

Phase 4 Phonics

A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

This step-by-step explanation to phase 4 phonics can help you support your child's learning at home. Each subject is broken down into manageable chunks, providing you with a simple guide to follow when exploring phonics together, either as part of homework or if you decide to give your child some extra support. At this stage, your child will be recapping Phase 2 and Phase 3 phonemes (sounds), including single letter phonemes, digraphs (phonemes represented by two letters, e.g. 'ch') and trigraphs (phonemes represented by three letters, e.g. 'air'). They will also learn to blend adjacent consonant letter sounds within whole words (for example, 'tr' in 'treat' is actually two consonant sounds 't' and 'r'). They'll also be identifying tricky words that are used regularly in sentences (including words like 'said', 'one' and 'some'). In this guide, you will find a step that matches where your child is at, then have ideas for where to go next.

[Click here](#)

Step 1

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.

Phase 4 Phonics

What Is Phonics?

Phonics is the process of learning to read using sounds and symbols that combine to create a phonetic alphabet that can be used to blend words together. At this stage, your child will probably recap and practise the range of phonemes (sounds) that they have studied so far. They will practise identifying the single grapheme, digraph and trigraph sounds (sounds represented by one, two or three letters). For example, s, a, t, p, ch, ai, ee, ow, air, ear.

What Phonics Language Do I Need to Know?

The language of phonics is very specific and involves more than just phonemes (sounds in words) learnt in previous phases. Graphemes are the letters or groups of letters that represent a sound. Digraphs refer to the sounds represented by two letters combined; trigraphs are represented by three letters combined.

In previous phases, your child will most likely have been blending and segmenting CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words such as dog, tin or leg, CCVC (consonant, consonant, vowel, consonant) words like clap, drag or chip and CVCC (consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant) words such as cash, burn or doll.

Which Elements of Phonics Are Learnt in Phase 4?

In previous phases, your child will have learnt about blending together several sounds to create increasingly complex words. The reverse of blending is segmenting. Rather than taking separate sounds and combining them to form words, segmenting involves breaking down a word into the sounds that make it. This is a useful way for your child to begin exploring spelling patterns of simple words.

When exploring blending in phase 4, your child will explore adjacent consonants. These are when single consonant letter sounds are joined together. For example, 'nd' in the word 'stand' actually consists of the individual consonant sounds 'n' and 'd' blended together. These pairs or groups of adjacent consonants are great for using when reading and blending words containing more phonemes.

Phase 4 also builds on your child's phonics knowledge through nonsense words. These are words that are not real, but require your child to use their phonics knowledge to break them down and read them. For example, reading the word 'gloyb' consists of the sounds 'g', 'l', 'oy' and 'b' to read the whole word. This is a good skill for your child to learn to practise sounding out unfamiliar words in the future. Some words in the stories and texts they read will seem like nonsense words to them and being able to use their phonics knowledge to decode these is a key skill.

As well as using the resources found in the Phase 4 Phonics category and the keyword searches suggested, this guide offers a few ideas for games and activities to help your child with exploring phonics.

Phase 4 Phonics

Rub out the Word

On a whiteboard or piece of paper, write down a selection of words containing the sounds your child has been learning (including digraphs and trigraphs). To play, say one of the words out loud. Your child has to find the word as quickly as they can, read it and rub (or cross) it out. Repeat for different words until they are all gone. If you want to do this activity outside, you could use chalk to write on the pavement and a dustpan brush to rub away.

Phonic Water Object Hunt

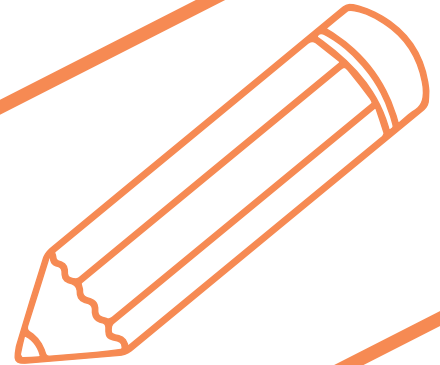
Fill a container (e.g. bucket or washing up bowl etc) with water and place a variety of objects inside whose names contain the sounds that your child has been learning. Next to the container, write some phonic sounds on a piece of paper. One at a time, your child can pull an object out of the water and place it next to the corresponding phonics sounds (that it begins with or contains). Continue until all the objects have been taken out of the water.

Phonics Baskets

In a series of baskets (or other suitable containers), place a written phonics sound (e.g. ch, ear, s). Using playdough, your child can build different objects that contain the phonics sound and place it into the correct basket. For example, for the sound 'ch', your child could build a chicken, chip or torch.

I Spy Phoneme Hunt

I Spy is a great game to play with your child when practising phonics. Rather than searching for words that begin with a certain letter, your child could try spotting words that contain a specific sound. For example, "I spy with my little eye, something with the phoneme -ee."



Step 1

Phase 4 Graphemes

Graphemes are the letter representations of phonemes, which are the sounds used in phonics to help your child learn to read. Specifically, graphemes refer to the written form of sounds represented by a single letter. By the end of phase 4, your child will hopefully have been able to recognise all the graphemes and will be working on becoming fully accurate when identifying them on sight. Sound mats are a great way to help your child practise identifying the Phase 2 and Phase 3 phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) used in Phase 4 phonics.

Phase 4 Digraphs and Trigraphs

Not all phonetic sounds are represented by single letters. Some can be represented by two letters together, e.g. ee, ai, ch and sh. It is during phase 4 of phonics that your child will hopefully become fully familiar with these digraphs (sounds with two graphemes or letters). They will start to identify and say the sound that corresponds to each digraph, becoming more familiar with them as time progresses. As well as grapheme and digraph sounds, there are also trigraphs that your child will learn. Trigraphs are sounds that are represented by three written letters together, e.g. air, igh or ear. It is during this step that your child will be working towards accurately recognising and naming these increasingly complex sounds. Recapping the digraphs and trigraphs from phase 3 by using sound mats is a nice way for your child to become more and more familiar with identifying sounds and helping them to get faster at this.

Step 2

Step 3

Phase 4 Adjacent Consonants

Adjacent consonants are groups of individual consonant letter sounds. For example, the 'lf' in the word 'shelf' blended together is made up of the individual sounds 'l' and 'f'. During phase 4, your child will learn to blend these neighbouring consonant sounds within whole words. This **CCVC Roll and Read Mat** encourages your child to read a variety of words containing adjacent consonants and have fun while practising this skill.

Step 4

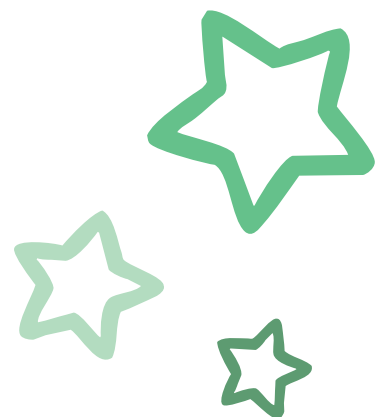
Phase 4 Blending and Segmenting

Blending is the process of combining letters together to form words. At this step, your child will probably be focusing on blending words that contain four or five sounds, e.g. 'b-l-i-n-k', 's-n-a-ck' and 'b-r-ow-n'. Segmenting is the reverse of blending. In blending, your child combines sounds together to form words. With segmenting, your child hears a word and identifies the different sounds that make up that word. This is a good way for your child to practise not only the phonics sounds they have learnt so far, but also to breakdown spelling patterns and rules. This blending snakes and ladders board game is a fun way for your child to practise using blending at home.

Phase 4 Tricky Words

Tricky words are ones that don't necessarily follow the phonics rules, but appear often in common sentences. They contain groups of letters that make unique or different sounds to the ones your child would expect if they were to use blending or segmenting. As these words don't follow the normal phonics rules, your child will need to memorise them and learn to read them on sight. Phase 4 Tricky words include 'said', 'like', 'some', 'come', 'there', 'little', 'one', 'when' and 'what'. Tricky word flashcards and word mats can be an effective way of practising reading these words on sight.

Step 5



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