

Phonics Key Vocabulary

All children are expected to learn, use and understand all the following key terms.

Phoneme: The smallest unit of sound. Phonemes can be put together to make words.

Grapheme: One letter or one group of letters used to write one sound e.g. the sound 'f' can be written with the graphemes 'f' (fun) or 'ff' (huff).

GPC: Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence. Knowing a GPC means being able to match a phoneme to a grapheme and vice versa.

Fred talk: Fred is a puppet who says, read and spells words in pure sounds. He never says the whole word so the children blend it for him.

Fred fingers: A way for children to physically sound out each phoneme in a word to support reading as well as spelling.

Oral blending: This involves hearing phonemes and being able to merge them together to make a word. Children need to develop this skill before they can blend written words.

Blending: This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme, and using knowledge of GPC's to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents, then merging these phonemes together to make a word.

Oral segmenting: This is hearing a whole word and then splitting it up into the phonemes that make it. Children need to develop this skill before they will be able to segment words to spell them.

Segmenting: This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it, using the knowledge of GPC's to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes, and then writing those graphemes down in the right order.

Green words: Words made up of graphemes that children have been taught. Children use 'Fred Talk' to read and 'Fred Fingers' to spell these words.

Red words: Common words with an uncommon spelling that cannot be phonetically sounded out e.g. said, you, the.

Challenge words: Topical words particular to a story.

High frequency words: Words that occur most frequently in written material.

Alien/nonsense word: A pseudo word used to assess children's phonetic decoding ability.

CVC word: Consonant-vowel-consonant words e.g. pin, cat, ship.

Digraph: A grapheme containing two letters that makes just one sound e.g. 'sh'.

Split digraph: Two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated with the word e.g. 'a-e' (cake), 'i-e' (smile).

Trigraph: A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound e.g. 'igh'.

Syllables: Chunks within long words.

Root: The part of the word that gives the most meaning.