

Phonics Phase 4

A Guide for Parents

Most children will progress to Phase 4 of the Letters and Sounds phonics programme towards the end of their reception year and into year 1. Phase 4 focuses on consolidating and practising the letter sounds learnt so far, and does not introduce any new sounds.

During Phase 4, children will continue to practise the letter sounds (phonemes) they learnt in Phase 2 and Phase 3. They will practise instant recall of these sounds as well as blending them together to read words. Alongside this, children will practise writing sounds correctly and segmenting words into sounds in order to spell them correctly.

Children will continue to learn 'alien words', sometimes also called 'nonsense words'. These are words that test children's ability to use phonics rather than word memory as the prime method of reading words. Examples might be 'thord', 'stip' or 'josk'. Alien words form part of the Phonics Screening Check taken at the end of year 1.

Children will progress to reading so-called 'CCVC' and 'CVCC' words. 'C' stands for consonant and 'V' for vowel, so whereas children so far have looked at 'CVC' words such as 'bat', 'dog' and 'pen', they will now learn to sound out and blend longer words such as 'stop', 'clap' (CCVC), 'desk' and 'hand' (CVCC).

Children will revise previously taught 'high frequency words'. High frequency words, as the name suggests, are words that we see frequently when reading and writing, and children can read much more fluently if they know these words by sight. Some of them can also be sounded out ('and', 'as', 'it'), but others cannot ('my', 'all'). They are also taught to read a new set of these words.

Support your child by continuing to help them recall the sounds they know. Show a sound and ask your child to tell you what it is, or say a sound and ask them to write it down or to identify it from a set of sounds.

Practise reading and writing CVC, CCVC and CVCC words, encouraging your child to say the sounds in a word before blending them together to read, and to split a word into its sounds before writing it down.

While many schools follow the Letters and Sounds programme, some follow other schemes, so it is worth checking with your child's teacher if you are unsure how best to support them.



Although no new sounds are introduced in this phase, children are taught to read and write more of the so-called 'tricky' words - words that cannot be sounded out and need to be learnt, such as 'my', 'the', 'I'.

When your child receives phonics practice work from school, make sure you are supporting them to complete this. Set some time aside every day to work on reading and phonics. Your child's teacher will be able to help you if you are unsure what to do, and there are also some great ideas for phonics games and support in the 'Ten Ways to...' pack.

Children also learn to differentiate syllables in words, and to read two-syllable words such as 'dinner', 'rocket', 'zigzag'.

Most importantly, keep reading with your child every day. Let them read to you, but also make sure that you are reading more complex books to them and that they are continuing to hear stories and other texts read aloud.

Keep working through your child's lists of words, both 'tricky' and 'high frequency'. Play different games to keep things interesting - there are lots of ideas in the Twinkl pack [Ten Ways to Practise Phase 4 Phonics at Home Guide for Parents](#).

