



Sheen Mount Phonics: Helpful terminology

Phoneme	<p>The smallest unit of sound and can be represented (spelt) in different ways using one, two, three or four letters. For example, the sound /aw/ can be represented as 'or', 'saw', 'haul', 'lore', 'fraught' and 'sought'</p> <p><i>When starting phonics in Reception and at the start of Year 1, we avoid using letter names (see, ay, tee etc) and use the sounds instead (c, a, t)!</i></p> <p><i>This will help with recognising letter sounds when reading and when spelling words where children make phonically plausible attempts. Letter names can be introduced more gradually as the children learn the names of letters in the alphabet.</i></p>
Grapheme	<p>Written letters or a group of letters which represent one single sound (phoneme). e.g. a, l, sh, air, ck.</p> <p>One grapheme (that is, a letter or combination of letters) can represent different sounds. For example, the digraph (two letters) 'ow' sounds different in 'crowd' and in 'low'; the four letters combined in 'ough' are pronounced differently in 'through', 'rough' and 'bough'; the letter 'c' represents a /s/ sound at the beginning of 'circus' and a /k/ sound in the middle, and so on.</p>
Letter	<p>The grapheme which represents a sound.</p>
Digraph	<p>Two letters which make one sound e.g: qu sh chi e oe</p> <p><u>Vowel digraphs:</u> At least one of the letters is a vowel ai ey ue oe oo</p> <p><u>Split digraphs (previously called magic e):</u> Two letters which work together to make one sound, but are separated by a letter a_e same e_e these i_e time o_e stone u_e flute</p> <p><u>Consonant digraphs:</u> Two consonants which make one sound ch sh th ng</p> <p>When explaining digraphs the names of the letters are used not the phonemes. When starting out, children may use the phoneme sounds but as their phonics knowledge progresses, they should identify the names of the letters/graphemes and this also supports their spelling development.</p>
Trigraph	<p>Three letters which make one sound e.g: igh ear air ure</p>



Segmenting and Blending	<p>Segment: break up and identify individual phonemes in words when reading. (chop – ch-o-p) At Sheen Mount we use</p> <p style="text-align: center;">coat</p> <p>sound buttoning to help with segmenting. For example, ● — ● Sound buttons can be referred to as sausage and beans and/or spaghetti lines.</p> <p>Blend: putting sounds together to make words (ch-o-p = chop)</p> <p>Blending and segmenting are, ‘reversible processes’: that is, if you can blend the sounds together to read a word, you should also be able to identify and break down (segment) the individual sounds in a word you hear to spell it. To spell the word, you need to represent each sound you hear by a letter – or more than one letter.</p> <p>The skill of blending sounds together needs to be taught directly. Children may be able to say the sound a letter ‘makes’ when shown the letter (for instance, on a flashcard), but this does not necessarily mean that they can blend individual sounds together to make a whole word. (Letters do not actually ‘make’ sounds: they are just a way of representing that sound in writing.) In segmenting to spell a word, the teacher or the child is listening to a whole word, identifying the individual sounds (not letters) that make up the word choosing a letter or more than one letter to represent each individual sound.</p>
CVC CCVC CCVCC etc	The abbreviation used for consonant-vowel-consonant etc to describe the order of sounds. E.g: CVC cat CCVC trip CCVCC black
Adjacent consonants	Two or three letters that make a sound e.g: fl cl str
Correction articulation, ensuring the use of a pure sound	<p>Correct articulation is vital in helping children to learn to blend sounds together. We make sure that the sound produced (each individual phoneme) is as precise and accurate as possible and that no additional sounds are added. For instance, the sound /m/ that starts ‘mother’ or is embedded in ‘impress’ needs to sound /mmmm/ and not /muh/. The clearer the sound, the easier it is for a child to blend together (synthesise) the individual sounds to read a word because there are no unnecessary sounds getting in the way.</p> <p>Creating a pure sounds means pronouncing each letter sound clearly and distinctly without adding additional sounds to the end e.g. ‘f’ not ‘fuh.’</p>
Tricky words/Exception words	<p>Children will be taught to read words that are not completely phonically regular. The Reception children refer to these as ‘tricky words’ and in KS1 they are referred to as exception words.</p> <p>Children need to be taught to read these words on sight, so that they do not have to spend time puzzling them out. Teachers help children to practise their speedy recall of these words.</p>



It should be noticed that only part of these words are not phonically regular and that children can use some of their phonics to help decode part of the word.

In terms of spelling, children need to remember the tricky parts of a word, that is, the letters that do not match the usual grapheme-phoneme correspondences they have learnt. For example, the word 'said' is not phonically regular in that the sound /e/ in the middle of the word is normally written 'e' as in 'bed' (or sometimes 'ea' as in 'bread', 'dread' or 'read' – past tense) and not 'ai' as in 'paid'. However, the sounds at the beginning and end of 'said' are represented with 's' and 'd', just as one might expect; it is only the middle of the word that is tricky.