bath | people |
| to | me | friend | because | every | hour | water |
| today | she | school | find | great | move | again |
| of | we | put | kind | break | prove | half |
| said | no | push | mind | steak | improve | money |
| says | go | pull | behind | pretty | sure | Mr |
| are | so | full | child | beautiful | sugar | Mrs |
| were | by | house | children | after | eye | parents |
| was | my | our | wild | fast | could | Christmas |
| is | here | | climb | last | should | everybody |
| his | there | | most | past | would | even |
| has | where | | only | father | who | |
| I | love | | both | class | whole | |
| you | come | | old | grass | any | |
| your | some | | cold | pass | many | |

Glossary of Phonics terminology

Phoneme: The smallest unit of sound in a word, e.g. c/a/t, sh/o/p, t/ea/ch/er.

Grapheme: A letter or group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, igh, t.

Clip Phonemes: when saying sounds, always clip them short 'mmmm' not 'muh'

Digraph: Two letters which together make one sound, e.g. sh, ch, ee, ph, oa.

Split digraph: Two letters, which work as a pair, split, to represent one sound, e.g. a-e as in cake, or i-e as in kite.

Trigraph: three letters which together make one sound but cannot be separated into smaller phonemes, e.g. igh as in light, ear as in fear, tch as in watch.

Segmenting: means hearing the individual phonemes within a word – for instance the word 'crash' consists of four phonemes: 'c – r – a – sh'. In order to spell this word, a child must segment it into its component phonemes and choose a grapheme to represent each phoneme. We use segmenting in order to spell words.

Blending: means merging the individual phonemes together to pronounce a word. In order to read an unfamiliar word, a child must recognise ('sound out') each grapheme, not each letter (e.g. 'th-i-n' not 't-h-in'), and then merge the phonemes together to make the word. We use blending to be able to read words.

Mnemonics: a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a hand action of a snake to remember the phoneme /s/ or to remember the correct spelling of the word 'because' children might be encouraged to remember the mnemonic 'big elephants can always understand small elephants' (each first letter of this sentence makes up the letters of the word 'because'). For

'beautiful' they might be given the mnemonic 'big elephants always understand tiny insects'.

Adjacent consonants: two or three letters (consonants) with discrete sounds, which are blended together e.g. str, cr, tr, gr.

Comprehension: understanding of language whether it is spoken or written.