

Phonics is... simply the system of relationships between letters and sounds in a language

What is a Phoneme?

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word and can be represented by one or more letters - e.g. 'd - o - g', 'c - r - a - b', 'b - l - a - ck', 'sh - ee - p'.

What is a CVC word?

This is the simplest type of word made up of a consonant – vowel – consonant e.g. 'c-a-t', 'h-e-n', 'p-i-g', 'd-o-g', 'b-u-s'

What is blending?

A blend of letters is where there is more than one letter, but the individual sounds can still be heard - for example 'sp', 'cl', 'tr', 'st'.

Blending is the process of sliding together individual sounds to make a word. For example, sounding out 'c-a-t' and sliding the sounds together to make 'cat'.

What is a digraph?

A digraph is a sound made up of two letters such as 'sh', 'ch', 'th', 'ee', 'oo' etc. where the individual letter sounds cannot be heard separately. Children should sound the digraph as one sound, not the individual letter sounds.

What are 'key words' or 'sight words'?

These are high frequency, essential words that children need to learn to recognise on sight, such as 'the', 'said', 'my', 'she'. The majority of these key words can be decoded once letter sounds are known. Although a small number (such as 'here', 'does', 'was', 'one') do not follow normal phonetic rules, an understanding of letter sounds can still help when a child comes across them.