

Debbie Hepplewhite's



International Online Synthetic Phonics Programme

Programme Overview and Guidance

Foreword

By the time that children are ready for a structured reading and spelling programme, they will already have experienced a wealth of language and literature at home and in their wider communities. A learner who wishes to learn English as an additional language will also need to be steeped in spoken English, see English print around them, and have access to age-appropriate literature in the English language as far as is possible.

A phonics programme designed to teach reading, spelling and handwriting is addressing one element of communication, language and literacy – although ability to read and write is fundamentally essential to support wider learning.

Any programme can only offer guidance and provide resources – it is not a substitute, nor should it be, for the key role of the ‘teacher’. The teacher still has to teach well and engage the learner in the learning process. The aim behind the design of the Phonics International programme is to create, as far as is possible, a partnership between the teacher and learner – but also a partnership with parents/guardians and the programme designers. A further extension to the notion of ‘partnership’ is the opportunity to post contributions on the shared message forum to create an international learning community. This can only be to everyone’s benefit so please use the forum liberally.

The beauty of an online educational programme is that it can be readily modified, or added to, as necessary. This is a new synthetic phonics programme based on classroom findings, research on reading instruction and personal teaching, training and advisory experience. I look forward to your feedback. So here’s to our shared adventure!

Debbie Hepplewhite

The Rose Report

In March 2006, following a UK government-commissioned national review of the way that reading is taught, **Jim Rose** outlined his findings in his **Final Report**.

The UK government accepted Rose’s recommendations and these have replaced the government’s previous ‘searchlights’ multi-cueing reading strategies. **Rose stated:**

“...the case for systematic phonic work is overwhelming and much strengthened by a synthetic approach, the key features of which are to teach beginner readers:

- grapheme/phoneme (letter/sound) correspondences (the alphabetic principle) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in order, all through a word to read it
- to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.” (para 51, Rose Final Report)

So – what does this **actually** mean? Read on...

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The aim of Phonics International is...

...to provide guidance and very practical resources to teach the English Alphabetic Code based upon Debbie's:

- Simple to Complex **Alphabetic Code** Overview Chart (one example on page 13)
- Two Stage **Teaching Model** (pages 17 and 18)

What does Phonics International include ?

This programme is suitable for all ages as a **stand-alone** programme or a **helpful complement** to other synthetic phonics programmes. It provides:

- printable user-friendly and detailed step-by-step materials to teach the letter/s-sound correspondences to beginners (and to provide extra teaching for those who wish to improve their code knowledge and skills at any age) and how to put the letter/s-sound correspondences learnt to immediate use for developing reading, spelling and handwriting skills
- online training through audio and video clips including audio examples of the 44+ individual sounds in the English language and how these map onto common graphemes (letters and letter groups)
- online message forum for offering guidance and sharing good practice - everyone is encouraged to ask their questions and share their experiences for the benefit of other programme users in our international learning community

What is The **Rationale** of Phonics International ?

This programme is designed to be highly supportive of both the 'teacher' and the 'learner'. Where the programme is used in schools, the completed activity sheets and The Alphabetic Code information can be sent home to encourage **working in partnership with parents**. The precise instructions for introducing each letter/s-sound correspondence, and how these are put to use in real words for reading and spelling, are provided on every **Sounds Book** activity sheet. The **Sounds Book activity sheets are the most important strand of the programme** as they put the latest letter/s-sound correspondence to immediate use in new words for blending, they include handwriting practice and drawing, and they routinely take the learner through the spelling process of identifying sounds all-through-the-spoken-word and mapping the sounds to letters and letter groups. The **Sounds Book** sheets, in effect, enable the 'teacher' to learn and teach, teach and learn, along with the 'learner'. What follows is a brief description of the various elements of the programme's teaching principles and resources - most of which are printable.

Now, **where** shall we start ?

...Here is **The Alphabet**

A a	B b	C c	D d	E e	F f	G g
H h	I i	J j	K k	L l	M m	N n
O o	P p	Q q	R r	S s	T t	U u
V v	W w	Ww	X x	Y y	Y y	Z z

blue = consonant letters

red = vowel letters

(See page 16)

People who learn to read and write in the English language commonly know about **The Alphabet**. We know that The Alphabet consists of **26** different letters presented in a specific **alphabetical order**. The 26 letters have a **lower case** shape and an **upper case** (or **capital letter**) shape. You can usually find The Alphabet chart in Early Years and Infant classrooms where English is the main language and where the English language is being taught.

For learning to read and spell, however, we need **much more information** than The Alphabet provides.

The Alphabet is helpful for teaching **handwriting** of lower and upper case letters and for teaching alphabetical order of the letters for later **higher-order** literacy skills (such as using a dictionary and understanding the organisation of registers and real books). It is the vehicle through which to teach letter **names** simply as conventional **terminology** used by experienced readers and writers. The letter names are often taught through singing and memorising an **alphabet song**. Letter names, however, are not helpful for teaching the knowledge and skills needed for **beginning** reading and spelling activities and they have been known to **detract** learners from saying a sound in automatic response to seeing letters which is part of the process of blending the sounds to make spoken words.

We need **The Alphabet** as it provides the bank of **26** letters from which the many graphemes of **The Alphabetic Code** are made.

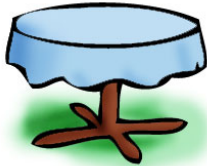

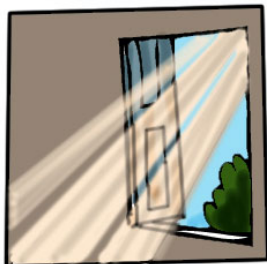


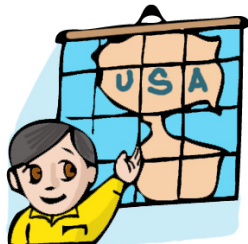



So what is The Alphabetic Code ?

Spoken words can be split up, or **segmented**, into smaller sounds of which the **smallest** units of identifiable sounds in a word are called **phonemes**. For example, the spoken word "**peach**" can be split into the phonemes /p/ /ee/ /ch/. (A phoneme is expressed within slash marks /-/). The phonemes are then **represented** by written symbols to create an **alphabetic code** writing system.

In the **English** spoken language around **44** phonemes can be identified but there are only **26 letters** in The Alphabet with which to represent the phonemes in the written code. Thus, not only single letters but also **groups of letters** are used to represent the 44+ phonemes for the English written code - known as **The Alphabetic Code**. A letter or a letter group can be referred to as a **grapheme**.

Spelling 'variation' or 'alternatives'

If only the **code** was as simple as a letter, or group of letters, representing any **one** particular phoneme, then the teaching and learning of the code would be speedy and straightforward - that is, one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes. Unfortunately, in the English **Alphabetic Code** over **150 main** graphemes are used to represent the **44+** phonemes. See the example following where **eight** different graphemes represent the /ai/ phoneme in common words. Whilst some of these code 'variations' (or 'alternatives') **are** very rare, **none** of the words themselves are rare.

table 	train 	rays 
sundae 	jet plane 	survey 
eight 	great grandma 	straight 

Pronunciation 'variation' or 'alternatives'

Sometimes the **same** grapheme is used as code for **different** phonemes and therefore the grapheme can be **pronounced in different ways** dependent upon the specific word in which the grapheme appears. Thus the '**ea**' grapheme is pronounced differently in the common words '**peach**', '**steak**' and '**bread**'. The letters '**ea**', however, are also part of the grapheme '**ear**' which can be pronounced in three different ways as in the common words '**fear**', '**bear**' and '**earth**'. We need to be aware of potential confusion and use **many common word examples** to support the learner.

Our job as teachers is to make this **complicated Alphabetic Code** as simple and straightforward as possible - working from the **simple** to the **complex** in systematic steps with **direct** teaching methods and materials. In order to do this, **we need good subject knowledge and we need to be very organised** with how we understand **The Alphabetic Code** ourselves, and how we teach it and how we support learners in learning it. If we are teaching in a school situation, we also need to be able to work in partnership with parents, sharing the information and the teaching steps with them.

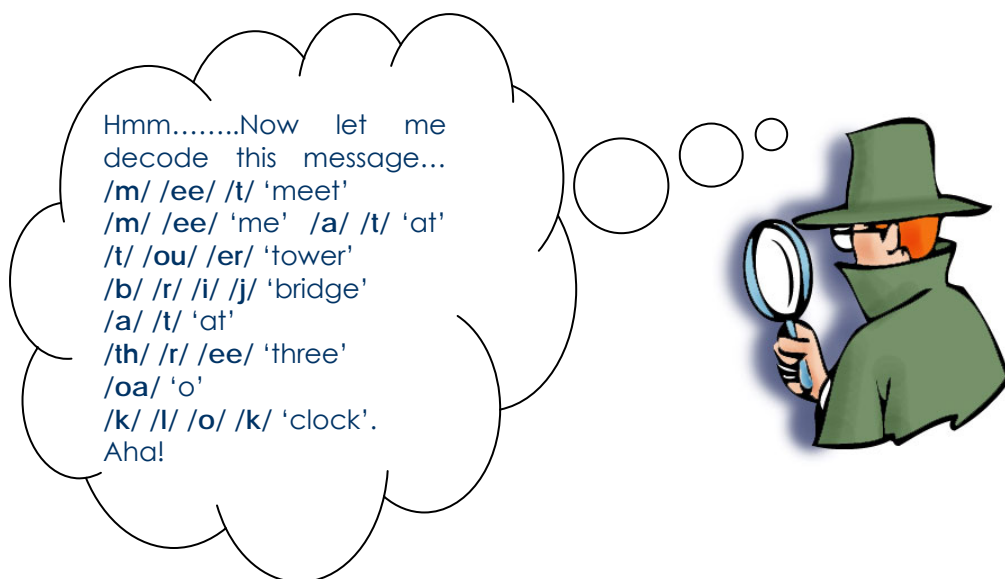
What do we mean by simple code and complex code ?

Introducing a **simple code** first involves teaching the letter/s-sound correspondences of mainly **one spelling** for each of the **44 phonemes** and then progressing on to teaching the **many alternative spellings** of the **same 44 phonemes** to build up knowledge of the **complex** or 'advanced' Alphabetic Code.

In Phonics International, the **STAGE ONE simple code** (units 1 - 5) **dips** into the complex code by going **beyond** just one spelling alternative for **some** of the phonemes (single sounds) of the English language. This means that examples of all the **complexities** of the English Alphabetic Code (page 13) are **introduced** during the **simple code** stage referred to as **STAGE ONE** on The two stage Teaching Model (page 17).

Understanding the reversibility of The Alphabetic Code

This **translation of the phonemes into graphemes** is the basis of our English language writing system and this is the **spelling** process leading to **written** words. **The Alphabetic Code also works in reverse direction for reading** where **graphemes are translated into phonemes** and the phonemes are then **blended** together (synthesised) to create the target **spoken** words.



Everyone needs to know and understand commonly **The Alphabetic Code** with the logic of its **reversibility** for spelling (encoding) and reading (decoding) and not just **The Alphabet** !

So what are the complexities of
The English Alphabetic Code ?

The three complexities of The English Alphabetic Code

1. In the English Alphabetic Code, a **phoneme** (the smallest sound) can be represented by **one, two, three or four letters** (graphemes); for example - **one** letter is code for each sound in 'hat' /h/ /a/ /t/; **two** letters is the code for the /sh/ sound in 'ship' /sh/ /i/ /p/; **three** letters is the code for the /igh/ sound in 'night' /n/ /igh/ /t/; **four** letters is the code for the /ai/ sound in 'eight' /ai/ /t/.
2. In the English Alphabetic Code, **one phoneme** (sound) is **sometimes** represented by **different spellings** (graphemes) as in the **chart above** where the phoneme (sound) /ai/ is illustrated with many different **spelling alternatives** (graphemes). Another example is the phoneme /oa/ which is represented by the following graphemes: o, oa, ow, oe, o-e, eau, ough. We can see the 'o' as in the word 'hello', the 'oa' as in 'coat', the 'ow' as in 'show', the 'oe' as in 'toe', the 'eau' as in 'chateau'; the 'ough' as in 'though'.

Note that in the Phonics International programme, **graphemes** and **words** are written **within single quotation marks** 'eau' and 'chateau' - whereas **phonemes** and **sound units** are written in **slash marks** as in /ai/, /igh/ and /oa/. The letters within the slash marks which are selected to express the phoneme, are **usually** (but not always) the **first grapheme introduced for that phoneme**. So, for example, the letter 't' is introduced **first** for the sound /t/ (as in 'teddy') so the single letter **t** also **becomes the notation in the slash marks to represent the phoneme**. The sound /k/, however, is notated by the letter **k** because this letter in real words is **consistently pronounced** as /k/ even though the letter 'c' (as in 'cat') is **introduced first**. This is because **c** is **sometimes code** for the sound /k/ (as in 'cat') but **c** is **sometimes code** for the sound /s/ (as in 'city') - so it makes better sense to use the letter **k** to express the sound /k/. There are numerous spelling alternatives for the sound /k/: ('c' as in 'cat'; 'k' as in 'kitten', 'ck' as in 'duck'; 'qu' as in 'quiche'; 'que' as in 'cheque'); but the **notation for the sound (phoneme) /k/** is consistently notated as the letter **k** within the slash marks.

3. In the English Alphabetic Code, there are some **spellings** (graphemes) which can represent **multiple sounds** (or 'various' or 'alternative' sounds); for example, the grapheme 'ough' can be code for: the sound /oa/ as in **though**; for the sound /or/ as in **thought**; for the sound /oo/ as in **through**; for the sound /ou/ as in **plough**; and for the sound /u/ as in **thorough**.

A key question to ask is whether we see charts of The Alphabetic Code in all the classrooms in the same way that we see charts of The Alphabet? Does everyone know the main graphemes and the alternative graphemes of the **44+** phonemes in the same way that they know the **26** letters in alphabetical order?

Phonics International promotes the wide use of The Alphabetic Code charts so that a common understanding can be shared amongst teachers, learners and the general public.

What do we need to know and teach about phonemic awareness ?

Children **naturally** split spoken words up into **larger** units of sound than phonemes. Very often the split will consist of **onset and rime** - for example; **c** - **at** or **cr** - **isp**. The learner can be **trained**, however, to segment spoken words into the **smallest** units of sound which are the **phonemes** - for example; /k/ /a/ /t/ or /k/ /r/ /i/ /s/ /p/. Teaching reading and spelling at **the level of the phoneme unit** of sound has been shown to be highly successful and to be **more flexible** and **more effective** than teaching in larger-sized units such as onset and rime and consonant clusters. The number of discrete units of sound that need to be taught is also reduced. What is the point of teaching separate **phoneme** units of sound /k/ /a/ /t/ /r/ /i/ /s/ /p/ **as well as** the sound units of **onset, rime** and **consonant clusters** such as **at, cr, isp, sp**?

When teachers teach at the level of phonemes for **one to one** mapping (as for the word **c-a-t**) and **in addition** teach the sounds units of consonant clusters and onset and rimes, then this unnecessarily **multiplies the teaching of discrete units** and it is a **potentially confusing** way to teach phonics.

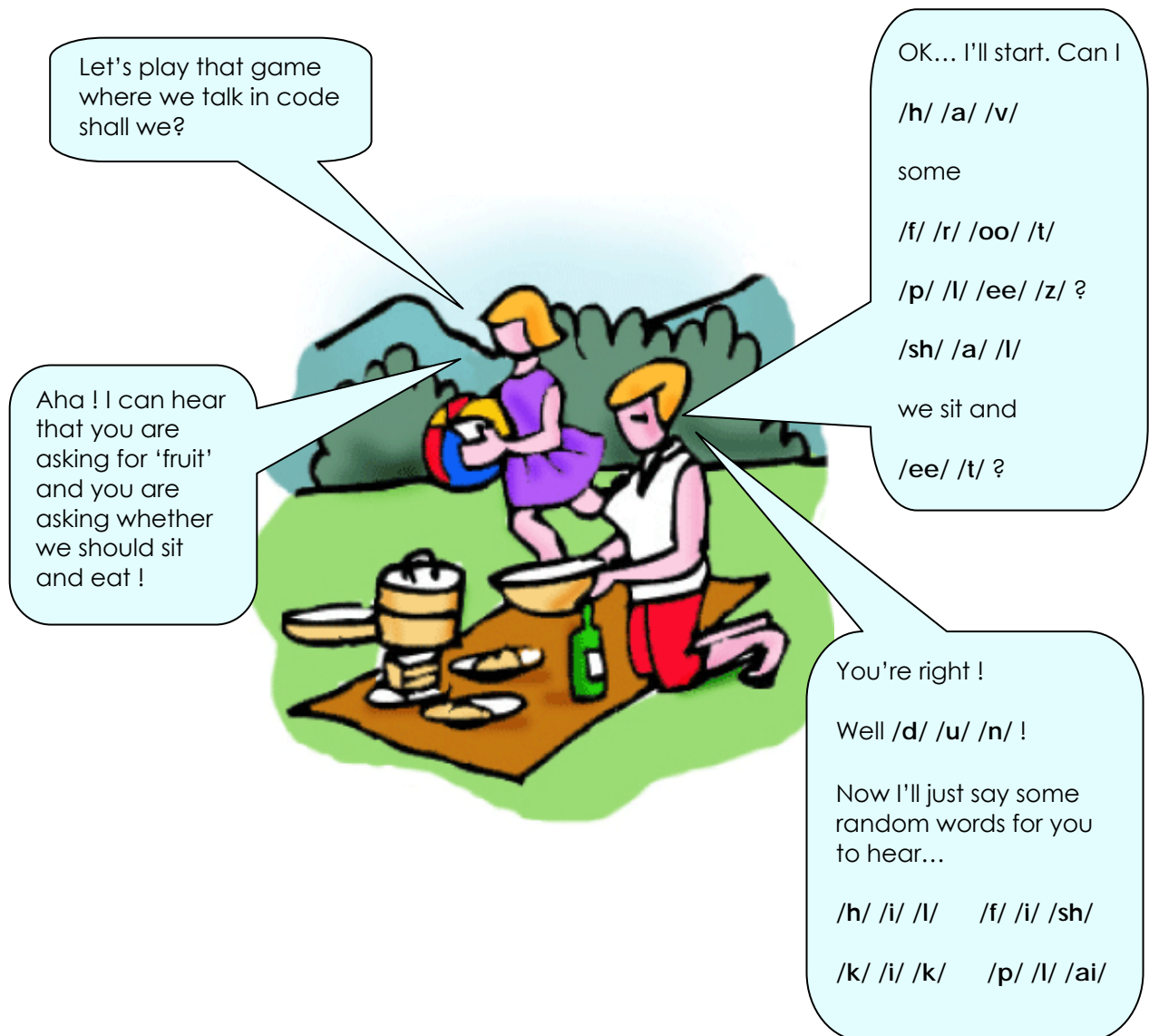
Bear in mind also, that whilst the teacher is busy introducing units of sound which are **onsets and rimes** (rimes include a vowel + word ending such as '-ack', '-ock', '-ick', '-imp', '-amp', '-ump', '-unk', '-ank', '-ink') and **consonant clusters** (known as 'beginning clusters' such as 'cr', 'st', 'spr' and 'end clusters' such as 'nd', 'lk', 'lt'), the teacher is not being systematic and steady in introducing the **phoneme** units of sound - the teacher is side-tracking, confusing and **complicating** the phonics teaching. Not only that - the skill of blending and segmenting the **phonemes** is being skewed by expecting learners to blend and segment with larger units of sound as well. The emphasis is invariably taken away from **the skills** of blending and segmenting and placed upon **the learning of more and more units of sound**. This simply makes no sense at all.

Unfortunately, long-standing phonics teaching tends to be based on the notion of onset and rime and consonant clusters, special needs teaching tends to be a mixed approach including these larger units of sound, the commercial market is flooded with long-standing material based on these larger units of sound - and therefore it is very hard to suggest that there is actually a **simpler and better** way to approach phonics teaching. It's not that the larger units of sound fail to work in terms of teaching effectiveness (although this could be the case for some learners), the suggestion (based on accumulating results from research and classroom findings) is that the **synthetic phonics** approach based on the **level of the phoneme** and the importance of the **skills** of **blending and segmenting all-through-the-word** is **more effective**.

So, whereas it seems that children more readily break whole spoken words up into larger units of sound, they can be **trained** to split up (segment) whole spoken words into phonemes (the smallest units of sound). It is then an easy step to provide the learner with the written code (the graphemes) for the phonemes. The indications are that it is very effective to teach phonemic awareness **whilst mapping the phonemes onto the written graphemes**. A further misunderstanding is the idea the learners need to be able to segment spoken words into phonemes as a **pre-requisite** to learning about letters **but this is not the case**. The latest government guidance in England 'Letters and Sounds' advises a 'Phase One' devoted to phonemic awareness. The three to four year olds are taken through oral exercises in phonemic awareness without the showing of letter shapes. It is perfectly possible, however, to wait until the children are **older** and then teach phonemic awareness **along with** mapping onto the graphemes. Surely it is better to focus on being able to speak in simple sentences before worrying about the splitting up of spoken whole words into their phonemes?

Activities for developing phonemic awareness

The ability to orally **segment** a spoken word into its phonemes from beginning to end of the word is a **sub-skill** necessary for **spelling**. This is part of developing **phonemic awareness** - the awareness of phonemes in spoken words. You can spell orally without knowing which letter shapes represent the phonemes. Start simply by modelling the process of orally segmenting a whole spoken word; "Can you see that /d/ /o/ /g/?" Eventually, the learner's 'ear' becomes attuned to be able to orally segment the phonemes all-through-the-spoken-word. See below where the mother is orally segmenting the words:



The **reverse process** of segmenting a spoken word into its phonemes (as the mother is doing) is to mentally **blend** the phonemes from beginning to end of a word to 'hear' and identify an **unknown** target word (this is what the daughter is doing). The ability to **identify** a whole word **from blending its phonemes** is a **sub-skill** of **reading**. You can therefore **blend** words orally without even seeing the words in print. This is part of developing **phonemic awareness**.

An activity where the teacher segments (splits up) the sounds all-through-the-spoken-word **within the context of a spoken sentence** is a **supported** activity to **attune** the learner's 'ear' to the segmenting of whole spoken words into their constituent phoneme units.

So you see, developing the learner's phonemic awareness **can** be accomplished **without any reference** to letters and letter groups (graphemes). This can be a fun activity to do on outings such as walks, picnics and on car rides along with such games as, "I hear with my little ear something beginning with the **sound** /f/..." (a more helpful version of "I spy with my little eye something beginning with the **letter** 'eff'"). Soon, the learner will be able to segment simple words orally like /h/ /a/ /t/ and /d/ /o/ /g/. Eventually, the learner's ability to segment spoken words into phonemes will extend to longer words such as /c/ /r/ /u/ /n/ /ch/.

Mapping the phonemes onto the graphemes

It is much more effective, however, to teach about phonemes in spoken words when the learner is **also shown** how the **phonemes** relate or 'map onto' the **graphemes** in printed words.

The **whole purpose** of the learner developing phonemic awareness is **in order to learn to read and spell**. So it makes much more sense to focus on teaching phonemic awareness **in the context of teaching about reading and spelling with the graphemes**.

In the Phonics International programme, the **Picture Cards** (and any real objects) can be used for developing phonemic awareness and the **Picture Posters** and '**Hear the Sounds**' audio resources take this one step further by **mapping the phonemes onto their graphemes in real words**.

Reversibility and its relationship to the three skills

The **synthetic phonics teaching principles** teach The Alphabetic Code both from **print-to-sound** for reading and from **sound-to-print** for spelling **from the outset**. It is understood that blending for reading and segmenting for spelling are the '**two sides of the same coin**' and that it is the **same** Alphabetic Code which is applied to both reading and spelling.

Blending all-through-the-printed-word:

Beginners will be able to read simple words when they can -

- visually track the printed word from **left** to **right** and recognise the graphemes
- say the phonemes (sounds) the graphemes represent quickly all-through-the-printed-word from left to right to enable the reader to...
- blend the individual phonemes (sounds) to 'hear' the target word and then say the word aloud (and, eventually, say the word silently as a 'thought' when reading to oneself.)

Segmenting all-through-the-spoken-word:

Beginners will be able to spell simple words when they can -

- segment and identify the individual phonemes all-through-the-spoken-word
- know the specific graphemes (letters and letter groups) which are code for the identified phonemes
- select the correct grapheme tiles, or write down the letters, in order from left to right

Writing letters, digraphs, whole words and simple sentences:

Beginners will be able to write words and simple sentences when they can -

- hold their pencil effectively - preferably with the traditional tripod grip
- form their letter shapes with ease correctly and automatically
- translate the phonemes which they can 'hold in their heads' into graphemes from left to right



This all seems logical and straightforward so why are there so many people who **don't read and spell well** ?

The **English** Alphabetic Code is very complex or **opaque** as it reflects the historical influence of several languages over many centuries. Some countries have much simpler written codes with a one to one correspondence (**one** sound of speech is represented by only **one** letter shape consistently). Simple written codes are significantly easier to teach thus literacy rates are much higher in countries where the code is more simple or **transparent**.

What about the teacher-training ?

To complicate matters further, teachers have been trained to use many **contradictory** methods to teach reading and they have often been advised to **mix** their methods of teaching reading. This has led to a situation where the **alphabetic principle** for teaching reading has sometimes been disregarded, or taught only in part along with a **range of reading strategies amounting to guessing words** from various **cues**. Consequently, there is a high percentage of illiteracy or semi-illiteracy in English-speaking countries causing international concern. Recent national inquiries in America, Australia and England have all concluded that synthetic phonics teaching is the most effective for beginning reading. The national conclusions **have not necessarily** been supported by the teacher-trainers and advisers and, as yet, learners are not guaranteed to be taught how to read and write by the synthetic phonics teaching principles.

Teacher-training has promoted a '**range of multi-cueing reading strategies**' for some time now. These following reading strategies are **not** part of the synthetic phonics teaching principles:

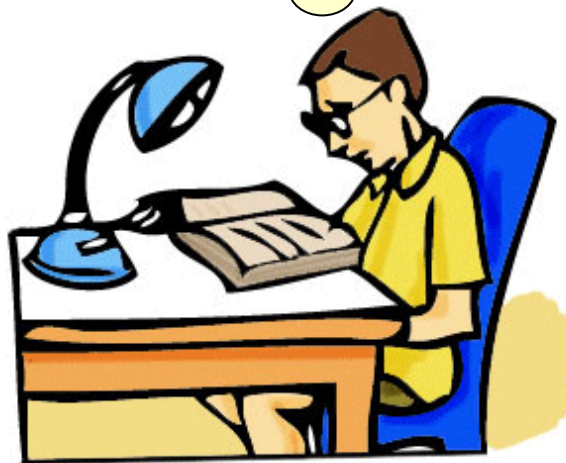
- learning words as global 'wholes' often as an 'initial sight vocabulary'
- guessing words from their whole shape (ascenders and descenders often used as clues)
- guessing words from picture clues
- guessing words from the context of the sentence or story line
- guessing words from the first letter or letters

The best way to **avoid** these strategies is **not to teach them** and **not to provide reading books** for the learner to read **independently** which are **beyond** his, or her, **code knowledge and blending skill**.

Decodable phonics **cumulative** reading books are far more preferable to **predictable text** and **repetitive text** reading books in the beginning stages of learning to read. Reading progress is often so rapid that most learners will soon be 'free readers'. The teacher needs to value reading **accuracy** over fluency and expression.

Reading with fluency and expression are higher-order reading skills and often teachers expect too much of beginners too soon. Learners can often read with 'fluency and expression' when they are 'reading a book' in their role-play as they **emulate** adult readers.

Hum....now let me think. I need to remember all my reading strategies. My teacher has told me to check the picture if I don't know a word so that I can make a guess. Hum... there is no picture. Not to worry, I can read a bit further and then go back and guess a word which makes sense. Oops - no I can't read on because I can't read very well in the first place. Ah well, I could always take a guess from the first letter of the word and see if that gets me the word. Or...hmm...perhaps I recognise its overall shape like the words on the flash cards at school. Let's see - there's a tall bit at the beginning and there's a tail bit going down there at the end. No... I don't recognise that particular shape. Oh no...why can't I read it? I've seen my younger brother reading this book with no problems.



Guess What ? No Guessing !

There is **no guessing words** from various multi-cueing strategies in the Phonics International Online Synthetic Phonics Programme!

More about the need to distinguish The Alphabetic Code from The Alphabet

We have established that wherever the English reading and writing system is being taught, there needs to be a distinction between teaching about **The Alphabet** and teaching about **The Alphabetic Code** and that their different roles and concepts need to be made explicit to the learner.

It is very helpful, therefore, to have a recognisable structure for **The Alphabetic Code** which is the 'code equivalent' of **The Alphabet**. A formalised structure for **The Alphabetic Code** (for example, the **44+ phonemes** always down the left hand column and graphemes across the rows). This would enable people - teachers and learners - to become readily familiar with the **contents** and the **concepts**.

With a recognisable structure in mind, the **Phonics International** Online Synthetic Phonics Programme provides many versions of the same chart - **Debbie's Simple to Complex Alphabetic Code overview chart** (informally known by some as 'Debbie's scroll') - to address the needs of the teachers and the learners for training, planning, teaching, learning, tracking, record-keeping and working in partnership with parents (when the 'teacher' is in a school setting).

What about all the colours on some of The Alphabetic Code charts?

The **colour code** included on some versions of the **The Alphabetic Code** chart simply helps to identify the **order of introduction** of the **12 units** of the **Phonics International** programme. This gives teachers and learners a very clear understanding of the correspondences that need to be learnt and the order of learning them. The colour coding also helps to split the code up visually into **manageable** and **memorable** chunks - thus the colours can serve the purpose of supporting teaching and learning the code whether or not the full **Phonics International** programme is used.

There are also **The Alphabetic Code** charts which can plot the teaching and learning progress by colouring-in or writing-over the graphemes over time. There are smaller versions of **The Alphabetic Code** charts with word examples which are suitable for sending home to parents so that they, too, are informed about the letter/s-sound correspondences which will be introduced. The charts which include **teaching points** and **key word examples** are ideal for whole school staff training and even older learners can benefit from the teaching points included on them.

Some of **The Alphabetic Code** charts are suitable for individual record-keeping and tracking like the versions of **Building up the Alphabetic Code**. These are charts for the simple code only and charts for the simple and complex codes.

Graphemes in and out of the context of words

Some of **The Alphabetic Code** charts include example **key words** to show the graphemes **in the context of real words**, and some charts, like the one following, illustrate only the graphemes.

The Alphabetic Code

(without key words)

simple code		complex code											
/s/	s	-ss	-ce	-se	ce	ci	cy	sc	-st-	ps			
/a/	a												
/t/	t	-tt	-ed										
/i/	i	*-y	-y	*-ey	*-ie				* sound between /i/ and /ee/				
/p/	p	-pp											
/n/	n	-nn	kn	gn	-ine								
/k/	c	k	-ck	ch	qu	que							
/e/	e	ea											
/h/	h								1) one sound can be represented by one, two, three or four letters: e.g. z-i-p, sh, ng, igh, ough 2) one sound can be represented by different spellings: e.g. o, oa, ow, oe, o-e, ough, eau 3) one spelling can represent multiple sounds: e.g. 'ough' - /oa/ though, /u/ thorough, /oo/ through, /ou/ bough, /or/ thought				
/r/	r	-rr	wr	rh									
/m/	m	-mm	-mb	-mn	-me								
/d/	d	-dd	-ed										
/g/	g	-gg	gu	gh	-gue								
/o/	o	wa	qua	alt									
/u/	u	o	-ou	ough									
/l/	l	-ll											
/ul/		-le	-il	-al	-el								
/f/	-ff	ph	-gh										
/b/	b	-bb	bu										
/j/	j	-ge	ge	gi	gy	-dge							
/y/	y												
/ai/	ai	ay	a	ae	a-e	-ey	eigh	-ea					
/w/	w	wh											
/oa/	oa	ow	o	oe	o-e	ough	eau						
/igh/	-igh	-ie	i	-y	i-e	ei							
/ee/	ee	ea	e	*-y	e-e	*-ey	-ie	-ine					
/or/	or	aw	au	al	oar	oor	ore	our	war	augh	ough		
/z/	z	-zz	-s	-se	-ze								
/ng/	-ng												
/ngk/	-nk												
/v/	v	-ve											
/oo/	oo												
/oo/	oo	-ue	u-e	-ew	-ui	-ou	-o	ough					
/ks/	-x	-ks	-k-s					/gz/	-x	-gs	-ggs		
/ch/	ch	-tch						/chu/	-ture				
/sh/	sh	ch	-ti	-ci	-ssi								
/th/	th												
/th/	th												
/kw/	qu												
/ou/	ou	ow	ough										
/oi/	oi	oy											
/yoo/	u	-ue	u-e	ew	eu								
/er/	er	ir	ur	ear	wor			schwa	-er	-our	-re		
/ar/	ar	alm	alf	alv	(a)								
/air/	air	are	ear	ere				STAGE ONE	grey = units 1 - 5				
/eer/	eer	ear	ere	ier				STAGE TWO	white - units 6 - 12				
/zh/	-si	-s	-z										

The Phonics International Sounds Book activity sheets

The best way to teach reading and spelling in the English language is to teach the **core code knowledge** of The Alphabetic Code in systematic steps and the **three skills** of: 1) blending (decoding=reading), 2) segmenting (encoding=spelling) and 3) handwriting. This core information is provided in the **Sounds Book** activity sheets. Other Phonics International resources support the core teaching and learning in the **Sounds Book** activity sheets. Teachers need to decide how best to use the support material for their learners' needs. The **Sounds Book** activity sheets are essential for **ALL** learners and should be used systematically and regularly.

In Phonics International, teaching the **core code knowledge** refers to teaching the letter/s-sound correspondences as outlined in detail in the **Sounds Book** activity sheets and illustrated on **The Alphabetic Code** charts (page 13) in the order listed in the units of work below:

The letter/s-sound correspondences core code knowledge

	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

The three essential technical skills

1. **READING** - sounding out and **blending** (synthesising) the phonemes represented by the letters and letter groups (graphemes) all-through-the-**printed**-word, from left to right (e.g. /c/ /u/ /p/ = "**cup**")
2. **SPELLING** - **segmenting** (or splitting up) the smallest identifiable sounds (phonemes) all-through-the-**spoken**-word (e.g. "**zip**" is segmented to /z/ /i/ /p/) and then knowing the **written code** - the graphemes - which represent the phonemes
3. **WRITING** - **recording** 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 three complexities of The English Alphabetic Code are made very explicit

1. **one sound** (phoneme) can be represented by **one, two, three or four letters**:
e.g. k, sh, ng, igh, eigh
 2. **one sound** (phoneme) can be represented by **different spellings** (graphemes):
e.g. /oa/ can be represented by o, oa, ow, oe, o-e, eau, ough
 3. **one spelling** can represent **multiple sounds** (or 'various' phonemes):
e.g. 'ough' can be:- /oa/ though, /or/ thought, /oo/ through, /ou/ plough, /u/ thorough
- Most importantly, learners are **not taught** the multi-cueing 'range of reading strategies' which amount to guessing words from whole-word shapes and picture, context and initial letter cues. There is **NO GUESSING WORDS** in this programme.
 - **Regional accent** must always be taken into account when teaching phonics; "In this country [county or region], we use this grapheme as code for this phoneme" and, "We pronounce that grapheme this way in our country [county or region]". This means some minor allowances or adjustments may need to be made to The Alphabetic Code overview chart and some materials in the programme.
 - Synthetic Phonics **does not involve** the teaching of written code for **different sized units of sound** such as **onset and rime** (m-op, sp-ark, ch-ill) and **consonant clusters**. Consonant clusters are sometimes referred to as **initial blends** and **end blends** but in synthetic phonics these are **not taught as if they were discrete units of sound** (that is: br, scr, tw, scr, spl, tr, str, gr; -st, -nd, -ld, -ct, -lk, -pt, and so on).

Letter sounds need to be distinguished from letter names

Letter **names** do not need to be learnt at all by the beginner. Letter names can **get in the way** of learning to read because the beginner may develop a tendency to utter automatically the letter **name** in response to seeing letter shapes. Many phonics experts advise that, **at first**, letter shapes are taught according to the sounds they represent and **not** their letter names **until good blending and segmenting skills are established**. This reduces early learning and avoids any confusion between names and sounds. The teacher says, "This letter **is the code for /s/**" and, "In this word, those letters **are the code for /ee/**".

If the learner arrives at school saying letter names, praise his/her knowledge and simply explain that "When we learn about reading and spelling, we are going to say the sounds and not worry about the letter names at the moment". When teaching early reading and spelling skills, always **refer to sounds** and not letter names. The letters **a, e, i, o, u** can represent the sounds as in 'at', 'enter', 'in', 'on' and 'up' (referred to as 'short vowel sounds') and they can also represent the sounds as in 'able', 'me', 'kind', 'old' and 'unit' ('long vowel sounds' - taught during unit 2) - **but avoid** saying that the letters **a, e, i, o, u** can "say their names".

Have you thought about this ?

The advent of 'The Alphabet' can lead people to think in terms of there being only 'five vowels' (a, e, i, o, u) but of course these are just vowel **letters**. The written code for many vowel **phonemes** includes **both** vowel letters and **consonant letters** (e.g. ar, ir, air, igh). Vowel correspondences with 'r' are sometimes referred to as 'r-controlled vowels'.

There is a need to distinguish between vowel and consonant 'letter shapes' (red and blue on The Alphabet chart above on page 2) and vowel and consonant 'phonemes' (red and blue on The Alphabetic Code chart above on page 13).

Of course, vowel letters in The Alphabet **are** code for vowel phonemes. The letter 'y' is regarded as having a dual role as code for a consonant phoneme and as code for vowel phonemes expressed as: /i/, /igh/, /i-ee/ or /ee/. Even in its consonant role, however, the y still sounds very close to /ee/. For example, take the word 'yacht' which is pronounced close to /ee/ /o/ /t/. Try saying the sound /ee/ alone, however. What shape does your mouth take compared to when you say "yacht". Is it different?

Some people also suggest that w is really a vowel phoneme rather than a consonant phoneme. You may hear w as close to an /oo/ sound. For example, consider the word 'wet' which is pronounced /oo/ /e/ /t/ if you listen very carefully and experiment with saying the sounds in the word. People tend to add a schwa /u/ sound when they say w and y in isolation out loud, that is "wuh" and "yuh". It is actually very difficult not to add the **schwa** - but also that is the way that pupils are usually taught at school in their infant days to sound out these letters. The reality and effect of 'adding a schwa' is not always addressed in reading instruction or widely understood.

Dependent on pronunciation, there are about **20** vowel phonemes including /y+long oo/ (sometimes notated as /yoo/ or /ue/); and about **24** consonant phonemes **plus** combinations /k+s/ (sometimes notated as /ks/ or /x/), /ng+k/ (sometimes notated as /nk/) and /k+w/ (sometimes notated as /qu/).

Vowel Phonemes

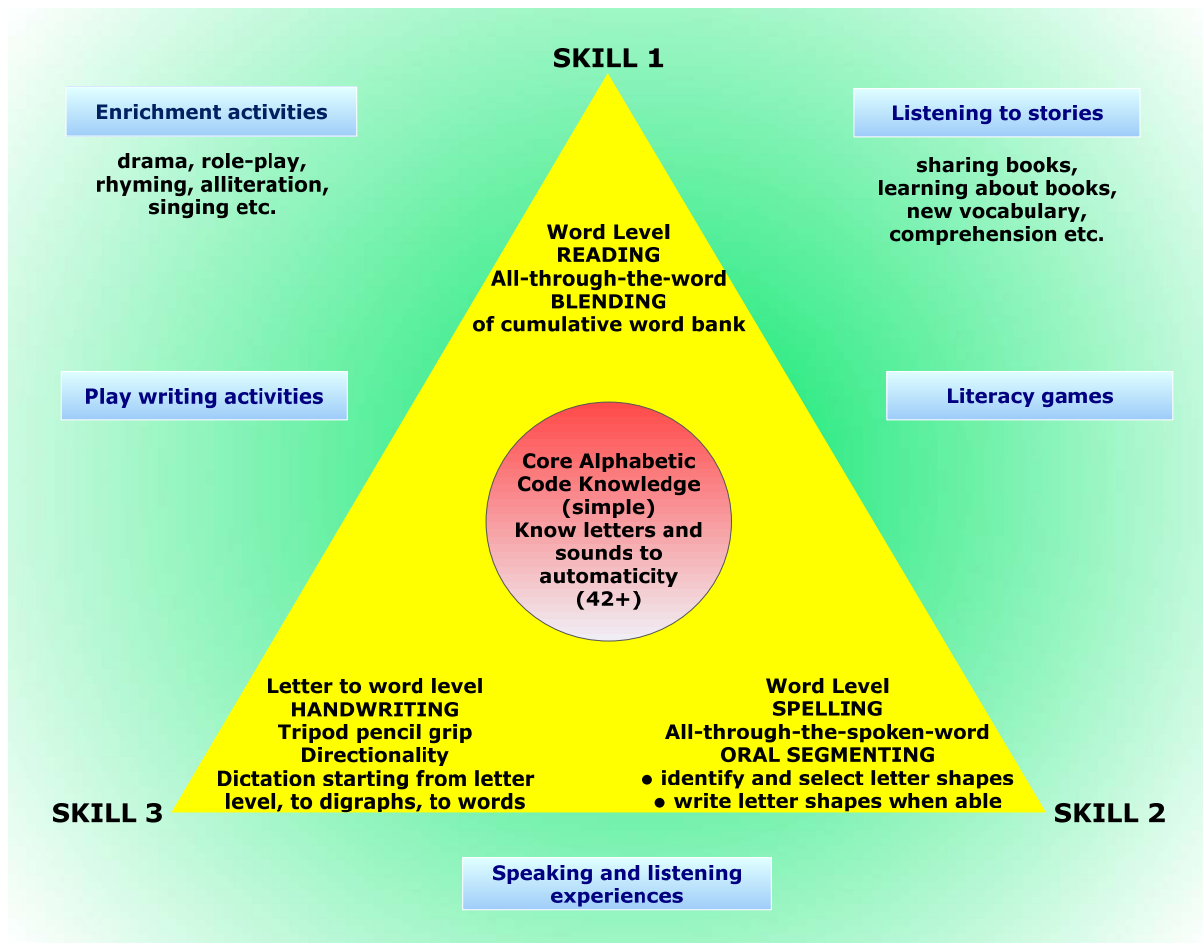
/a/ /i/ /e/ /o/ /u/ /ai/ /oa/ /igh/ /ee/ /or/ /oo/
long /oo/ /ou/ /oi/ /er/ /ar/ /air/ /eer/
/y+oo/ /i-ee/

Consonant Phonemes

/s/ /t/ /p/ /n/ /k/ /h/ /r/ /m/ /d/ /g/ /l/ /f/ /b/ /j/ /y/
/w/ /z/ /ng/ /v/ /ch/ /sh/ /th/ voiced /th/ /zh/
/k+s/ /ng+k/ /k+w/

The two stage Teaching Model

STAGE ONE - The Communication, Language and Literacy Curriculum (beginners / special needs)

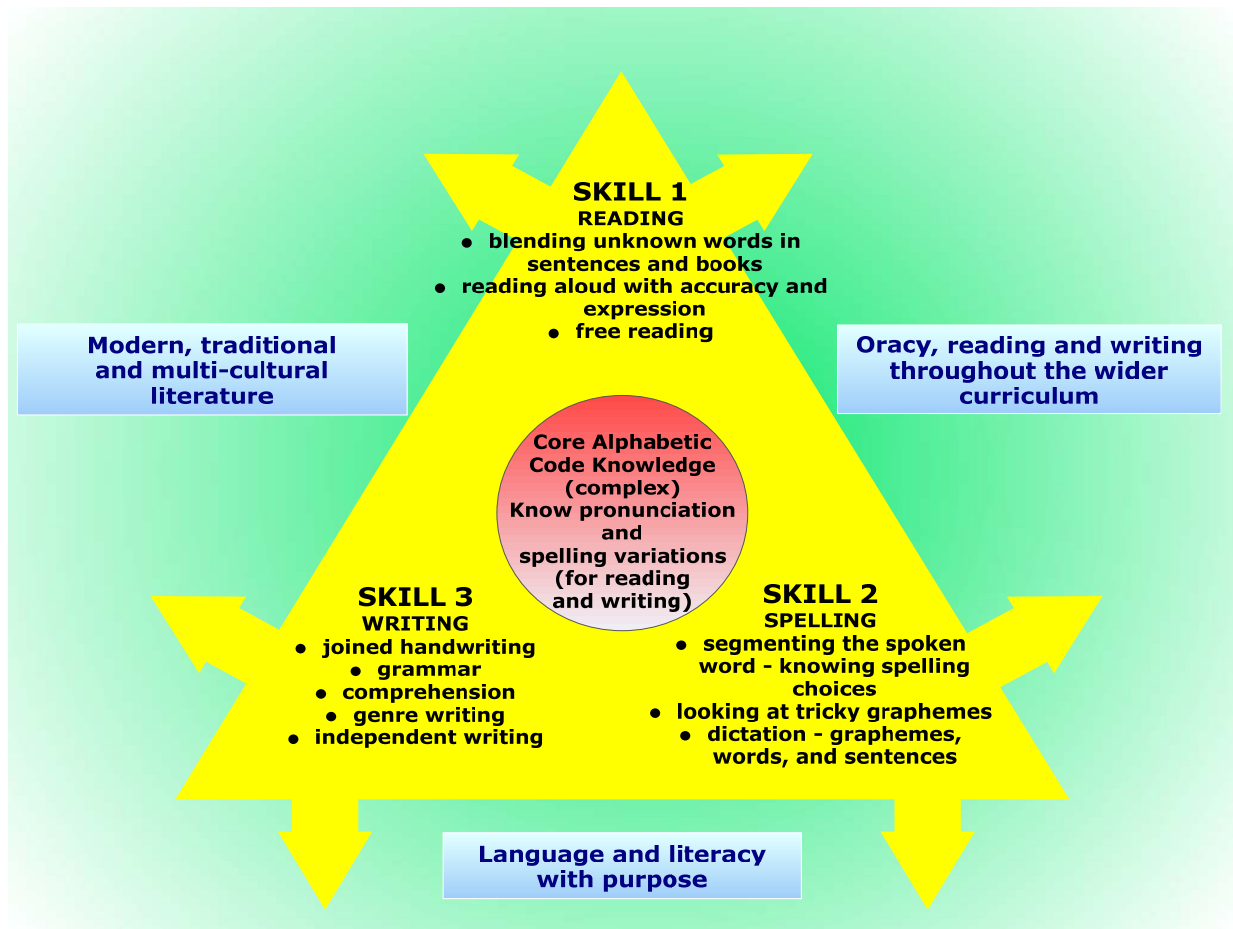


STAGE ONE - In synthetic phonics teaching, beginners are not required to read books independently which are beyond their level of Alphabetic Code knowledge and blending skill, but they do have **free access** to any books and share books with adults in a variety of ways. The teacher identifies the precise learning intention for activities. For example, the teacher would not worry about teaching letter/s-sound correspondences whilst reading a lovely story book to the children or demonstrating how an information book can be used!

Remember - learners are **never taught** words as whole shapes and they are **not taught** letter names **at first**. They learn the letter/s-sound correspondences quickly. In this programme, the recommended start-off pace is to introduce a new correspondence **every alternate day** with revision the following day. The letter/s-sound correspondences are **modelled** in all-through-the-word blending (synthesising) for reading and all-through-the-spoken-word segmenting for spelling from **week one**. Most importantly, learners are **not taught** the multi-cueing 'range of reading strategies' which amount to guessing from picture, context and initial letter cues. There is **NO GUESSING WORDS** in this programme.

Without competent handwriting skills, learners cannot record the spellings they may know orally but they can select letter tiles, magnetic letters or letters on the 'CanDoCubes'. A **tripod pencil hold** needs to be taught from the earliest days. For older learners identified with literacy special needs, **teach or re-visit** the core knowledge and skills as illustrated in the **STAGE ONE** Teaching Model.

STAGE TWO - Progression to the complex Alphabetic Code and integration with the wider curriculum



STAGE TWO - Once the learners know to automaticity at least **one** version of letters and letter groups (graphemes) to represent the 44+ sounds of speech (phonemes), they then need to learn further common **spelling variations** of the phonemes. The learner needs to be knowledgeable about **letter/s-to-sound** correspondences for reading and **pronunciation variations**. Teachers and learners need to know and understand the **reversibility** of The Alphabetic Code and the three complexities of the code.

Handwriting skills should be learnt to automaticity and fluency. Learners need plenty of opportunity to practise handwriting 'little and often' - but also thoroughly. In the **Phonics International** programme, handwriting is linked to **learning code knowledge** and, in addition, there is **discrete practice of letter formation**. As the learners gain basic reading and writing knowledge and skills, they themselves will apply these to a wider range of activities and integration will occur within the wider curriculum - both planned by the teacher and occurring naturally through the learners' interest and capability. Teachers may add 'leaders' and 'joins' by hand to the handwriting resources.

Some older learners may have the **intellect** of their peers but their **code knowledge** may be within the **STAGE ONE** level of basic literacy. Teachers must not assume that poor levels of literacy equate to poor general ability and the learner must be provided with lessons to match **all** their intellectual needs **and** their basic literacy knowledge and skills. **Intervention** programmes of work should include intensive teaching but **still consist of the synthetic phonics teaching principles** and not a return to flawed methods of the multi-cueing guessing strategies.

Focusing the teaching

The teacher needs to have a good understanding of the small steps involved with **both** reading and spelling and take care not to overteach reading at the expense of spelling or vice versa. This is why the **Sounds Book** activity sheets are **very important**. They emphasise the learning of **code knowledge** (the correspondences) **and** the **three essential skills** - with opportunity for vocabulary development and phonemic awareness development in addition.

Remember - be careful not to **underteach** any of the three skills. For example, whilst it is common for the teacher to show grapheme **Flash Cards** for quick-fire responses of the learner **saying the sounds** which is a sub-skill of **reading**, what equivalent **daily** activity is rehearsed for spelling and handwriting? The **teacher** could daily 'say the sounds' and the **learner** then **points to graphemes** on a chart or selects grapheme tiles or **writes the graphemes**.

Even when the learner **can** read and spell and teaching has broadened out significantly to include grammar and written comprehension and other higher order knowledge and skills, the teaching of code knowledge and the skills **needs to continue** for some time at higher levels. Some learners seem to have almost 'photographic' memories when it comes to **spelling** ability - but others just have to work very hard at learning to **associate specific words with specific spelling patterns** and it is vital that teachers can teach **spelling** systematically for several years until good spelling is automatic.

Assessment

Having just referred to the need for teachers to plan their teaching to achieve a balance between **teaching new letter/s-sound correspondences** and the **rehearsal of the three skills** of blending, segmenting and handwriting, it is timely to discuss 'assessment'. Assessment and testing is very important for teachers in terms of gaining clarity as to what learners really know and can do compared to our impressions! Teachers can sometimes achieve a 'feel good' factor with modern synthetic phonics teaching whereby, for example, flashing grapheme cards at the class, or group, of children will receive an enthusiastic and interactive response to confirm to the teacher that the children are enjoying themselves and that they are learning their sounds! But who exactly knows their letter/s-sound correspondences? Who exactly can blend and segment all-through-the-word? In the wider educational domain, how effective is the teaching compared to classes of a similar intake?

It was the scrutiny of formal standardised testing which alerted people to the fact that reading standards in England had gone down compared to previous times and eventually it was understood that the teaching methods themselves had affected the average standards of reading in primary schools. Schools need to adopt some simple **standardised reading tests** to compare with other schools but the assessment in classes and tutoring can be simple, purposeful and diagnostic.

Eventually, the **Phonics International** programme may provide a greater range of assessment material but at the moment there is a simple **Alphabet Letter Baseline Assessment** for younger learners and a **Baseline Assessment with Nonsense Words** suitable for a quick diagnostic assessment for older learners. There are also proformas for group or class assessment based on the letters of **The Alphabet** and based on the order of introduction of graphemes of the **Phonics International** programme (in a colour version and in a plain version). Tracking on these proformas can continue for the group, class or individual and be **passed on to the following teachers**.

It may take three years or more to teach **The Alphabetic Code** - and much longer to teach spelling which needs to continue until all learners are competent spellers.

The teacher needs to consider providing several columns for each pupil for record-keeping - or keep several types of record-keeping sheets to address:

- knows (specify) code knowledge from print to sound (see the grapheme, say the phoneme)
- knows (specify) code knowledge from sound to print (hear the phoneme, point to the grapheme)
- has the skill of blending all-through-the-printed-word for reading (words of various complexities - specify vc, cvc, ccvc, cvcc, multi-syllable)
- has the skill of orally segmenting all-through-the-spoken-word (does not need to know the graphemes)
- knows the graphemes which represent the identified phonemes all-through-the-spoken-word
- can handwrite the letter shapes correctly from memory (lower case, then later upper case)
- can handwrite the graphemes identified during oral segmenting for spelling
- knows possible pronunciation alternatives for graphemes in common words
- advanced skill - knows exact spelling **alternatives** for specific words used commonly

Where learners are clearly showing signs of good, steady progress, the teacher does not have to assess these things in a formal way or make the assessment an onerous activity. Where learners are clearly struggling to recall letter/s-sound correspondences readily and they are not learning the skills of blending and segmenting, then the teacher needs to be clear about the learner's needs and then plan carefully how to address any difficulties. In a school situation, the rationale of **Phonics International**, as has been described, is to work in partnership with parents. It could be that extra attention at home as well as in school to rehearse new teaching at school is sufficient to get the learner on track. **Little and often** is a very effective teaching and learning technique and it really helps when everyone understands the importance of keeping up with the phonics teaching and rehearsing it whilst it is being introduced in the small, systematic steps.

The **Phonics International** programme provides resources which can be used readily for games and activities at home. The parents can use sets of **Grapheme Tiles** which are provided per unit, the **Pairs Games**, and the **Say the Sounds Posters** (three in each of units 1 - 5) can be available to use both at school and at home. The **Say the Sounds Booklets** are designed specifically for use in the home. The **My Words** word lists can be used at school and at home and any of the resources such as the **Read the words, make up a story**, the **I can read, write and draw**, the **I can read** texts, can be used **both** in school and be sent home as **sharing-with-parents** homework activities.

The **Phonics International** activity resources themselves are often **suitable as assessment materials** as well as being helpful for teaching and learning. For example, copies of the **Say the Sounds Posters** can be used as A3 posters around the classroom for all learners to use but also individual A4 copies can be used to test and tick off the individual learners' code knowledge. Each learner is asked to say the sounds of the graphemes on the posters at the end of the units 1 to 5 and the teacher uses a coloured pen to tick off the graphemes and date the assessment.

The same sheet can be used later with a different coloured pen to date and tick off any new learning. (Bear in mind, sometimes learners forget their learning so you may discover regression!) These posters can also be used in reverse, the teacher says the sound and the learner has to point to the correct grapheme. The teacher can tick off on a separate copy of the poster which graphemes the learner pointed to correctly.

The **Say the Sounds Booklets** have lists of each unit's graphemes at the back of the booklets (units 1 to 6) and so the parents can use these to tick off which graphemes the learner recognises automatically at the end of a unit.

The teacher can select appropriate grapheme **Flash Cards** to show the learner for a quick response (say the sound). The teacher makes two piles - a pile of graphemes that the learner knows well, a pile of graphemes that the learner does not know well. The teacher can then privately record the graphemes from the pile of cards that the learner knows well - or handle assessment whereby it is a natural process of celebration of knowledge and skills learned. This is preferable. Learners then are fully engaged in the notion of 'real learning' and achievement - or the need to put in a little extra practice. Assessment can be undertaken using the same type of games and activities that the learners are familiar with so that this does not seem like formal testing but just an extension and acceptable part of the teaching and learning process.

Teachers can also explain that 'the teacher' needs to know what he, or she, is teaching well and where he, or she, may need to focus the teaching next. The use of the **Colour the Code** or the **Write-over the Graphemes Alphabetic Code** posters can be used to **plot the teaching** and measure general class or group progress. These can also be used at home stuck onto a wardrobe or wall with blu-tac to **track successful learning** of letter/s-sound correspondences. There is no reason why these posters cannot be used both at school to note what has been **introduced** and at home for the individual to note what has been **learnt**. The flexibility of the many resources is why the **Phonics International** programme can claim to foster a genuine partnership between school and home - and also to be suitable for use alongside other commercial or in-house programmes.

Vocabulary development, speaking and listening:

Teaching the mechanics of reading and spelling also provides a good opportunity to build up the learner's **bank of vocabulary** (knowledge of words and phrases and their meaning) and **speaking and listening skills**.

If a word is not in the **oral** (spoken) vocabulary of the learner, then the act of **decoding** the word is meaningless. [Note, however, that blending **nonsense** words or words **not known** by the learner is still a legitimate and effective way to **teach the skill** of blending.] The learner may well be able to sound out and blend "/d/ /o/ /g/ **dog**", but if the learner does not know what a dog is, then decoding of the word fails to **activate meaning**. In the context of a sentence, however, the reader may be able to deduce the meanings of new words - although it is possible that the reader may deduce the meaning incorrectly. Without oral knowledge of the word, the learner may have greater difficulty to 'hear' the sounded out target word and may not be able to 'tweak' the blended word to its correct pronunciation where this might be necessary.

In **Phonics International**, activities are introduced which afford specific opportunities to **increase the learner's vocabulary bank and to improve speaking and listening skills**. The teacher needs to **allow time** for this vocabulary development.

This is particularly of relevance to younger learners and to learners for whom **English is an additional language**. “I can sound out /d/ /o/ /g/. I can blend the sounds to say “**dog**”. But what is a ‘**dog**’? I can see that animal is labelled ‘**dog**’ so now I understand that a ‘**dog**’ is **that animal**”.

Synthetic phonics advocates have worked hard to raise awareness of teaching letter/s-sound correspondences much more rapidly than the previous ‘one letter a week’ approach - and to **put them to use immediately** in words for reading and spelling. In the **Phonics International** programme, the suggestion is that a **new** correspondence is introduced, more or less, every **alternate** day to take the time to revise it the next day through creative activities such as the ‘**Read the words, make up a story**’ strand in units 1 - 6. Teachers have to **use their discretion**, however, as to whether to speed up or slow down the introduction of new letter/s-sound correspondences or ‘take a week out’ to revise correspondences introduced to date - or even ‘to have a week off’ to rehearse for a school performance or undertake a special project.

The frequency of **homophones** in the English language (words pronounced in the same way but differing in meaning, or spelling, or both) can be explored. For example, “/t/ /a/ /p/ **tap**.” “What does ‘**tap**’ mean?” “Where else might we use that word?” “How many meanings does that word have?” “Can you say that word in a simple sentence?” “Can you use the same word but with a different meaning in a simple sentence?”

For young learners this may well be the first steps of learning about ‘**word classes**’ perhaps starting with talking about **nouns** which we can generally touch and see and which start with the definite or indefinite article, “**the tap**”, “**a tap**”. Follow this with the concept of **verbs**, “I can **tap**, you can **tap**, he can **tap**” commonly known as ‘doing’ words or ‘action’ words.

Handwriting

In this programme, there are frequent handwriting opportunities through both **discrete** letter-writing practice **and** handwriting **linked to the phonics** learning. The resources provide many opportunities for the learner to see **letters positioned correctly on writing-lines** and to write correctly on the lines. Lined proformas are provided which can be used flexibly for handwriting practice, spelling routines, dictation exercises and creative writing. Teachers can easily add ‘by hand’ **leaders and writing joins** to the print letter shapes to create and model a **joined-up** writing style where appropriate.

Drawing

Drawing plays a major role in the programme. Opportunities to draw can engage the learner, increase multi-**sensory** learning, improve pencil skills and observational skills, act as a **mnemonic** (aid to memory) for words, sounds and meanings and is a rewarding activity in itself. Some drawings may be invented and some drawings may be copied from other illustrations or from real objects. Support and encourage learners to draw carefully and thoughtfully and they may take additional pride in their activities.

Mnemonic Systems

Teachers frequently choose a commercial phonics programme because they are attracted by the programme's **mnemonic** system. A mnemonic system is designed to '**aid memory**'. In other words, learning a letter shape and the sound the letter represents is often achieved by using a **key word** and **key object** where the **first** letter and sound is the focus letter and sound. For example, **a** for apple, **b** for ball, **c** for cat, **d** for dog, **e** for egg - with pictures of the animals and objects.

Some mnemonic systems attempt to **illustrate** the **entire letter shape** as a specific animal, object or character. The intent is that the learner (often a young child) is attracted to the animal, object or character and will therefore more readily remember the letters. Unfortunately, this can result in the learner remembering the object, animal or character - but not necessarily go on to relate an unadulterated letter shape with its pure sound. The ultimate purpose of the exercise should be that the learner sees a letter shape and automatically says, or thinks of, its corresponding phoneme so that the sounding out and blending process can occur for reading. In any event, the learner needs to learn not only the single letter shapes but also needs to recognise letter groups and respond by saying the associated phoneme. So teachers need to be aware of just how far any mnemonic system 'extends' in terms of learning the advanced **Alphabetic Code**. How does the programme evolve over time for the learner to be weaned away from the mnemonic system?

Some mnemonic systems are designed to help the learner to recall the letter shape and its sound - but also how to **write** the letter shape. An innovative development of mnemonic systems is a multi-sensory approach whereby the letter shapes are unadulterated but associated with an 'action' and a 'pure sound' (without the schwa added on to the consonant letters as far as is practicable). The child sees the letter shape and automatically does the associated action and says the sound. This can captivate young children in particular and has been shown to be very successful in aiding memory and inspiring enthusiasm.

Mnemonic systems can be an attraction for both the teacher and the learner but it is very important that the teacher **evaluates** the mnemonic system for its advantages and disadvantages. At first glance, a mnemonic system can seem to be very child-friendly but the longer term effect needs to be considered.

Sometimes the mnemonic system only goes so far (for example, the alphabet letters or perhaps for the introduction of a 'simple code') but this might be far enough in terms of getting the teacher and children motivated to begin to learn the letters and sounds. Unfortunately, some teachers are unaware of the need to carry on teaching phonemes and graphemes beyond either **The Alphabet** or beyond a version of the 'simple code' of **The Alphabetic Code**. Then the teaching and learning is expected to continue through the reading of books and a more incidental approach to phonics teaching. The UK government's new guidance '**Letters and Sounds**' based on the **Rose Report** acknowledges the need for rigorous systematic phonics teaching going beyond Reception classes into Year One and Year Two classes as discrete and explicit synthetic phonics teaching and learning - not incidental - and to extend right through the complex code.

The use of **Phonics International** does not prevent teachers from using a commercial mnemonic system if they have evaluated it and have found it to be genuinely effective in aiding the teaching and learning. The resources of the **Phonics International** programme are suitable as core teaching and learning material to complement a good mnemonic system which is also based on synthetic phonics teaching.

The **Phonics International** programme, however, **does not require** a specific mnemonic system other than the one that is embedded in the methods and materials described in the programme itself. For example, there are some key words and key objects which will help to attract learners to the programme and to recall the first sounds of the words and objects. A feature of this programme, however, is that it models new phonemes and graphemes in **all positions of words** from the outset so there is little point in over-emphasising key words and key objects where only the first letter and sound is studied.

This makes the **Phonics International** programme suitable for all ages and needs of learners. The illustrations are designed so that they are not 'cute and cuddly' to avoid the idea that phonics teaching is 'baby stuff'. Too often students struggling to read and spell well have interpreted any additional teaching they have been offered as '**A, B, C baby stuff**' and they may be embarrassed to attend extra lessons. This is so tragic. The chances are that had they received rigorous synthetic phonics teaching in the first place, there would be no need for later tutors to 'pick up the pieces'.

In any event, application of blending all-through-the-word for reading new, unknown or rarely-read words is exactly what most skilled adult readers do, and segmenting all-through-the-spoken-word to spell a long, unknown or rarely-used word phonically is exactly what most skilled adult writers do [usually by way of syllable - or word chunk - splitting up]. **These phonic skills are competent adult skills** and yet people struggling with basic literacy are unlikely to appreciate this fully. In fact, most people generally have **never thought through** the processes that they use automatically when they read and spell more difficult words - and this includes many junior and secondary school teachers! When teachers support students by **relaying letter names** for a requested spelling, they are not modelling the processes of a competent adult speller which is arguably what any teacher should do - they are falling into the conventional trap of reeling-off the letter names and thus, unwittingly, they are failing to move the students forwards in the spelling skills they need for life!

A list of the Phonics International Resources

Assessment - age and stage appropriate methods and material

- 'say the sounds' (and later 'say the letter names') a - z baseline assessment
- group record-keeping proforma for single letters a - z assessment
- group record-keeping proforma for tracking letter/s-sound correspondences (colour or plain version) showing graphemes introduced in all units (6xA4)
- one letter: one sound assessment with real and nonsense words and a common grapheme assessment with real and nonsense words
- provided **free** in unit 1

Parents' Letter and Parents' Reading Guidance

- provided **free** in unit 1

The Alphabet posters

- colour your alphabet letters
- upper and lower case letters in black
- upper and lower case vowel letters in red, consonant letters in blue
- Mini A4 Alphabet Poster for individual learner use
- provided **free** in unit 1

Picture Cards

- phonemic awareness and vocabulary development
- in each unit 1 to 6

Picture Posters

- mapping phonemes to graphemes in all positions of the words
- in each unit 1 to 6

'Hear the Sounds'

- online audio-visual resource of **Picture Posters** material to hear the phonemes and to hear whole spoken words with the focus phonemes and graphemes

Colour-in Sounds Book

- build up a 'code book' for home and school
- in each unit 1 to 6

Sounds Book – MOST IMPORTANT STRAND OF THE PROGRAMME!

- cumulative new code knowledge and essential skills practice with detailed **explanations for the teacher** on every activity sheet – add to the 'home' code book
- in each unit 1 to 12

Mini Posters

- visual aids to support **Sounds Book** code knowledge
- in each unit 1 to 12

Say the Sounds Booklets

- for individuals to see the grapheme, say the sound in quick response
- in each unit 1 to 6

Say the Sounds Posters

- grey graphemes for consonant sounds, black graphemes for vowel sounds
- three posters in each unit 1 to 5 (15 in total) with graphemes for each unit

Grapheme Flash Cards

- STAGE ONE simple code set not on lines (provided **free** in unit 1)
- STAGE ONE simple code set on lines (provided **free** in unit 1)
- STAGE ONE giant classroom set not on lines (provided **free** in unit 1)
- Capital letters also code for phonemes (provided in unit 2)
- Capital letters on lines (provided in unit 2)
- Extension set for building verbs not on lines (provided in unit 3)
- Extension set for building verbs on lines (provided in unit 3)
- STAGE TWO complex code set, four cards per A4, not on lines (provided in unit 6)
- STAGE TWO complex code set, four cards per A4, on lines (provided in unit 6)
- STAGE TWO giant class set, 2 cards per A4, not on lines (provided in unit 6)

Make and Break small letter/s-sound correspondence cards

- simple code set (provided **free** in unit 1)
- complex code set (provided **free** in unit 1)

Pairs Games

- grapheme tiles including lower and upper case single letters all on lines
- sets provided to cover all letter/s-sound correspondences in each unit 1 to 6

Grapheme Tiles for spelling

- choose 'dark teal' or print in monochrome for black graphemes, or...
- grey graphemes for consonant sounds, black graphemes for vowel sounds
- in each unit 1 to 12

Read the words, make up a story

- revise new letter/s-sound correspondence, build vocabulary, speaking and listening
- in each unit 1 to 6

I can read, write and draw

- selected cumulative words to blend, write, discuss meanings and illustrate
- in each unit 1 to 6

My Words

- cumulative word lists for blending, handwriting and spelling
- in each unit 1 to 6

Lined proforma for word spelling

- provided in each unit 1 to 12 (extra lines on proforma for units 6 to 12)

Blend Word Cards

- cumulative words on cards for teaching and learning aid
- in each unit 1 to 6

Handwriting resources

- 10 pages to select from matching upper and lower case Alphabet letters
- 14 pages to make a personal booklet for lower case letter formation
- 14 pages to make a personal booklet for upper case letter formation
- all provided in unit 2

Alphabet Letters Game

- Tiles of lower case and upper case letters on lines for various activities
- provided in unit 3

Origami blend, spell and write books

- 20 illustrated origami books of simple words mainly one to one mapping
- 5 books provided in unit 3 with full instructions
- 15 books provided in unit 4 with full instructions

Story and sequencing proforma

- a simple package of grids, lines and boxes for writing and illustrating A4x5
- available in each unit 1 to 12

I can read

- 150 pieces in total of cumulative text for reading, discussing and later dictation
- in each unit 1 to 12

Questions

- simple starting points for discussion of I can read texts
- in each unit 7 to 12

About The Resources

The Phonics International resources are highly practical and designed to help teachers to introduce systematically the letter/s-sound correspondences of **The Alphabetic Code** and to put these to immediate use in words for blending and segmenting and to teach correct handwriting. The resources are also designed to provide learners with many ways to recall the letter/s-sound correspondences and to rehearse the three essential skills little and often whilst enriching the learners' bank of vocabulary and speaking and listening skills. The resources are designed to share the teaching and learning information with the home setting wherever possible.

The **Picture Cards** provide a simple focus for developing phonemic awareness - that is, hearing and saying real words and identifying the sounds all-through-the-spoken-word. This is a **sub-skill** of spelling. An ability to segment the sounds from beginning to end of the word is the **oral** part of the spelling process. These cards can also be used to develop vocabulary and speaking and listening. Articulating the words clearly, putting the words in simple sentences and saying the names of the objects, animals and actions will help the youngest of learners but also those learners for whom English is an additional language. Familiarity with a particular set of objects, animals and actions will support the next step of matching spoken sounds (which are the phonemes when they are the smallest identifiable sounds of a word) to specific letters or letter groups (graphemes). Thus, the **Picture Cards** can be used on their own or immediately prior to using the **Picture Posters**. Later, when the learners can spell simple words, the cards can be selected carefully and matched with the **Grapheme Tiles** which make up the spellings. For example, the picture of the **hen**, the **hat**, the **rat**, **rip**, the **train**, the **rain** can be available to make a **spelling game** with the **Grapheme Tiles** 'h', 'a', 't', 'e', 'n', 'r', 'i', 'p', 'ai' **after** those letter/s-sound correspondences have been introduced. The learner selects a card and then selects the graphemes which spell the picture on the card.

The **Picture Posters** are phonemic awareness posters which break away from the tendency for beginning instruction to focus only on the first, or initial, sound of spoken words and the corresponding initial letter of printed words; (for example, **a** is for **a**pple). The learner is taught the **relationship between sounds of speech (phonemes) mapped onto the letters (graphemes)** in the printed words in an 'all-through-the-word' way. The word examples chosen are **not cumulative** words because the focus of the **Picture Posters** is on the phoneme-grapheme (sound to print) relationship and the learner is learning just **one specific grapheme** (letter or letter group) and its **relationship to a phoneme** (sound) on any one poster. The teacher **finger-tracks** under the words as he/she says the whole word slowly. The learner/s can indicate when they hear the focus sound and note the corresponding grapheme in the printed word. Although the words chosen are not cumulative, before long learners will be able to read most words in their entirety as their knowledge of **The Alphabetic Code** builds up.

There is also an audio-visual file per unit online - 'Hear the sounds' - which includes all the visuals of the **Picture Posters** of any one unit. The phoneme can be heard first followed by three word examples which include the focus phoneme in different positions in the words. (units 1 - 6)

The A5 **Colour-in Sounds Book** sheets include a key word (non-cumulative) with a key colour-in picture and **three cumulative words to blend**. 'Tracker font' provides some handwriting practice of the focus grapheme. These A5 sheets can be used when the teacher introduces a new letter/s-sound correspondence and then, when completed, they can be glued into an exercise book or scrap book to make a '**Code Book**'. On the alternate day, the teacher can then introduce the main **Sounds Book** activity sheet and follow the guidance on each sheet. This **Sounds Book** sheet can then be **glued into the exercise book** or scrap book (with the 'folded-up' part kept in the folded up position). This exercise book **with both versions** of the **Sound Book** sheets can go 'home' and be returned to school every day so that a little bit of extra learning and rehearsal can be undertaken at home. In this way, the parents or guardians of the learner are kept informed as to the basic knowledge and skills learning in class.

The teacher can decide whether the **Colour-in Sounds Book** sheets are necessary for older learners in addition to the **Sounds Book** activity sheets. Some learners may manage well with having a **new Sounds Book** activity sheet **every** day with a faster pace of introduction of the new letter/s-sound correspondences. **This is for the teacher to decide**. For those teachers who wish to introduce a new correspondence **every day**, at least for a while, one suggestion is that the learner could take the **Colour-in Sounds Book** sheet **home** to complete as a homework activity in preparation to do the main **Sounds Book** activity sheet **in school** the following day - but only where parents are happy to support and co-operate. (units 1 - 6)

The **Sounds Book** activity sheets are **very important indeed** as they focus on learning **new Alphabetic Code knowledge** and then rehearsal of the **three skills** of 1) blending all-through-the-word for reading, 2) segmenting the sounds all-through-the-spoken-word for spelling, and 3) handwriting. The first four sheets for **s, a, t, i** do not include cumulative decodable words for the learner to read but focus on **modelling** the new letter-sound correspondences in all positions in a word. The learner is only learning the new letter-sound correspondence and mapping - not being asked to sound out and blend any words. A **cumulative word bank** is provided for systematic use in all **Sounds Book** sheets after the first four sheets. This word bank supports teacher modelling and also allows for learner **differentiation** and extension. **Explicit instructions are provided on each sheet**. **The Sounds Book sheets are the core activity sheets throughout the programme**. (units 1 - 12)

The **Mini Posters** are ideal **support** material for **introducing** new letter/s-sound correspondences immediately prior to using the **Sounds Book** sheets. The word examples are **cumulative** and model the new letter/s-sound correspondence in **different positions** in the words. They make ideal **visual aids** for wall display and can be **rotated** as required. (units 1 - 12)

Say the Sounds Booklets are designed for learning and rehearsing the letter/s-sound correspondences as they are systematically introduced. The pages of the booklets are clipped together with a paper clip and the teacher releases each page as the new letter/s-sound correspondence is introduced. The booklet can go between school and home for 'little and often' practice of saying the sounds. There is one booklet each for units 1 to 5 and two booklets for unit 6. At the back of each booklet is a list of all the letter/s-sound correspondences introduced in the particular unit for a final assessment of each unit. The booklets can be kept and looked at over and again to keep learning fresh. (units 1 to 6)

The **My Words** resource provides the extensive cumulative decodable word bank in **word lists** for the first six units. These can be used at first to rehearse the blending of words. **Use of the word lists should be delayed** until the learner **can blend** and the learner already knows the letter/s-sound correspondences of the focus words **well**. A lined proforma is also provided to enable the learner to copywrite the words to practise handwriting or for spelling activities. Avoid the 'look, cover, write, check' routine where possible as this does not involve 'identifying' the phonemes all-through-the-spoken-words. Once the learner can read and is provided with 'reading books', the learner can still continue to use the word lists to rehearse blending words out of the context of sentences. This is excellent blending rehearsal. The length and complexity of the words is mixed up allowing for differentiation and extension. What the learner cannot blend, the teacher and/or parent can model. These lists can be used both in school and at home aiming for the learner to be able to read the whole words automatically. (units 1 - 6)

The **Blend Word Cards** consist of the same cumulative word bank as the **Sounds Book** sheets and the **My Word** word lists. Ideally this resource could be printed onto card or laminated so that the words can be cut up into individual cards. This resource can be displayed on whiteboards (with bluetac or magnetic sticky tape), or simply laid out on a desk top, for learners to blend the words or pick out the words after the teacher has said the word. Another activity involves the learners working in pairs. One partner can select a card and read the word whilst the other partner goes through the spelling routine (segments the word, counts the phonemes, writes dashes for the phonemes, writes the correct graphemes - or alternately selects the correct graphemes from a bank of **Grapheme Tiles**). The partners can then compare the newly spelt word with the **Blend Word Card** and make any corrections if necessary. The partners then swap roles.

The **Read the words, make up a story** activity sheets provide revision of the latest letter/s-sound correspondence and some handwriting rehearsal of the latest grapheme. From the introduction of the 'ck' grapheme in **unit 1**, there are both **cumulative words** for the learner to blend and **enrichment words** (non-cumulative) for the supporting adult to model the blending. This provides an opportunity for developing speaking and listening skills and building up the learner's vocabulary of the key words. These key words are the stimulus for the teacher and learner **together** to create a story. The storyline can be illustrated by the learner or, in the case of young learners, by a combination of the teacher and learner. **Not all the words** need to be used, and the teacher and learner/s may **think of additional words** with the focus grapheme and sounds. These sheets would also make suitable occasional homework sheets if parents were prepared to support the learner. (units 1 - 6)

The **I can read, write and draw** activity sheets provide a **limited** number of selected **cumulative** words for the learner to blend, to write under carefully, and then to discuss the meaning, or possible meanings, of the word with the teacher. The learner then draws pictures to illustrate the meanings of the words. This would also make a suitable homework sheet if parents were prepared to support the learner. (units 1 - 6)

The **I can read** sheets provide **text level material** of mainly cumulative words for every new letter/s-sound correspondence introduced. These are provided in **unit 1** after the introduction of **s, a, t, i, p** and continue right through to the end of the programme. Different fonts are introduced in units 11 and 12. **It is important to note** that these texts are better used once the learners **can blend** and that their use is **delayed** for at least several lessons after the letter/s-sound correspondences included have been introduced. As these are paper-based activities, the learner can **write on** the paper; for example, to underline graphemes or to group words with a particular grapheme (word search) and to circle words where meanings are not known after blending.

Some of the **I can read** texts may be suitable to provide extension work such as to discuss and/or write what happens next. A paragraph of these texts may also be used for a spelling dictation exercise **at a later date**. Some pupils may be able to read the text independently whilst others may require extra support. The texts could also be used by the teacher for modelling the reading of whole sentences and discussing any inference and the meaning of any colloquial phrases in the text. The **Phonics International** programme is not intended to be a 'comprehension' programme per se and these texts are designed mainly to rehearse the blending process beyond word-level work. These texts and other materials can also be viewed and used online and projected onto large screens where these are available. Learners would still need access to a wide range of enrichment texts in addition to this programme and would benefit from other cumulative decodable text if possible. (units 1 - 12)

The **Questions** sheets provide a starting point for discussion linked directly to the **I can read** decodable texts. These can be used in any way the teacher feels is appropriate - or not used at all if the teacher does not wish to pursue the simple **I can read** texts further than the actual decoding of them. They are provided as an option for teachers if required. (units 7 - 12)

The Alphabetic Code Resources

The **Alphabetic Code** resources include **Grapheme Tiles** for units 1 to 12, **Pairs Games** for units 1 - 6, various sets of letter/s-sound correspondence **Flash Cards** with and without lines, **Say the Sounds** charts (3 in each unit 1 to 5), **Make and break small correspondence cards** for simple code and complex code, **Blank proformas for Pictures, Writing and Sequencing**, several multi-purpose versions of **The Alphabetic Code chart** (ranging from one side of A4 to ten sides of A4) and **Origami Books**.

The Alphabet Resources

The **Alphabet** resources include **The Alphabet Letter Shapes wall charts** (three types) and **The Alphabet Letter Shapes handwriting visual aid**, a 10 sheet **Handwriting Package** based on lower and upper case letters in alphabetical order, 14 sheet lower case and 14 sheet upper case **Handwriting Booklets** based on specific letter pattern order (c o a d g q s f, l t i j, r n m, h b k p, u y, v w x, e z), **Matching and Ordering Alphabet Cards**.

American and British English Spelling

Please note the main differences between American and British English spellings:

- British English words that end in **-re** (e.g. centre, theatre, fibre) often end in **-er** in American English (center, theater, fiber).
- British English words that end in **-our** (e.g. colour, favour, humour) usually end with **-or** in American English (color, favor, humor).
- Verbs in British English that can be spelled with either **-ize** or **-ise** at the end (e.g. recognize/recognise; synthesise/synthesize) are always spelled with **-ize** in American English.
- Verbs in British English that end in **-yse** (e.g. analyse) are always spelled **-yze** in American English (analyze).
- In British spelling, verbs ending in a vowel plus **l** double the **l** when adding endings that begin with a vowel (e.g. travel, travelled, traveller). In American English the **l** is not doubled (travel, traveled, traveler).
- British English words that are spelled with the double vowels **ae** or **oe** (e.g. archaeology, manoeuvre) are just spelled with an **e** in American English (archeology, maneuver).
- Some nouns that end with **-ence** in British English (e.g. licence, defence) are spelled **-ense** in American English (license, defense).
- Some nouns that end with **-ogue** in British English (e.g. dialogue, catalogue) end with **-og** in American English (dialog, catalog).

Phonics International reserves the right to change and improve the online resources and instructions at any time. The advantage of an online programme is the way that it can be readily updated where necessary. There are plans to extend this programme further over time to include additional packages for vocabulary extension with pictures, culture-specific decodable sentences and text plus much more! Feedback and suggestions are always welcome and everyone is wholeheartedly invited to contribute to the discussion forum to raise questions and share results and ideas. Thank you for all the interest which has already been so forthcoming from the international community. It has been most heartwarming...

Enjoy, Good Luck and Best Wishes!

Debbie Hepplewhite