

# Letters and Sounds

## Overview

'Letters & Sounds' is the government programme for teaching phonics and high frequency words.

It is split into 6 phases:

**Phase 1:** Children learn rhymes. Keep rhythms and start to relate letter sounds to (starting in Nursery) words. E.g. b for bag.

**Phase 2:** Children learn initial letter sounds and build 3 letter words.

**Phase 3:** Children learn all 44 phonemes and blend sounds to read and write words.

**Phase 4:** Children blend consonants together to read difficult words e.g. blue, grab.

**Phase 5:** Children learn how to spell letter sounds in more than one way e.g. rain, day, make.

**Phase 6:** Children learn how to spell word specific spellings. E.g. turned, beautiful, shopping.

The aim of this page is to give you a clear picture of how we, at TIMU Academy, approach the teaching of phonics and word recognition and how, as a parent or carer, you can support and encourage your child at home.

Here's some of the technical vocabulary explained.

**Blend(ing)** - to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p

**CVC** - Consonant - Vowel - Consonant (cat)

**CCVC** - Consonant - Consonant - Vowel - Consonant (pram)

**Grapheme** - Written representation of the sounds

**Phoneme** - Smallest unit of speech sounds sh/i/p

**Segment(ing)** - to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it.

**Suffix(es)** - a unit of letters such as 'ed' 'ing' that are added to a word to change its meaning e.g. play'ed'

## Phase 1

This paves the way for systematic learning of phonics and usually starts in nursery or playgroup.

Teachers plan activities that will help children to listen attentively to sounds around them, such as the sounds of their toys and to sounds in spoken language.

Teachers teach a wide range of nursery rhymes and songs. They read good books to and with the children.

This helps to increase the number of words they know - their vocabulary - and helps them talk confidently about books.

### Things to try at home:

- Play games like 'I Spy'
- Sing songs and rhymes together
- Share books together

## Phase 2

In Phase 2, they will also be taught the phonemes (sounds) for a number of letters (graphemes).

Your child will be taught how to pronounce the sounds (phonemes) correctly to make blending easier. Try to avoid saying 'buh', 'cuh' encourage your child to say the pure sound.

**s a t p i n m d**

**g o c k ck e u r**

**h b f ff l ll ss**

and be able to read 5 tricky words...

**the to l no go**

They should be able to orally blend (sound talk) cvc words e.g. when you sound out c-a-t, they can tell you the word is cat, and also orally segment cvc words e.g. when you say mum, they can pick out the sounds m-u-m.

Spelling is harder than reading. During this phase they will use lots of alternatives to pencil and paper (eg magnetic letters, writing in sand, using paint)

## Phase 3

The purpose of this phase is to teach 25 graphemes (letters) most of them comprising of two letters (e.g. oa) so the children can represent each of the 42 phonemes (sounds). Your child will continue to blend and segment for reading and spelling (e.g. pool)

**j v w x y z zz qu ch**

**jug van wig box yes zip buzz quit rich**

**sh th ng ai igh oa oo oo ar**

**shop moth king rain high loaf look moon park**

**or ur ow oi ear air ure er**

**port burn town boil hear pair pure hotter**

and 12 more tricky words to read...

**he she we me be was  
my you her they all are**

They should now, also be able to spell the 5 tricky words from phase 2.

## Phase 4

In Phase 4, children continue to practice previously learned graphemes and phonemes and learn how to read and write:

CVCC words: tent, damp, toast, chimp

**For example, in the word 'toast',**

t = consonant, oa = vowel, s = consonant, t = consonant.

and CCVC words: swim, plum, sport, cream, spoon

**For example, in the word 'cream',**

c = consonant r = consonant ea = vowel, m = consonant.

and 14 more tricky words are added too...

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

The children should now be able to write the Phase 3 tricky words. During Phase 4, sounds with adjacent consonants or initials and final blends are taught e.g. bl, dr, sc, ft, so. These can be sounded out but recognising them.

## Phase 5

The purpose of this phase is for children to broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling.

**ay ou ie oe ea oy ir ue  
play soup tried goes heat boy shirt value/blue  
au aw wh ph ew ey  
author lawn when/who Phillip blew honey  
a\_e e\_e i\_e o\_e u\_e  
same these pine bone cube**

They will learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these and graphemes they already know, where relevant. E.g. the phoneme 'a' can have alternative phonemes: hat/acorn/was also.

'Y' can have alternative phonemes: yes/by/gym/very.

There are many alternatives which the children will investigate during the phase.

## Phase 6

In Phase 6, the focus is on learning spelling rules for word endings or suffixes.

They learn how words change when you add certain letters. There are 12 different suffixes taught...

The children are also expected to be able to read and write the 'next 200 common words'.

**-s -es -ing -ed**  
**-er -est -y -en**  
**-ful -ly -ment -ness**

### Useful Websites

- [www.phonicsplay.co.uk/freeindex](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/freeindex)
- [www.letters-and-sounds.com](http://www.letters-and-sounds.com)
- [www.ictgames.com/literacy.html](http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html)
- [www.educationcity.co.uk](http://www.educationcity.co.uk)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/phonics](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/phonics)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks1bitesize/literacy](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks1bitesize/literacy)