Synthetic Phonics Teaching:

The best way to teach the **technical** skills of **reading** (decoding) and **spelling** (encoding) in the English language is to teach the **core code knowledge** of **The English Alphabetic Code** in systematic steps and the **three core skills** of:

1. READING - sound out and **blend** (synthesise) the sounds (phonemes) represented by the letters and letter groups (graphemes) all-through-the-printed-word, from left to right (e.g. **see** 'tray', **say** "/t/ /r/ /ai/", **hear and say** "tray").

2. SPELLING - segment (or split up) the smallest identifiable sounds (phonemes) all-through-the-spoken-word (e.g. **hear** "tray", **identify** /t/ /r/ /ai/) and then **pull letter/s from memory** to spell the word 'tray'.

3. WRITING - **record** the correct shapes of the letters or letter groups (graphemes), from left to right, which represent the phonemes identified from segmenting the spoken word from beginning to end.

The English Alphabetic Code:

We can identify around 44 phonemes (the smallest identifiable sounds in words) in the English language but there are only 26 letters in **The Alphabet** to represent the 44+ sounds. **Single** letters and **letters combined** into letter groups act as **code** for the sounds, for example; the grapheme '**ie**' is pronounced /**igh**/ as in the word 'tie'. **The English Alphabetic Code** is complicated by the fact that it has many 'spelling alternatives' **and** 'pronunciation alternatives', for example; the grapheme '**ie**' can also be pronounced /**ee**/ as in the word 'chi**e**f'. **The Alphabetic Code**, therefore, needs to be taught explicitly and systematically for both reading and spelling. The chart immediately below illustrates the **sounds** and **spelling alternatives** of the *Phonics International* programme as featured on the many versions of **The Alphabetic Code Overview Charts** (all free in unit 1) and **The Alphabetic Code Frieze Posters** (provided throughout the **12 units** of the *Phonics International* programme):

sounds	words with spelling alternatives	sounds	words with spelling alternatives
/s/	snake glass palace house cents scissors	/igh/	night tie behind sky bike eider
/a/	apple	/ee/	eel eat emu sunny key chief sardines
/t/	teddy letter skipped	/or/	fork dawn sauce chalk oars snore four
/i/	insect cymbals	/z/	zebra jazz fries cheese breeze
/p/	pan puppet	/ng/	gong jungle
/n/	net bonnet knot gnome engine	/ngk/	ink uncle
/k/	kit cat duck chameleon bouquet	/v/	violin dove
/e/	egg head said	/oo/	book should
/h/	hat	/oo/	moon blue flute crew fruit soup move
/r/	rat arrow write rhinoceros	/ks/	fox books ducks cakes /gs/ exam
/m/	map hammer thumb welcome	/ch/	chairs patch /chu/ picture
/d/	dig puddle rained	/sh/	sheep chef station magician admission
/g/	girl juggle guitar ghost catalogue	/th/	thistle
/o/	orange watch qualify salt	/th/	there
/u/	umbrella son touch thoroughfare	/kw/	queen
/l/	ladder shell	/ou/	ouch owl plough
/ul/	kettle pencil hospital camel	/oi/	ointment toy
/f/	feathers cliff photograph laugh	/yoo/	unicorn statue tube new pneumatic
/b/	bat rabbit building	/er/	mermaid birthday nurse earth world
/j/	jug cabbage gerbil giraffe fridge	/uh/	(schwa) mixer humour theatre
/y/	yawn	/ar/	artist father palm half calves
/ai/	aid tray table sundae cake prey	/air/	hair hare bear where
/w/	web wheel	/eer/	deer ears adhere cashier
/oa/	oak bow yo-yo oboe rope dough	/zh/	television treasure courgettes collage

The Systematic Steps:

The Phonics International programme (program) provides many 'strands' of useful, flexible teaching and learning resources divided into **12 units**. The letter/s-sound correspondences featured on The Alphabetic Code Overview Charts (select from the many versions free in unit 1) are introduced or revisited in the following order:

	the main letter/s-sound correspondences introduced and/or revisited in each unit
unit 1	s a t i p n c k ck e h r
unit 2	m d g o u l -ll f -ff s -ss b j y ai ay w oa ow ie igh -le o
unit 3	ee or z -zz w wh ea e-ea /z/ s se ze
unit 4	ng nk v ve oo-oo y -y x ch sh th-th
unit 5	qu ou ow-ow oi oy ue-ue er ar -ve -ce s-ss ge-j -se y-y-y
unit 6	ce,ci,cy ge,gi,gy o-oe 'oes' ie,i-e ee,e-e oe,o-e ae,a-e ue,u-e air are ear ere eer ear ere ier ir ur ear wor er,our -re
unit 7	le il al el aw au al oar oor ore our ch,tch ge,dge x,x kn wr mb sc gu bu ch rh
unit 8	sh,ch ti ci ssi /zh/ si s z g ge ou 'ous' ph gh g,gg,gh ch,ch,ch wa qua war gn st
unit 9	-ey eigh -ea -aigh -ey -ie -y -ie ei
unit 10	-o -ew -ui -ou -o eu ew -iew
unit 11	ough augh ch qu -que quar
unit 12	-gue -ine -ine -ine mn ps alm alt -ture -eau -re

Please note that this order of introducing letter/s-sound correspondences can be used **flexibly** when Phonics International is used as a **spelling programme for older learners**. For example; focus on a specific sound and teach all the spelling variations for that sound using resources from whichever units these are featured. Phonics International can also be used as an '**intervention programme**' for learners of all ages with gaps in alphabetic code knowledge.

The Sounds Book Activity Sheets:

The **core Alphabetic Code information** and **rehearsal of the core skills** are provided on the *Sounds Book Activity Sheets* which are available in all 12 units. **There is detailed guidance for the 'teacher' on every** Sounds Book Activity Sheet and **this can be shared** with learners' parents. Other Phonics International resources support the teaching and learning provided on the Sounds Book Activity Sheets. Teachers need to decide how best to select and use the additional support material in their context for their learners' needs. The Sounds Book Activity Sheets, however, **are essential for ALL learners** and should be used systematically, regularly - and where necessary - in a '**layered**' way (that is, go back to earlier work and revise as required whilst pressing ahead with new learning).

Basic Phonics Lesson Format:

The standard lesson format for **introducing letter/s-sound correspondences** has a very simple structure:

1. **Revise old learning** of the letter/s-sound correspondences of **The Alphabetic Code** taught to date (see chart above for **order of introduction**).
2. **Introduce new learning** of '**next**' letter/s-sound correspondence.
3. Include the **new** letter/s-sound correspondence **to practise the three skills of blending, segmenting and handwriting** at word level using the **cumulative word bank** (sometimes with an emphasis on a particular skill as decided by the teacher). Note that the *Sounds Book Activity Sheets* build up a cumulative word bank as letter/s-sound correspondences are taught or revisited.

4. **Extend to sentence level and text level** work with cumulative word bank as appropriate (this will become part of the **basic lesson format** over time). **See variety of resources in each unit for extension work.**

The basic phonics lesson format in the UK government's guidance '*Letters and Sounds*' is described as, "**Introduction** (objectives and criteria for success); **Revisit and review**; **Teach**; **Practise**; **Apply**; **Assess** learning against the criteria". Phonics International can be used to complement '*Letters and Sounds*' or as a stand-alone programme.