

Phonics Glossary

Phoneme - The smallest unit of sound. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English (it depends on different accents). Phonemes can be put together to build words.

Digraph - A grapheme containing two letters that makes just one sound (phoneme) e.g. 'sh'

Trigraph - A grapheme containing three letters that makes just one sound (phoneme) e.g. 'igh'.

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 will be able to blend written words.

Tricky Words – These are words that cannot be decoded by oral segmenting. For example the ... if you sounded out 't' 'h' 'e' you couldn't blend it to reach the word 'the'. These words need to be learned by sight.

Blending - This involves looking at a written word, looking at each grapheme and using knowledge of GPCs to work out which phoneme each grapheme represents and then merging these phonemes together to make a word. This is the basis of reading.

Grapheme - A way of writing down a phoneme.

Graphemes can be made up from 1 letter e.g. 'p', 2 letters e.g. 'sh', 3 letters e.g. 'tch' or 4 letters e.g. 'ough'.

GPC - This is short for Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence. Knowing a GPC means being able to match a phoneme to a grapheme and vice versa.

Segmenting - This involves hearing a word, splitting it up into the phonemes that make it, using knowledge of GPCs to work out which graphemes represent those phonemes and then writing those graphemes down in the right order. This is the basis of spelling.

Oral Segmenting - This is the act 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

