

EXPLORERS PHONICS TEACHER'S NOTES

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Introduction

Explorers Phonics Readers are part of the *Macmillan English Explorers* reading scheme. The books are designed to run alongside and complement the existing 'core' readers. *Explorers Phonics Readers* are ideal for introducing and teaching phonics in context, in a structured, developmental manner. Each of the readers contains a clear phonic focus. Within each book, children are taught how to decode and build up words using phonics. This is not done in isolation, but within the context of a strong storyline. Many of the characters met already in the 'core' readers, such as Tom and Holly, Teddy, and Daisy, feature in the books.

What is phonics?

- Phonics is the understanding of the link between the sounds of English and the ways we write them.
- In phonics we teach children these sounds and how to use them to read and write words correctly.

Why do we teach phonics?

- Teaching phonics helps children become better readers, writers and spellers.
- Phonics gives children some strategies and rules to use when reading, spelling and pronouncing new words.
- Most words in English are regular phonic words (such as *cat* and *sheep*). They can be pronounced, read and spelt correctly by using phonics.

What are phonemes?

- The sounds we use together to make up words in English are called *phonemes*.
- There are about 44 phonemes used in the English.

How do we write phonemes?

- Phonemes are written using the 26 letters of the English alphabet.
- We use these letters in different combinations to write phonemes.
- Some phonemes can be written with one letter. For example, the word *cat* consists of three phonemes, /k/ /a/ /t/ and three letters, *c-a-t*.
- Some phonemes are written with two or more letters. For example, the word *sheep* also consists of three phonemes, /sh/ /ee/ /p/, but here the letters *sh* make one phoneme (or sound) as do the letters *ee*.

What do we need to teach children?

We need to teach children to:

- **hear and identify** the separate sounds that make up a spoken word;
- **learn the letters** (or combinations of letters) that represent different phonemes;
- **pronounce** words correctly by making these sounds themselves;
- **read** words by breaking them down into phonemes or sounds – sometimes called ‘sounding out words’;
- **spell** words by putting the correct letters together – sometimes called word-building.

Scope and sequence

Explorers Phonics Readers and Workbooks, when used together, are an ideal programme for introducing and teaching phonics in a systematic and structured way.

Phonics Workbook	Phonics Reader	Phonic focus
Little Explorers A Phonics Workbook	In Teddy's Bag	individual letter sounds 'a', 'b', 'c', 'd', 'e' and 'f'
	In Daisy's Box	individual letter sounds 'g', 'h', 'i', 'j', 'k', 'l' and 'm'
	Run and Hide	individual letter sounds 'n', 'o', 'p', 'q', 'r', 's' and 't'
	Look!	individual letter sounds 'u', 'v', 'w', 'x', 'y' and 'z'
Little Explorers B Phonics Workbook	Teddy in Bed	consonant/vowel/consonant words with 'a' (e.g. <i>bat</i>) and 'e' (e.g. <i>bed</i>)
	Pin it on	consonant/vowel/consonant words with 'i' (e.g. <i>pin</i>) and 'o' (e.g. <i>box</i>)
	In the Mud	consonant/vowel/consonant words with 'u' (e.g. <i>mud</i>)
	Fish and Chips	consonant digraphs 'ch' (e.g. <i>chips</i>), 'sh' (e.g. <i>fish</i>) and 'th' (e.g. <i>bath, this</i>)
Young Explorers 1 Phonics Workbook	Daisy is Ill	consonants 'll' (e.g. <i>ill</i>), 'ss' (e.g. <i>kiss</i>), 'ck' (e.g. <i>duck</i>), 'ng' (e.g. <i>sing</i>)
	Crazy Cat and Fat Old Rat	initial consonant blends: consonant + 'l' (e.g. <i>flag</i>), consonant + 'r' (e.g. <i>grass</i>), 's' + consonant (e.g. <i>stop</i>) final consonant blends: 'l' + consonant (e.g. <i>help</i>), 'n' + consonant (e.g. <i>hand</i>), 's' + consonant (e.g. <i>fast</i>)
	Professor Green and the Snake	long vowel sounds with modifying 'e': 'a-e' (e.g. <i>lake</i>), 'i-e' (e.g. <i>hide</i>)
	Tom's Haircut	long vowel sounds with modifying 'e': 'o-e' (e.g. <i>note</i>), 'u-e' (e.g. <i>cute, blue</i>)
Young Explorers 2 Phonics Workbook	The Muddy Sheep	'ai' (e.g. <i>rain</i>), 'ay' (e.g. <i>play</i>), 'ee' (e.g. <i>tree</i>), 'ea' (e.g. <i>sea</i>)
	Daisy and the Big, Yellow Kite	'y' (e.g. <i>fly</i>), 'igh' (e.g. <i>high</i>), 'oa' (e.g. <i>coat</i>), 'ow' (e.g. <i>blow</i>), 'oo' (e.g. <i>moon</i>)
	Crazy Cat and the Stars	'ar' (e.g. <i>star</i>), 'er' (e.g. <i>ladder</i>), 'ir' (e.g. <i>bird</i>), 'ur' (e.g. <i>turn</i>), 'or' (e.g. <i>torch</i>)
	Pirate Jack Looks for Treasure	oy (e.g. <i>boy</i>), oi (e.g. <i>point</i>), ow (e.g. <i>down</i>), ou (e.g. <i>shout</i>), ea (e.g. <i>head</i>), oo (e.g. <i>look</i>), wh (e.g. <i>wheel</i>)

Explorers Phonics Readers

- The books embody a strong, clearly identifiable phonic focus.
- They follow the scope and sequence of phonics skills taught in the *Explorers Phonics Workbooks*.
- Much of the vocabulary from the *Phonics Workbooks* is used in the *Phonics Readers*.
- The phonic words used are illustrated wherever possible.
- Phonic vocabulary is listed at the back of each reader.
- Children are taught how to sound out and blend the sounds to make words in each of the readers.
- The high-frequency vocabulary from the core *Explorers Readers* is re-cycled in the *Explorers Phonics Readers*.
- Sentences are kept short and simple.
- Model language structures from the core *Explorers Readers* are recycled in the *Phonics Readers*.
- The number of words on each page is carefully controlled.
- Detailed illustrations are used to support the stories and provide a stimulus for spoken language.
- The stories are about everyday events and things the children are interested in.
- Familiar characters from the core *Explorers Readers* are featured, as well as some exciting new ones.

Little Explorers A

In Teddy's Bag

When Teddy looks in his schoolbag, he finds things beginning with the first six letters of the alphabet.

Teddy also does some painting, but some of the things he paints are hard to recognize!

In Daisy's Box

Daisy is in her bedroom. She is unpacking all the things in her box. What a mess she makes!

In the second story, Danny joins her and they play a game of 'follow the leader' in which Daisy copies his actions.

Run and Hide

A small mouse comes out of his hole and has fun running around the house. He doesn't see the cat getting closer and closer. Fortunately the mouse's mum notices and the small mouse manages to get home before the cat catches him!

In the second story, the small mouse likes to hide. He hides in all sorts of places and asks the reader to try and find him.

Look!

Tom and Holly are at the zoo. Tom is looking through a telescope. He looks all around the zoo and sees lots of interesting things.

Tom and Holly then visit the zoo shop, where they pick up different toys and ask their parents if they can have them.

Little Explorers B

Teddy in Bed

Poor Teddy is unwell and is in bed. He continually asks his parents to bring him things. However, he soon gets bored and makes a recovery!

In the second story, Teddy looks at pictures of his dad and himself in a family photo album.

Pin it on

Daisy and Danny are playing a game of 'Pin the tail on the fox'. Daisy wears a blindfold so she cannot see and tries unsuccessfully to pin the tail on the fox, much to the amusement of Danny and the family.

The whole family is trying to do an animal jigsaw puzzle together. Who will fit the last piece in the puzzle? Will it be Daisy or Danny?

In the Mud

Bud the mouse asks his mum if he can go out to play. Bud jumps in a puddle and gets very muddy. He needs a bath when he comes in. He does the same thing the next day. Finally the mud dries up and he runs around in the sun.

Bud wears a mask and pretends to be a big bad bug. He buzzes all round the house. At the end he is rather tired so the big bad 'bug' wants a hug with his mum!

Fish and Chips

Tom and Holly go to the shops with mum. Holly and mum like shopping but Tom is bored – until he sees a shop that sells fish and chips! Unfortunately it is shut, so Holly kindly gives Tom a bar of chocolate to cheer him up.

Next Tom and Holly go to play in the shed. Holly doesn't like it because it is dark in there. Suddenly they find a thin cat in the shed and decide to give it some fish for dinner.

Young Explorers 1

Daisy is Ill

Daisy is in bed. She does not feel well. Danny decides to try and cheer her up. He brings her one toy after another, but all Daisy wants is to be left alone!

It is a hot day and Daisy and Danny are splashing in a paddling pool in the garden. One after another of their friends joins them in the paddling pool until there is no room for any more – and no water left!

Crazy Cat and Fat Old Rat

Crazy Cat loves sport. He loves running and jumping. One day, he decides to challenge Fat Old Rat to a race. Right from the start Crazy Cat races ahead. Poor Fat Old Rat is so far behind that Crazy Cat sits down and has a rest. Fat Old Rat keeps plodding on. Eventually he passes Crazy Cat, but Crazy Cat does not see him. Fat Old Rat goes on and wins the race. Crazy Cat is not very happy!

Professor Green

Professor Green is in the jungle. He is looking for a black and white snake. He asks the lion, the elephant and the monkey to help him. They make a raft and sail across the lake. After several adventures they do find the snake, catch it and put it in a cage. That night a big red snake opens the cage and lets the black and white snake escape. When Professor Green looks in the cage in the morning the snake has gone – but it has left an egg, with a small snake inside it, in the cage!

Tom's Haircut

Tom's mum takes him to the hairdressers for a haircut. Unfortunately the hairdresser's shop is closed. Tom is glad and goes home to play with Holly. She gets a pair of scissors and decides to cut Tom's hair for him. She makes quite a mess! Mum is horrified when she sees Tom. She is very cross with Holly, too. When the hairdresser's shop opens she takes him back. After he has a haircut, Mum buys Tom and Holly a toy each. Holly chooses a doll with long hair. When they get back home, Holly looks at her doll's hair and decides to give it a haircut ...

Young Explorers 2

The Muddy Sheep

Tom and Holly and their parents go to stay on Grandma and Grandad's farm for a holiday. Grandma asks Holly and Tom to give the sheep some hay. One sheep is stuck in a muddy puddle. Tom and Holly get a rope and try to put it out – but they can't do it and need more help. They go and ask Dad. They pull and pull, but they can't do it and need more help. They go and ask Mum. They pull and pull, but they can't do it and need more help. They go and ask Grandad. Grandad brings his jeep. They tie the rope to the jeep and ... out comes the very muddy sheep!

Daisy and the Big Yellow Kite

It is a bright, windy day. Daisy and Danny go for a picnic by the lake with Mum and Dad and decide to take their kites to fly. They take their boats to float, too. Daisy sees a blue dinosaur flying a big yellow kite. The blue dinosaur lets Daisy fly her big yellow kite. Suddenly a strong wind begins to blow. Up, up, up goes the kite ... and up, up, up goes Daisy, too! It takes Daisy over a hill, the lake and a road. It goes over some trees, over the roof of their house, and over some goats eating long grass. Mum, Dad and Danny chase after Daisy in the car. The wind stops blowing – and down, down, down comes Daisy! They get back in the car, return to the hill and their picnic.

Crazy Cat and the Stars

One night Crazy Cat looks out of his bedroom window and sees lots of stars. The next morning he asks Fred the Fox how he can go to the stars. Fred the Fox tells him to go into the garden at midnight and the stars will be there ... but they aren't. Next Crazy Cat asks Bert the Bat the same question. He does as Bert tells him ... but he does not find any stars. Finally he asks Fat Old Rat. He gives Crazy Cat a riddle and tells him to solve it. Then he will find the stars. To solve the last clue Crazy Cat has to climb a rainbow. He begins to climb the rainbow when ... whoosh! He wakes up in his bed. What a lovely dream!

Pirate Jack Looks for Treasure

One day, Pirate Jack rows his boat out to sea. He sees a green bottle floating on the water. Inside the bottle is a treasure map. Pirate Jack follows the map. First he meets a seagull. It joins Jack in his search. Then they meet a boy called Roy mending his bike. Roy joins them, too. They come to the big tree on Jack's map. Jack begins to dig for the treasure. First he finds some wool. The seagull takes the wool for his nest. Next he finds a wheel. Roy takes the wheel to mend his bike. Last of all Jack finds a chest full of gold. He takes that!

A typical reading lesson

Stage-by-stage teaching notes which deal with teaching phonics at different levels are included on pages 15–48.

Preparation before the lesson

- Read the pages in the reading book several times. Look at the way the text is arranged on the page and look at how the pictures are used to explain the story. Make sure you know the vocabulary and understand the story.
- Decide how you will present the pages. Will you sit down, walk round the class or stand at the front? Will the children sit round you or sit at their tables?
- Ensure you have ready all the things you need for the lesson.

During the lesson

Teaching the target phonic vocabulary of each reader

It is suggested that you teach the specific target phonic vocabulary of each book *before* the children look at the book. This will help ensure the children recognize and can read the words when they meet them in the context of the story. Do this as a class. Follow the sequence of activities and suggestions on pages 22–4 at the back of the reader to do this. (N.B. If possible, follow this up, and use the relevant pages from the *Explorers Phonics Workbooks* and the 'Ideas for teaching phonics' on pages 15–48 of these notes.)

Before reading

When you introduce a new reading book to the class, encourage the children to be interested in it and excited about it. Show the children the book cover and read the title together. Ask the children to predict:

- what the story is about;
- who the characters are and what they will do;
- where the story happens.

Elicit the words for the things the children can see on the cover and elicit other vocabulary the children know.

During reading

Step 1 Modelled reading:

- demonstrates fluent and expressive oral reading and reading for enjoyment;
- motivates children and helps them to appreciate the value of reading;
- allows children to hear vocabulary and grammar in context;
- allows you to introduce the story without asking the children to do anything;
- introduces the children to the patterns of language and the structure of stories, and helps them to use their imaginations.

Read the text on the page out loud to the class. Do not stop to explain any words. This will help the children to get the gist of the text and provide a model for reading.

Guide to modelled reading:

- Open the pages of the reading book you are going to read to the class.
- Ask the children to find and read any of the target phonic words they have already been taught. It is very important that the children believe that they can read some of the text already.
- Make sure the children can hear and see you clearly.
- If each child, or pair of children, has copy of the reading book, make sure they are all on the correct page.
- During the reading make sure all the children are following the words in their books.
- Read slowly and clearly. Move your finger under each word in a left-to-right direction as you do so.
- Bring the story to life for the children. There are several ways you can do this:
 - vary the speed, tone, and volume of your voice;
 - use different voices when different characters speak;
 - make sound effects from time to time;
 - make regular eye contact with the children;
 - use hand and body gestures;
 - mime facial expressions to help convey meanings and feelings.
- Use the illustrations:
 - Point to the parts of the illustration mentioned in the text. Ask the children to point, too.
 - Give the children time to look at the illustrations and ask questions or comment.
- While you are reading, encourage the children to watch your gestures and listen to how your voice changes, to match illustrations and language to what they are hearing, to guess meanings of words and to predict the next part of the story.
- Make comments on the story, relating it to the children's own experiences.

Step 2 Shared reading:

- is an opportunity for you to read the passage again;
- allows the children to read along with you in a safe way, without you stopping to ask questions or to teach specific things.

Read the page again. Ask the whole class and/or individuals to repeat parts of the text after you.

Shared reading can be done in different ways. Here are some options:

- Option 1 – Read the text again and encourage the children to join in with you.
- Option 2 – Read one phrase or sentence at a time and ask the class or individual children to repeat it after you.
- Option 3 – Do both 1 and 2. You are the best judge of what is right for your class.

Step 3 Guided reading:

- shows the children how to use ways of understanding the text and encourages them to learn from you;
- helps the children learn how to work out words using their phonic knowledge, and develop ways of understanding the text.

Read the page in small parts, phrases or sentences.

Help the children to read and understand unknown words. Ensure you practise and reinforce the target phonic words and ask children to practise and reinforce their phonic skills.

Ask the class and/or individuals to read parts of the text.

Ideas for guided reading:

- Read the text out loud to the class in small stages, e.g. one phrase or sentence at a time.
- Ask the children to guess from the illustrations and from your gestures, voice and tone, if a particular character is angry, happy, sad, etc.
- When you come to one of the target phonic words, remind the class how to work out the pronunciation and meaning.
- During the reading, check any predictions about the story made at the end of the last lesson.
- Ask questions which elicit understanding of the text.
- Draw attention to the punctuation marks on the page. Discuss why they are there and how they help the reader.

- Point out:
 - recurring language
 - grammar patterns
 - time markers, e.g. words like *first*, *next*, etc.
- Discuss any special use of language, e.g.
 - vivid adjectives like *big*, *bad*
 - words in bold print
 - onomatopoeic words like *BANG!*
 - speech bubbles, etc.
- Ask the children to tell this part of the story in their own words.
- Always give the children plenty of time to think, to work out meanings and to understand the text. They need to develop their reading strategies. Praise them regularly.

Step 4 Independent and paired reading:

- is an opportunity for the children to read the whole story;
- allows the children to practise and reinforce what they have learnt.

Independent/paired reading is best done at the end of a complete story. Ask the children to read the story again alone or in pairs. Ask each child to work with a partner, and ask them to take it in turns to read sentences to each other. They can help each other.

At this stage independent reading will be limited, as the children will need a lot of support. You may need to go round the class asking individual children to read a sentence or page out loud.

After reading

The following suggestions provide some ideas for practising, consolidating and reinforcing what the children have learnt in the reading book.

- Practise and reinforce phonic skills, using the 'Ideas for teaching phonics' on pages 15–48.
- Work through a page from an *Explorers Phonics Workbook*.
- Let the children take their reading books home to read the pages they have studied to and with their parents. It is important for children to be able to practise their reading as much as possible. It is good to involve parents, so they can see how their child is getting on. Make sure parents understand how to keep their children (see *Helping your child with reading* on the inside cover of the reading books).

Ideas for teaching phonics

The following notes offer a practical and systematic general approach for teaching phonics.

Some important terminology

Phonemes

- The sounds we use to make up words in English are called *phonemes*.
- There are about 44 phonemes which together make up every word in the English language.

Graphemes

- In writing, phonemes are represented by *graphemes*.
- A grapheme is a letter, or group of letters, that represents a sound.
- There are 26 letters in the English alphabet.
- These letters can be written down in different combinations.
- Some graphemes are single letters. For example, the word *cat* is made up of three graphemes *c-a-t*.
- Some graphemes are made up of two or more letters. For example, the word *sheep* is made up of three graphemes *sh-ee-p*. Notice that in this word the letters *sh* and *ee* each make one sound (phoneme).

Phonemes and graphemes

- When we are *reading aloud* (*decoding* written words) we must change *graphemes* (letters or combinations of letters) into *phonemes* (sounds).
- When we are *spelling* (*encoding* words) we must change *phonemes* (sounds) into *graphemes* (letters or combinations of letters).
- In order to do this, children need to learn which *graphemes* (letters or combinations of letters) to associate with which *phonemes* (sounds) and vice versa.
- In order to read an unfamiliar word, a child must be able to *sound out* each *grapheme* (letter or combination of letters) and then *blend* the *phonemes* (sounds) together to make a word.

Segmenting and blending

- Segmenting and blending are opposite phonic skills.
- *Segmenting* means *breaking down* words into phonemes to spell.
- *Blending* means *building words up* from phonemes to read.

Digraphs and trigraphs

- A digraph is a two-letter grapheme, where two letters represent one sound (such as 'ee' for /ee/ in *tree*).
- A trigraph is a three-letter grapheme where three letters represent one sound (such as 'igh' for /ie/ in *high*).
- A split digraph has a letter that comes between the two letters in the digraph (such as the 'a' and 'e' for /ae/ in *cake* in which the 'k' comes between the 'a' and 'e'). There are six split digraphs 'a-e', 'e-e', 'i-e', 'o-e', 'u-e', 'y-e', as in *make, theme, fine, bone, cube, type*. This type of word is called 'magic e' by some teachers.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations describe the order of graphemes in words:

VC = vowel-consonant as in *am*

CVC = consonant-vowel-consonant as in *bin* or *hill*.

CCVC = consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant as in *clap*.

The phonemes

The consonant and vowel phonemes and some common sample words are listed below:

Vowels

Phonemes	Sample words	Phonemes	Sample words
/a/	cat	/oo/	look, could, put
/e/	peg, bread	/ar/	cart, fast
/i/	big, wanted	/ur/	burn, shirt, term, heard, work
/o/	log, wash	/or/	torn, door, warn
/u/	mug, love	/au/	sure
/ae/	pain, day, gate, station	/uh/	woollen, brother
/ee/	sweet, heat, thief, theme	/ow/	down, about
/ie/	tried, light, my, shine, mind	/oi/	boil, joy
/oa/	road, blow, bone, cold	/air/	stairs, bear, care
/ue/	moon, blue, grew, cube	/ear/	fear, steer, here

Consonants

Phonemes	Sample words	Phonemes	Sample words
/b/	bark, rabbit	/s/	sun, class, house, science
/d/	dig, ladder	/t/	top, little
/f/	fan, puff, photo	/v/	vest
/g/	gate, foggy, ghost	/w/	watch
/h/	house	/z/	zoo, please, is
/y/	yes, yellow	/th/	there, thin
/k/	cook, quick, anchor	/ch/	cheese, catch
/l/	lion hill	/sh/	ship, mission, chef
/m/	mouse, summer, comb	/j/	jam, joy
/n/	not, dinner, knife, gnaw	/ng/	sing, think
/p/	paint happy	/zh/	treasure
/r/	risk, wrong		

Teaching words that are not phonically regular

There are many high-frequency words that children come across in the early stages of reading and writing that are not, at first sight, phonically regular, e.g. *was*, *said*, *they*. These can, of course, be taught as 'sight words' (words which need to be recognized as a visual whole). However, research shows that with these words, recognition is more efficient if we encourage children to use whatever grapheme-phoneme knowledge they have. For example, with the word *said* children may already know the sound of the graphemes 's' and 'd'; with the word *they* children may already know the sound of the 'th' grapheme.

Teaching the names of the letters of the alphabet

There is no right or wrong time to introduce the names of the letters of the alphabet. Children quite happily learn to do this alongside using phonics. A good way to teach letter names is through an alphabet song. This can be done at an early stage. However, always make it clear whether you are referring to a letter's sound or its name.

N.B. Children will need to know the names of letters of the alphabet by the time they begin learning two-letter graphemes. They provide the vocabulary to help describe the sounds made by these graphemes, e.g. 'ai' as in *rain* sounds like the name of the letter 'a'.

Pronouncing phonemes

Some phonemes are difficult to pronounce on their own without adding an extra sound, as in /m/ pronounced *muh*. This /uh/ sound is known as *schwa*. When you are speaking to a class and you have to exaggerate the sound, the *schwa* becomes more obvious. As far as possible, try to keep the sound 'clean' and minimize this extra sound, saying *mmm* rather than *muh*.

Stage 1 – Getting ready for phonics

These activities and games can be used before introducing the formal teaching of phonics, or alongside the early stages of teaching it.

Sounds around us

- Encourage children to listen attentively to sounds around them. Encourage them to:
 - talk about sounds they hear;
 - recall the sounds they heard;
 - discriminate between the sounds;
 - describe the sounds they hear.
- When telling stories or rhymes, act these out and include sounds, e.g. *Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. (bang! crash! bump!)*

Instrumental sounds

- Use percussion instruments to accompany songs.
- Hide an instrument from sight and play it. Ask the children to guess what it is.
- Ask children to make loud and soft noises with their instruments.
- Ask children which instruments best describe certain movements, e.g. a giant, walking softly on tiptoe, running, etc.
- Ask children to listen and repeat simple rhythms.

Body sounds

- Experiment making sounds with different parts of the body, e.g. clapping hands, stamping feet, snapping fingers, etc.
- Play 'follow the leader'. Make a body sound and the children have to copy it.

Voice sounds

- Ask children to make different sounds with their mouths, e.g. snoring, yawning, whistling; buzzing like a bee – *zzzz*; being a clock; hissing like a snake; making their voices bounce like a ball – *boing! boing! boing!*
- Whose voice is it? Ask one child to hide and make a sound. The class must guess who it is.
- Describe a farm animal to the children, or show them a picture or toy animal, and ask them to make its noise. Repeat this with wild animals, means of transport, etc. If you know any relevant songs or rhymes you could include these, too, e.g. *Old Macdonald had a farm, The wheels on the bus go round and round*, etc.

Describing sounds

- Talk about noises you would hear at a swimming pool, in the library, at a party, when someone is asleep, in the park, etc.
- Introduce vocabulary and ask children to make noises that are: slow/fast, quiet/loud, long/short.

Rhythm and rhyme

- When you read to the class, encourage children to join in repetitive phrases, e.g. *Run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man.*
- Learning songs and rhymes. Make songs and rhymes part of your daily classroom activity. Have fun with them. Encourage children to learn them.
- Playing with words. Clap out syllables as you say words, e.g. *tel-e-phone, di-no-saur, a-ni-mal.*
- Rhyming pairs. Use pictures of objects that rhyme, e.g. *dog/frog, cat/hat.*
- Think of a rhyming word. Give children a word, e.g. *door* and ask them to name something that rhymes with it, e.g. *floor.*

Alliteration

- Point out and say children's names that begin with the same sound.
- Point out objects around the classroom, or pictures of objects, that begin with the same sound, e.g. *bag, book.*
- Build up a table with pictures of objects that begin with the same sound, e.g. *sock, snake, spider, sandwich, sausage.*

Oral blending and segmentation

It is helpful for children to hear how sounds are blended orally before they are formally introduced to it themselves. These activities can be done before you teach all the letter sounds (phonemes) and how they are written down (graphemes). As a teacher, you can model to children how to blend sounds orally.

N.B. Use only single-syllable words for oral blending and avoid words with two consonants coming next to each other, e.g. *spoon.*

Some ideas:

- *When giving instructions or asking questions* – From time to time, segment (break down) the last word into separate phonemes (sounds) and then immediately blend the sounds together to say the word, e.g. *Pick up your /b/ /oo/ /k/, book.* Encourage the children to copy segmenting and saying the last word aloud.
- *In story time* – You can do the same thing with words from stories, songs or rhymes you are reading to the children. (N.B. Remember – this is an oral activity. There is no need for children to see the word written down at this stage.)

- *Thematic words* – You can do the same activity with any words, e.g.
 - action words: *hop, run, sit*
 - food words: *cheese, cake, jam*
- *Listening and matching* – Have several pictures of objects with single-syllable names e.g. *car, house, cat, pen* etc. Ask the children to listen carefully when you segment one of the words, e.g. *house* – /h/ /ow/ /s/. They must blend the sounds together, say the word and point to the correct picture.
- *I spy* – Segment the names of different objects in the classroom one at a time, e.g. *chair* – /ch/ /air/, *coat* – /k/ /oa/ /t/, etc. Ask the children to listen carefully when you segment each word. They must blend the sounds together, say the word and point to the object in the classroom.
- *Counting the sounds* – When the children are familiar with oral blending, and can blend together two or three sounds to make single-syllable words, from time to time, ask them to count how many phonemes (sounds) they can hear in different words. Say the word, e.g. /k/ /u/ /p/, *cup*, and ask the children to use their fingers to count each sound as they repeat the word and segment it.

Stage 2 – Individual letter sounds

What is involved in learning a letter?

To learn a letter children need to:

- distinguish the shape of the letter from other letter shapes;
- recognize and say the sound (phoneme) usually associated with the letter;
- recall the shape of the letter when given its usual sound;
- write the shape of the letter correctly;
- name the letter;
- recall and recognize the shape of the letter from its name.

The order for teaching letter sounds

There is no right or wrong order for teaching individual letter sounds. *The Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers A* (for individual initial letter sounds) is arranged in alphabetical order for ease of access.

Many schools will have their own views on the order in which individual letter sounds should be taught. It is suggested that the following variables should be taken into account:

- similarities of letter formation (e.g. the 'c' group of letters – 'c', 'a', 'd', 'g', 'o', 'q')
- keep apart letters which commonly get confused (e.g. 'b' and 'd')
- frequency of use (e.g. teaching high-frequency letters like 's' and 't' first)

A useful sequence is:

- s, a, t, p
- i, n, m, d
- g, o, c, r
- e, h, f, b
- u, k, w, l
- j, v, q, x, y, z

Practising oral blending and segmentation

Remember to continue to teach oral blending and segmenting whilst teaching individual letter sounds. (see page 19)

Focus pictures for each letter

It is helpful to use a specific picture to introduce individual letter sounds. Pictures of the following are suggested. N.B. these can be found in *Little Explorers Phonics Workbook A*:

a – apple	b – book	c – car	d – duck
e – egg	f – fish	g – goat	h – hand
i – insect	j – jug	k – key	l – lion
m – monkey	n – net	o – octopus	p – pencil
q – quilt	r – rabbit	s – sock	t – tree
u – umbrella	v – vest	w – window	x – x-ray
y – yoyo	z – zebra		

Mnemonics

Children often remember better if they learn to associate a mnemonic with each letter. The mnemonics activities below are oral activities linked to the focus pictures for each letter. Teach children the first sentence, e.g. /a/ /a/ /a/ is for *apple*. with the actions. If you feel it is appropriate, also teach the second of the two sentences for each letter. These mnemonics may be introduced as each new letter sound is taught, and used when you wish in the activities that follow. You will need to demonstrate what to do.

Sentences	Actions and sounds
/a/ /a/ /a/ is for <i>apple</i> . <i>I eat my sweet apple.</i>	Hold a pretend apple in one hand and lift it to your mouth to eat it. Say /a/ /a/ /a/
/b/ /b/ /b/ is for <i>book</i> . <i>Look! Look! Look at my book!</i>	Put your two hands together and open them like a book. Say /b/ /b/ /b/
/k/ /k/ /k/ is for <i>car</i> . <i>My car can go fast.</i>	Open your left hand in the shape of a letter 'c' and move it quickly from left to right. Say /k/ /k/ /k/
/d/ /d/ /d/ is for <i>duck</i> . <i>My duck has a beak.</i>	Straighten the fingers of one hand. Hold the thumb out straight beneath them to make a duck's beak. Move the thumb up and down and say /d/ /d/ /d/
/e/ /e/ /e/ is for <i>egg</i> . <i>I put my egg in a pan.</i>	Pretend to tap an egg on the side of a pan and drop it in to fry it. Say /e/ /e/ /e/
/f/ /f/ /f/ is for <i>fish</i> . <i>My fish can swim.</i>	Move the left hand from left to right. Wriggle the fingers as you do this to make it 'swim'. Say /f/ /f/ /f/
/g/ /g/ /g/ is for <i>goat</i> . <i>A goat can butt you with its head.</i>	Make a butting motion with your head. Say /g/ /g/ /g/
/h/ /h/ /h/ is for <i>hand</i> . <i>I have five fingers on my hand.</i>	Hold up one hand in front of you. Wiggle the fingers on your hand. Say /h/ /h/ /h/
/i/ /i/ /i/ is for <i>insect</i> . <i>My insect crawls up my arm.</i>	Have one arm straight down at your side. Place the other hand at the bottom of your arm and let it 'crawl' up it. Say /i/ /i/ /i/

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Sentences	Actions and sounds
<i>/j/ /j/ /j/ is for jug. I pour a drink from my jug.</i>	Pretend to pick up a jug and pour out a drink. Say <i>/j/ /j/ /j/</i>
<i>/k/ /k/ /k/ is for key. I can open a door with my key.</i>	Pretend to put a key in a lock, turn it and open a door. Say <i>/k/ /k/ /k/</i>
<i>/l/ /l/ /l/ is for lion. I have sharp claws.</i>	Pretend to be a lion and make your hands into 'claws'. Say <i>/l/ /l/ /l/</i>
<i>/m/ /m/ /m/ is for monkey. I like to swing in a tree.</i>	Pretend you are holding on to a rope. Hold with both hands. Move your hands to one side and pretend you are swinging on the rope. Say <i>/m/ /m/ /m/</i>
<i>/n/ /n/ /n/ is for net. I can catch a fish in my net.</i>	Pretend you are holding a net. Hold both hands together in front of you. Lower your net into the water and pretend you catch a fish in it. Say <i>/n/ /n/ /n/</i>
<i>/o/ /o/ /o/ is for octopus. I live in the sea.</i>	Hold one hand upside down in front of you with your fingers ('legs') hanging down. Wiggle your fingers. Say <i>/o/ /o/ /o/</i>
<i>/p/ /p/ /p/ is for pencil. I can write with my pencil.</i>	Pretend you are holding a pencil in your hand and 'write' with it. Say <i>/p/ /p/ /p/</i>
<i>/kw/ /kw/ /kw/ is for quilt. My quilt keeps me warm when it is cold.</i>	Shiver with cold. Wrap a quilt around you to keep warm. Say <i>/kw/ /kw/ /kw/</i>
<i>/r/ /r/ /r/ is for rabbit. My rabbit has long whiskers and a funny nose.</i>	Pretend to stroke your long whiskers. (Put your hands on opposite sides of your mouth and move them away from you.) Twitch (wiggle) your nose. Say <i>/r/ /r/ /r/</i>
<i>/s/ /s/ /s/ is for sock. I put my sock on my foot.</i>	Pretend to put a sock on your foot. Say <i>/s/ /s/ /s/</i>
<i>/t/ /t/ /t/ is for tree. My tree can stand up tall.</i>	Stand up as tall. Put your arms out. Pretend you are a tree. Say <i>/t/ /t/ /t/</i>
<i>/u/ /u/ /u/ is for umbrella. I put up my umbrella when it rains.</i>	Pretend to open up an umbrella and hold it over your head. Say <i>/u/ /u/ /u/</i>
<i>/v/ /v/ /v/ is for vest. I wear my vest over my chest.</i>	Pretend you are putting on a vest and pulling it over your head. Say <i>/v/ /v/ /v/</i>
<i>/w/ /w/ /w/ is for window. I look out of my window.</i>	'Draw' a window in front of you with your hands. Lean forward and look out of your 'window'. Say <i>/w/ /w/ /w/</i>
<i>/ks/ /ks/ /ks/ is for x-ray. I can see inside your body with an X-ray.</i>	Pretend to take an X-ray of someone. Say <i>/ks/ /ks/ /ks/</i> (This is the most common sound of 'x'.)
<i>/y/ /y/ /y/ is for yoyo. My yoyo goes up and down.</i>	Pretend you are holding a yoyo. Raise your hand up and down. Say <i>/y/ /y/ /y/</i>
<i>/z/ /z/ /z/ is for zebra. Listen. The zebra is asleep.</i>	Lay your head on one side as if you are asleep. Say <i>/z/ /z/ /z/</i>

Resources

- *Phonics Workbooks for Little Explorers A and B*
- *Phonics Readers for Little Explorers A*
- Make a large card for each letter of the alphabet. Make the cards large enough for classwork. On one side of the card have a key picture of an object which has the focus phoneme as its initial letter (e.g. a monkey for the phoneme /m/). The name of the object should be written below the picture. The initial letter should be in a different colour, e.g. if the word is written in black, the initial letter could be in red. (To reinforce the visual image of the focus letter, you could also draw the letter on the picture, too.) On the other side of the card, have a large picture of the focus letter (e.g. 'm') N.B. The focus pictures and letters can be photocopied from the *Macmillan Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers A*.

Step 1 – Hear it and say it

- Show the focus picture for the letter sound being taught.
- Talk about the picture with the children.
- Read the name of the picture to the class.
- Emphasize the initial letter sound.
- Encourage the children to repeat the word.
- Can they hear what sound it begins with?
- Say the sound to the class and ask them to repeat it.
- Are there any children in the class whose names begin with that sound?
- Do the children know any other words beginning with that sound?

Step 2 – See it and say it

- Turn the card over and show the class the focus letter.
- Say the sound of the letter.
- Move your finger over the letter to show how it is formed and say the sound it makes. Do this a few times.
- Put the card behind your back. Explain that when you show the side with the focus picture on it, the class must say the name of the picture. When you show the shape of the letter, the class must say the sound it makes. Do this a few times.

Step 3 – Say it and write it

- Stand at the front, with your back to the class. Look over your shoulder at the class. If you are right-handed, stand on the left of the class so all children can see what you are doing and you can see them. If you are left-handed, stand on the right. Draw the focus letter on the whiteboard so children can see the letter shape.
- Throughout the teaching process, explain the writing movements you are making, e.g. *Start at the top ... go round and round ...* Make sure that the children understand words and phrases like *start here, up, down, over, under*, etc. Do this a few times. Ask the children to join in and repeat the instructions for forming the letter with you. (Note that the picture of each letter in the *Macmillan Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers A* shows where to start and in which direction to go.)
- Next, stand at the front with your back to the class. Look over your shoulder at the class. Draw the letter shape in the air. Make large arm movements. Let the children follow as you repeat it, and then ask them to draw it in the air while you watch.
- Tell them to draw the letter shape with their finger on the desk (or on the back of a partner). This helps give children the 'feel' of the shapes they are learning.
- Draw the letter on the board again. Ask a few children to come to the board and trace it with their fingers, and with different-coloured chalks.
- Finally, ask the children to write the focus letter several times on paper.
- If you are using the *Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers A*, children can complete this in their workbooks.
- For further teaching and practice writing and using individual letters, *Little Explorers B Workbook* is suggested.

Step 4a – Letter recognition (for reading)

As letters are introduced and taught, it is important to ensure that children have lots of practice in recognizing and recalling the letters quickly. As the children learn new letter sounds, remember to check regularly that they remember those that were taught earlier.

Resources

- Letter cards (as above)
- An alphabet ladder (see *Macmillan Phonics Workbooks for Little Explorers A*) or an alphabet frieze

Activities

- Hold up the letter cards one at a time.
- Ask the class to say the letter sound.
- If necessary, turn the card round to show the focus picture on the other side to help them.
- Ask children to find particular letters on the alphabet ladder or frieze.

Step 4b – Letter recall (for spelling)

Resources

- Letter cards (as above). An alphabet ladder (see *Macmillan Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers A*) or an alphabet frieze.

Activities

- Hold up a number of cards (5 or 6).
- Say a letter sound. Ask a child to come out and take the correct card.
- Ask the class if they agree
- Turn over the card and check from the focus picture.

- Say a letter sound.
- Ask the children to find and point to the correct letter on the alphabet ladder or frieze.

- Say a letter sound.
- Ask children to write the correct letter on paper or the whiteboard in response.

Stage 3A: CVC words

Stage 3A deals with short, phonically regular CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words.

Teaching and practising blending CVC words (for reading)

Resources

- *Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers B*
- *Phonics Readers for Little Explorers B*
- Make five sets of CVC of word cards (large enough for classwork). Choose a number of appropriate words from each set of words below. Choose words that can be illustrated. Under each letter of each word draw a 'sound button'. Do it like this:



- Make a photocopy of each set.
- Make a second set of cards and draw an appropriate picture on the reverse side of each card.

N.B. The words in *italics* below appear in the *Phonics Workbooks* and/or the *Phonics Readers*.

Many of the CVC words below are illustrated in the *Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers B* or *Young Explorers 1*. The words in brackets are additional words you may wish to use.

CVC wordbank

Set 1 – CVC words with medial 'a'

- ad *sad, dad* (*bad, mad*)
ag *bag, rag* (*sag, tag*)
am *jam* (*dam, ham, ram, yam*)
an *fan, van* (*can, man, pan, ran*)
ap *cap, tap* (*gap, lap, map, nap, rap*)
at *cat, hat* (*bat, fat, mat, pat, rat, sat*)

Set 2 – CVC words with medial 'e'

ed *bed, red*
eg *leg, peg (beg)*
en *hen, pen (den, men, ten)*
et *net, wet (get, jet, pet, vet, yet)*
es *yes*

Set 3 – CVC words with medial 'i'

ib *bib, rib (nib)*
id *lid (did, hid)*
ig *big, dig (fig, pig, wig)*
im *him (dim)*
in *bin, pin (tin, win)*
ip *lip, rip (dip, hip, nip, pip, sip, tip, zip)*
it *hit, sit (bit, fit, pit)*
ix *fix, six (mix)*

Set 4 – CVC words with medial 'o'

ob *rob, sob (job)*
od *nod, rod (cod)*
og *dog, fog (bog, cog, hog, jog, log)*
op *hop, mop (pop, top)*
ot *hot, pot (cot, dot, got, lot, not)*
ox *box, fox*

Set 5 – CVC words with medial 'u'

ub *rub, tub (cub)*
ud *bud, mud*
ug *jug, mug (bug, dug, hug, rug, tug)*
um *hum, mum (gum, sum)*
un *bun, sun (fun, run)*
up *cup (pup)*
ut *cut, hut, nut*

N.B. Ensure children know the meaning of the words you use in the following activities.

Step 1

- Use the word cards with pictures on the back.
- Choose a word card from one set.
- Point to the 'sound button' under each letter, say the sound, then say the word, e.g. /k/ /a/ /t/, *cat*.
- Turn the card over and show the picture to check the children understand the word.
- Repeat and then ask the children to repeat the process with you. Then ask the children to tell you the word you have sounded out.
- Repeat with another CVC word from the set.
- Choose one more word card from the set.
- Point to the 'sound button' under each letter. This time, ask the children to say each sound first.
- You repeat each sound and then ask the children to tell you the word.
- Turn the card over and show the picture to check the children understand the word.
- Repeat this with another CVC word from the set.

Step 2

- Choose a word from one set of word cards without pictures on the back.
- Hold the word up and ask a child to read the word by sounding out the letters and blending them.
- Display several pictures of words from the same set, using the set of word cards with pictures on the back.
- Ask the child to find and hold up the correct picture.
- Ask the class to say if it is the correct one.
- To finish, point to each sound button under the letters in the word and ask the class to say the sounds, then blend them and read the word.

Step 3

- Divide the class into two groups (A and B).
- Give five words from one set (without pictures on the reverse) to different children in group A.
- Give the five corresponding pictures to five different children in group B.
- Ask the children with cards in group A to hold up their cards and read the words on them to their group.
- Ask the group to say if they agree or not.
- Ask the children in group B to hold up their pictures.
- The child in group A with the word card must then go and choose the correct picture from the group B cards.
- Continue the game until all the words have been matched with all the pictures.

Step 4

- Have five word cards from one set (without pictures on the reverse) pinned on the wall.
- Ask the class to read each word, by sounding out the letters and blending the sounds.
- Have the five corresponding picture cards 'hidden' in different places in the classroom.
- Invite five children to hunt for the corresponding pictures. Each time one is found, ask the child to match the picture to the correct word and ask the class if they agree.

Step 5

- Choose a number of words from one set of word cards (with pictures on the reverse).
- Hold up each word, one at a time.
- Point to each sound button and ask the class to say each sound, blend the sounds and say what word they have made.
- Turn the card round and look at the picture to check if their answer is correct each time.

Teaching and practising segmenting CVC words (for spelling)

Resources

- *Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers B*
- *Phonics Readers for Little Explorers B*
- 26 letter cards (one for each letter) large enough for classwork (It would be helpful to photocopy these and have some extra sets, too.)
- Sticky tape for sticking letters to the whiteboard
- Some sets of smaller-sized letter cards (or plastic letter shapes) for children to practise with
- Sheets of photocopied 'phoneme frames' (two columns of ten frames on each sheet) for children to write on. Do them like this:



Step 1

- Have the following letter cards stuck down the left side of the whiteboard (in random order): *a, t, b, c, h, m*.
- Sound out the word *at* and say it, e.g. /a/ /t/, *at*. Do this several times.
- Ask children to identify the letter that makes the /a/ sound from the letters at the side of the whiteboard. Move it and stick it in the middle of the whiteboard.

- Ask children to identify the letter that makes the /t/ sound from the letters at the side of the whiteboard. Move it and stick it next to the 'a' to make the word *at*.
- Point to each letter in turn. Sound out each letter with the class, e.g. /k/, then say /a/ /t/, *cat*. Do this several times with the class. Ask a few individual children to do it on their own, too.
- Point to the letter 'b' and ask the class what sound it makes. Move it and stick it in front of the word *at* to make *bat*.
- Point to each letter in turn. Sound out each letter with the class and then say the word: /b/ /a/ /t/, *bat*. Do this several times with the class. Ask a few individual children to do it on their own, too. Write the word *bat* on the right side of the board. Take away the 'b' and replace it on the left side of the board. (Point out to the class that this leaves the word *at*.)
- Repeat this process and make the words *cat*, *hat* and *mat*.
- Say all the words you made together. Point out that the words rhyme.
- To finish, give children the opportunity to practise writing the words a number of times on sheets of phoneme frames. Encourage them to sound out the words as they write them. Allow children to draw and label pictures of the words they made on the back of their phoneme frame sheets.
- If possible, allow the children to work in pairs to practise making the words with the appropriate letters from sets of smaller letter cards.

The following CV words may be used to make CVC words using the same procedure as above:

an – can, fan, man, pan, van

in – bin, win, tin, pin

it – hit, sit, bit

up – cup, pup

Step 2

- Choose five CVC words from Set 1 words from CVC wordbank (above). Write these on a piece of paper for your own reference.
- Stick the letter cards required to make the five chosen words on the left side of the whiteboard.
- Say one of the CVC words, e.g. *bag* to the class. Hold up three fingers, point to a finger one at a time for each phoneme and sound out the word, e.g. /b/ /a/ /g/, *bag*.
- Ask the children to do the same, using their own fingers.
- With the help of the class, find and make up the word on the board, saying each phoneme as you do so.
- Ask the children to write the word a couple of times on their sheets of phoneme frames.
- Repeat the process with the rest of the words you chose.
- N.B. This game can be used as many times as you like with each of the five sets of CVC words in the CVC wordbank.
- If possible, allow the children to work in pairs and to practise making the words with the appropriate letters from sets of smaller letter cards.

Step 3

- Choose five CVC words from the CVC wordbank (above). Write these on a piece of paper for your own reference.
- Have the letter cards required to make the five chosen words on your desk so the children can't see them.
- Say one of the CVC words, e.g. *run* to the class. Say it slowly twice. Ask the children to hold up three fingers, point to a finger one at a time for each phoneme and sound out the word, e.g. /r/ /u/ /n/, *run*.
- Ask a child to come and find the correct letters to spell the word and stick them on the whiteboard correctly. Demonstrate how to write the word on the board.
- Ask the children to write the word twice on their sheets of phoneme frames and to sound out each phoneme as they do so.
- Take the letter cards down from the board, rub out the word and repeat the process with the next word on your list. Do this until you have done all the words on your list.
- Encourage the children to make up oral sentences containing the five words.
- N.B. This game can be used as many times as you like with CVC words from the CVC wordbank.
- If possible, allow the children to work in pairs and to practise making the words with the appropriate letters from sets of smaller letter cards.

Stage 3B: CVC words

Stage 3B deals with short, single-syllable, phonically regular words that contain two consonants at the beginning or end of the words. The two consonants act as a single phoneme and make one sound.

CVC words covered in this stage are:

'll' words (as in *bell*)

'ss' words (as in *miss*)

'ff' words (as in *off*)

'ck' words (as in *sick*)

'ng' words (as in *king*)

'ch' words (as in *chop*)

'sh' words (as in *ship*)

'th' words (as in *thin* and *that*)

When teaching these phonemes point out that 'll', 'ss', 'ff', 'ck' and 'ng' never come at the beginning of words. With single-syllable words they always come at the end. (With two-syllable words, which come at a later stage, they sometimes come in the middle, e.g. *falling*, *rocket*.)

With single-syllable words, 'ch', 'sh' and 'th' may come at the beginning or end of a word, e.g. *shop*, *fish*. (With two-syllable words, which come at a later stage, they sometimes come in the middle, e.g. *fishing*.)

Teaching and practising blending CVC words (for reading)

Resources

- *Phonics Workbooks for Little Explorers B and Young Explorers 1*
- *Phonics Readers for Little Explorers B and Young Explorers 1*
- Use the CVC wordbank below and make sets of CVC of word cards (large enough for classwork). Choose a number of appropriate words from each set of words. Choose words that can be illustrated. Under each grapheme consisting of a single letter, draw a 'sound button'. Under graphemes consisting of two consonants which make one sound, draw a line. Do it like this:



- Make a photocopy of each set.
- Make a second set of cards and draw an appropriate picture on the reverse side of each card.

N.B. The words in *italics* below appear in the *Phonics Workbooks* and/or the *Phonics Readers*.

Many of the CVC words below are illustrated in the *Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers B* or *Young Explorers 1*.

CVC wordbank

Words in brackets are additional words you may wish to use.

ll *ball, wall* (call, fall, hall, mall, tall)

bell, shell (fell, sell, tell, well, yell)

hill, pill (bill, fill, mill, till, will)

doll

(bull, full, pull)

ss hiss, kiss (pass, less, mess, miss, boss, toss, fuss)

ff puff (cuff)

ck back, sack (pack, rack)

neck (deck, peck)

kick, quack (lick, pick, quick, sick, tick)

rock, sock (dock, lock)

duck (luck, suck)

ng bang (hang)

king, ring (sing, wing)

(long, song, lung)

ch chip, chin (chat, check, chick, chill, chop)

rich, lunch (bunch, munch, punch, bench, pinch, much, such)

sh ship, shop (shed, shell, shin, shut)

fish, dish (wish, brush, bush, cash)

th thank, thick, thin (thing)

bath, path (both, moth)

(than, that, them, then, this, with)

N.B. Ensure children know the meaning of the words you use in the following activities.

The process for teaching words at this stage is exactly the same as the steps outlined in this section above in Stage 3A. Whenever you come to the phoneme in the word in which two letters represent one sound, e.g. 'sh', 'll', point this out to the children.

Teaching and practising segmenting CVC words (for spelling)

Resources

- *Phonics Workbook for Little Explorers B and Young Explorers 1*
- *Phonics Readers for Little Explorers B and Young Explorers 1*
- The 26 letter cards (one for each letter) used for Stage 3A, plus additional cards for 'll', 'ss', 'ff', 'ck', 'ng', 'ch', 'sh' and 'th'. Make them large enough for classwork. (It would be helpful to photocopy these and have some extra sets, too.)
- Sticky tape for sticking letters to the whiteboard.
- Some sets of smaller-sized letter cards (or plastic letter shapes) for children to practise with, i.e. the 26 letter cards plus the additional cards.
- Sheets of photocopied phoneme frames (two columns of ten frames on each sheet, with each space large enough for two letters) for children to write on. Do them like this:



The process for teaching words at this stage is exactly the same as steps 2 and 3 outlined in this section above in Stage 3A. Whenever you come to the phoneme in the word in which two letters represent one sound, e.g. 'sh', 'll', point this out to the children. When you write a words in the phoneme frames, the phoneme with two letters goes in *one* frame, e.g. sh-o-p.

Stage 4: CCVC and CVCC words (words beginning or ending with consonant blends)

Stage 4 deals with short, single-syllable, phonically regular words that begin or end with consonant blends, i.e. two consonants that are sounded separately, e.g. /f/ /l/ /a/ /g/, /h/ /a/ /n/ /d/.

Initial consonant blends covered at this stage are:

- consonant + l, e.g. bl, cl, fl, gl, pl, sl
- consonant + r, e.g. br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, tr
- s + consonant, e.g. sl, sn, sp, st, sw

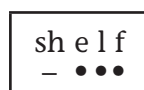
Final consonant blends covered at this stage are:

- l + consonant, e.g. ld, lf, lk, lp, lt
- n + consonant, e.g. nd, nt
- s + consonant, e.g. sk, st

Teaching and practising blending words beginning or ending with consonant blends (for reading)

Resources

- *Phonics Workbooks for Young Explorers 1*
- *Phonics Readers for Young Explorers 1*
- Use the wordbank below and make sets of word cards (large enough for classwork). Choose a number of appropriate words from each set of words. Choose words that can be illustrated. Under each grapheme in each word draw a 'sound button'. Do it like this:



N.B. Draw a sound button 'line' under any graphemes consisting of two consonants that make one sound (as in the word *shelf*).

- Make a photocopy of each set.
- Make a second set of cards and draw an appropriate picture on the reverse side of each card.

N.B. The words in italics below appear in the *Phonics Workbooks* and/or the *Phonics Readers*. Many of the words below are illustrated in the *Phonics Workbook for Young Explorers 1*. Words in brackets are additional words you may wish to use.

Wordbank

Words in brackets are additional words you may wish to use.

Initial consonant blends

bl	<i>black</i> (bless, blink)
cl	<i>clock</i> (<i>clap</i> , cliff, cluck)
fl	<i>flag</i> (flash, flat, flesh, flick)
gl	glass (glad)
pl	plant (plan, plus)
sl	slap (slit, slot)
br	brick (bring, <i>brush</i>)
cr	crack (crash, crisp, <i>cross</i>)
dr	drum (drag, <i>dress</i> , <i>drink</i> , drip, drop)
fr	<i>frog</i> , <i>from</i> (fresh)
gr	<i>grass</i> (grab, <i>grin</i> , grip)
pr	print
tr	truck (track, <i>trick</i> , trap, trip)
sw	<i>swim</i> (<i>sweets</i> , <i>swing</i>)
sk	<i>skip</i> (skid, skull)
sm	<i>smell</i> (smack, smash)
sn	snap (sniff, snip)
sp	<i>spell</i> (spill, spin, spit, spot)
st	<i>stab</i> , stamp, <i>stand</i> , <i>step</i> , <i>stick</i> , stiff, <i>still</i> , sting, <i>stuck</i>)

Final consonant blends

ld	<i>cold</i> , <i>held</i> (bold, fold, <i>gold</i> , hold, sold, told)
lf	<i>shelf</i> (elf, golf)
lk	<i>milk</i> (silk, sulk)
lp	<i>help</i> (gulp, yelp)
lt	<i>belt</i> (<i>felt</i> , melt, <i>quilt</i>)
ft	<i>raft</i> , <i>soft</i>
mp	<i>jump</i>
nd	<i>hand</i> (<i>band</i> , land, <i>sand</i> , <i>stand</i> , bend, lend, mend, send, <i>wind</i> , fond, <i>pond</i>)
nt	<i>tent</i> , <i>ant</i> (pant, bent, dent, lent, sent, <i>went</i> , hunt)
st	<i>fast</i> (<i>last</i> , mast, <i>past</i> , best, <i>chest</i> , <i>nest</i> , <i>rest</i> , vest, west, fist, list, mist, cost, lost, bust, just, must, rust)
sk	mask (task, desk, dusk, tusk)

N.B. Ensure children know the meaning of the words you use.

The process for teaching words at this stage is exactly the same as the steps outlined in this section above in Stage 3A. Sound out each grapheme separately, e.g. /s/ /w/ /i/ /m/, *swim*. If you use a word in which a grapheme consists of two letters representing one sound, e.g. /sh/ in /f/ /l/ /a/ /sh/, *flash*, point this out to the class.

Teaching and practising segmenting words beginning or ending with consonant blends (for spelling)

Resources

- *Phonics Workbook for Young Explorers 1*
- *Phonics Readers for Young Explorers 1*
- The 26 letter cards (one for each letter) used for Stage 3A, plus additional cards for each of the consonant blends listed in the wordbank above. Make them large enough for classwork. (It would be helpful to photocopy these and have some extra sets, too.)
- Sticky tape for sticking letters to the whiteboard
- Some sets of smaller-sized letter cards (or plastic letter shapes) for children to practise with, i.e. the 26 letter cards plus the additional cards
- Sheets of photocopied phoneme frames (two columns of ten frames on each sheet, with spaces large enough for two letters) for children to write on. Do them like this:



The process for teaching words at this stage is exactly the same as steps 2 and 3 outlined in this section above in Stage 3A (except that now we have four phonemes in each word, rather than three). If you use a word in which two letters represent one sound, e.g. 'll' for /l/, point this out to the children. When you write the word in the phoneme frame, the phoneme with two letters goes in *one* frame, e.g. s-p-i-ll.

Stage 5: Digraphs

Stage 5 deals with short, single-syllable, phonically regular words that contain a digraph, i.e. two or three letters that come together to make one sound, like the 'ai' in *rain*.

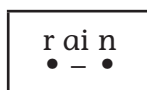
Digraphs covered at this stage are:

digraph	sound
ay, ai, a-e*	/ae/
ee, ea	/ee/
y, igh, i-e*	/ie/
oa, ow, o-e*	/oa/
oo, u-e*	/ue/
ar	/ar/
er, ir, ur	/er/
or	/or/
oy, oi	/oi/
ow, ou	/ow/
ea	/e/
oo	/oo/
wh	/w/

*This shows how the words with split digraphs from Stage 6 may be integrated into Stage 5, if preferred. The teaching of split digraphs is covered separately in the Stage 6 notes.

Resources

- *Phonics Workbooks for Young Explorers 1 and 2*
- *Phonics Readers for Young Explorers 1 and 2*
- Use the wordbank and make sets of word cards (large enough for classwork). Choose a number of appropriate words from each set of words. Choose words that can be illustrated. Under each grapheme consisting of a single letter, draw a 'sound button'. Under digraphs consisting of two or three consonants which make one sound, draw a sound button 'line'. Do it like this:



- Make a photocopy of each set.
- Make a second set of cards and draw an appropriate picture on the reverse side of each card.

N.B. The words in *italics* below, appear in the *Phonics Workbooks* and/or the *Phonics Readers*. Many of the words are illustrated in the *Phonics Workbooks for Young Explorers 1 and 2*.

Wordbank

Words in brackets are additional words you may wish to use.

- ay *day, pay, play, stay*
(clay, *hay, lay, may, pray, ray, say, sway, way*)
- ai *nail, tail, rain, train*
(maid, paid, gain, brain, chain, main, pain, stain, plain, fail, mail, pail, rail, *sail, snail, wait, aim*)
- ee *three, tree, sheep, sleep, green, queen, feet*
(bee, see, free, *feed, need, weed, week, eel, feel, heel, peel, wheel, seem, keen, creep, deep, jeep, keep, peep, steep, sweep, weep, greet, meet, street, sweet, teeth*)
- ea *sea, tea, read, beach, dream, eat*
(each, peach, reach, teach, lead, beak, weak, leak, speak, *squeak, meal, seal, deal, team, steam, cream, mean, bean, clean, heap, leap, beat, bleat, cheat, heat, meat, neat, seat, beast, east, feast, leave*)
- y *cry, dry, fly, sky*
(by, my, shy, sly, try, why)
- igh *fight, light, night, right*
(high, sigh, thigh, might, tight, *bright, fright*)
- oa *boat, coat, goat, road*
(coach, load, toad, loaf, soak, cloak, goal, moan, groan, soap, coast, toast, *float*)
- ow *low, slow, snow, throw*
(bow, blow, grow, row, show)
- oo *zoo, roof, pool, room, broom, moon, spoon*
(too, food, mood, cool, fool, tool, noon, soon, hoop, choose, boot, root, shoot)
- ar *car, star, park, shark, arm, farm*
(bar, far, jar, arch, *march, card, hard, scarf, bark, dark, mark, spark, sharp, art, cart, dart, part, smart, start*)
- er (her, kerb, herd, jerk, term, verse)
- ir *bird, third, girl, first, shirt, skirt*
(sir, stir)
- or *torch, fork, horse, short*
(for, pork, *stork, storm, corn, horn, thorn, fort, port, sort, sport, north*)
- ur *turn, nurse, purse*
(fur, curl, burn, hurt)
- ow *cow, brown, down, town, owl*
(how, now, crowd, crown, *frown*)

ou	<i>cloud, round, count, house, mouse, shout, mouth</i> (<i>loud, proud, out, trout, found, ground, sound, south</i>)
ea	<i>bread, head</i> (<i>dead, spread</i>)
oo	<i>wood, book, cook, look, foot, wool</i> (<i>good, hood, stood, hook, shook, took</i>)
wh	<i>whale, wheel, white</i> (<i>when, which, why</i>)
oy	<i>boy (joy, toy)</i>
oi	<i>point (boil, soil, spoil, coin, join, noise)</i>
a-e	<i>cake, name, plane, gate, wave</i> (<i>face, made, spade, cage, bake, lake, make, rake, take, wake, shake, snake, gale, pale, sale, tale, whale, came, game, same, lane, cape, shape, tape, chase, ate, date, hate, late, skate, cave, brave, gave, save, shave</i>)
i-e	<i>nice, rice, hide, bike, smile, nine, kite, five</i> (<i>side, ride, slide, wide, tide, pile, like, time, dine, fine, mine, pine, shine, pipe, ripe, stripe, wipe, bite, white, dive, drive, pie</i>)
o-e	<i>hole, bone, rope, nose, note</i> (<i>robe, broke, choke, joke, poke, smoke, spoke, stroke, pole, home, stone, hope, slope, close, chose, hose, rose, those, drove, toe</i>)
u-e	<i>cube, tune, flute, blue</i> (<i>tube, rude, huge, duke, rule, June, use, cute, glue</i>)

N.B. Ensure children know the meaning of the words you use in the following activities.

Teaching and practising blending words with digraphs (for reading)

Use the teaching suggestions below to teach the reading of all the sets of digraphs from the wordbank.

Step 1

- Choose a few words from one set of digraphs.
- Show the class a picture of one of the words, e.g. *rain*. Ensure they know and can say the word.
- Show the *rain* word card.
- Point to each grapheme and say the sound and then say the word, e.g. /r/ /ae/ /n/, *rain*. Draw attention to the long /ae/ sound written as 'ai' represented by the line under it.
- Point to each grapheme and say the sounds and word again. Ask the class to join in.

- Finally, point to each grapheme, ask the class (or an individual child) to say each sound, and then say the word.
- Together, make up an oral sentence containing the word.
- Teach all the remaining words you chose in the same way.

Step 2

- Stick some pictures of the words you taught in Step 1 on the board.
- Show one word card to the class at a time.
- Ask the class (or individual children) to sound out the word, blend it and then match the word to the correct picture.
- Repeat the process until all the words have been matched to the pictures.

Step 3

- To complete the teaching of each digraph, play a 'race' game with the class.
- Tell the children they are going to have a race to see which team can read the words the fastest.
- For this activity you will need a clock or watch with a seconds display.
- Stick the list of the word cards taught above on the whiteboard, one under the other.
- Divide the class into two (or more) teams.
- Each team takes it in turns to sound out each word, blend the sounds and read each word as quickly as possible.

Teaching and practising segmenting words with digraphs (for spelling)

Resources

- *Phonics Workbooks for Young Explorers 1 and 2*
- *Phonics Readers for Young Explorers 1 and 2*
- The 26 letter cards (one for each letter) used for Stage 3A, plus additional cards for each of the digraphs listed in the wordbank above. Make them large enough for classwork. (It would be helpful to photocopy these and have some extra sets, too.)
- Sticky tape for sticking letters to the whiteboard.
- Some sets of smaller-sized letter cards (or plastic letter shapes) for children to practise with, i.e. the 26 letter cards plus the additional digraph cards.
- Sheets of photocopied phoneme frames (two columns of ten frames on each sheet, with spaces large enough for two letters) for children to write on. You will mainly need phoneme frames divided into three like this:



You will need a few phoneme frames divided into four for some words.

When you write a word containing a digraph in the phoneme frame, the digraph with two (or three) letters goes in *one* frame, e.g. r-ai-n.

Use the teaching suggestions below to teach the spelling of all the sets of digraphs from the wordbank.

Step 1

- Choose a few words from one set of words from the wordbank (above). Write these on a piece of paper for your own reference.
- Stick the letter cards required to make the chosen words on the left side of the whiteboard.
- Say one of the words, e.g. *boat* to the class. Hold up three fingers, point to a finger one at a time for each phoneme and sound out the word, e.g. /b/ /oa/ /t/, *boat*.
- Ask the children to do the same, using their own fingers.
- With the help of the class, find the letters and make up the word on the board, saying each phoneme as you do so.
- Ask the children to write the word a couple of times on their sheets of phoneme frames.
- Repeat the process with the rest of the words you chose.
- If possible, allow the children to work in pairs and to practise making the words with the appropriate letters from sets of smaller letter cards.

Step 2

- Choose a few words from one set of words from the wordbank (above). Write these on a piece of paper for your own reference.
- Have the letter cards required to make the chosen words on your desk so the children can't see them.
- Say one of the words, e.g. *seat* to the class. Say it slowly twice. Ask the children to hold up three fingers, point to a finger one at a time for each phoneme and sound out the word, e.g. /s/ /ea/ /t/, *seat*.
- Ask a child to come and find the correct letters to spell the word and stick them on the whiteboard correctly. Demonstrate how to write the word on the board.
- Ask the children to write the word twice on their sheets of phoneme frames and to sound out each phoneme as they do so.
- Take the letter cards down from the board, rub out the word and repeat the process with the next word on your list. Do this until you have done all the words on your list.
- Encourage the children to make up oral sentences containing the five words.
- If possible, allow the children to work in pairs and to practise making the words with the appropriate letters from sets of smaller letter cards.

Stage 6: Split digraphs (modifying 'e' or magic 'e' words)

Stage 6 deals with short, single-syllable words with a split digraph. A split digraph has a letter that comes between the two letters in the digraph (such as the 'a' and 'e' in *cake* in which the 'k' comes between the 'a' and 'e'). These types of words are called 'magic e' words by some teachers. The 'e' at the end of the word is also called a modifying 'e' because it has the effect of modifying the middle vowel sound in the word from a short to a long sound, e.g. *hop* (short middle vowel sound) *hop + e = hope* (long middle vowel sound). Some teachers call the 'e' the magic 'e' because of the way it changes the sound of the middle vowel of the word. They tell children that words with 'e' at the end make the middle vowel say its name, e.g. 'o' sounds like /oa/ in *hope*.

N.B. The teaching order for Stages 5 and 6 is flexible. Some teachers prefer to teach the vowel digraphs covered in Stage 5 before they teach words with split digraphs from Stage 6. Some teachers like to teach words with split digraphs at the same time as they teach the vowel digraphs in Stage 5, i.e. they teach 'a-e' words when they teach 'ai' and 'ay' words.

Teaching and practising blending words with split digraphs (modifying 'e' or magic 'e' words) for reading

Resources

- *Phonics Workbooks for Young Explorers 1 and 2*
- *Phonics Readers for Young Explorers 1*
- Use the wordbank below and make sets of word cards (large enough for classwork). Choose a number of appropriate words from each set of words. Choose words that can be illustrated. Under each grapheme representing a single letter sound draw a 'sound button'. Under the middle vowel and final 'e' draw a sound button 'line' joined with a curve to show that the middle vowel and final 'e' make one long sound. (In the word *fine* the letters 'i' and 'e' make the /ie/ sound.) Do it like this:



- Make a photocopy of each set.
- Make a second set of cards and draw an appropriate picture on the reverse side of each card.

N.B. The words in the wordbank in *italics* appear in the *Phonics Workbooks* and/or the *Phonics Readers*.

Many of the words are illustrated in the *Phonics Workbooks* for *Young Explorers 1* and *2*.

Wordbank

a-e *cake, plane, gate, wave, name*

(*made, spade, make, take, lake, wake, snake, rake, bake, shake, tale, pale, gale, sale, came, game, same, lane, cape, tape, shape, late, date, hate, skate, cave, gave, shave, save, brave*)

i-e *hide, bike, smile, nine, pipe, kite, five*

(*side, wide, ride, tide, slide, like, time, dine, fine, mine, pine, shine, ripe, wipe, bite, white, dive, drive, pie*)

o-e *hole, bone, rope, smoke, nose, note, toe*

(*robe, pole, home, stone, hope, slope, joke, stroke, poke, broke, spoke, choke, hose, rose, close, chose, those*)

u-e *cube, tune, flute, blue*

(*tube, rude, June, rule, cute, use, duke, glue*)

N.B. Ensure children know the meaning of the words you use in the following activities.

Step 1

- Write the word *hat* on the whiteboard. Draw a 'sound button' under each letter. Point to each phoneme and sound out the word /h/ /a/ /t/, *hat*. Repeat the sounds and ask the children to do it with you.
- Tell the children you are going to do a trick and change the sound of the 'a'. Write the word again, but this time add 'e' to the end of the word (to make it *hate*). Read the new word you have made. Draw a sound button under the 'h' and 't' and a line under the 'a' and 'e' joined with a curve. Explain that the 'a' and 'e' make one sound and say the name of the vowel 'a' in the middle - /ae/.
- Sound out the word again. Point to the 'h', say the sound. Point to the 'a' and slide your finger to the 'e' at the end and say /ae/, then point to the 't' and say the sound. Then tell children the word - /h/ /ae/ /t/, *hate*.
- Write the sentence *I hate my hat.* on the board and read it to and with the class.
- Repeat the process again with the words *pin* and *pine*, *hop* and *hope* and *cut* and *cute*.
- Ask the children to re-read the words *hat* and *hate*, *pin* and *pine*, *hop* and *hope* and *cut* and *cute*. Remind children that when they see an 'e' at the end of a word it makes the middle vowel say its name ('a-e' says /ae/, 'i-e' says /ie/, 'o-e' says /oa/, and 'u-e' says /ue/).

Step 2

- Use the word cards with pictures on the back.
- Choose the word card for *cake* from the 'a-e' set of words.
- Point to the 'c', say the sound. Point to the 'a' and slide your finger to the 'e' at the end and say /ae/, then point to the 'k' and say the sound. Then tell children the word - /k/ /ae/ /k/, *cake*.
- Turn the card over and show the picture to check the children understand the word.
- Repeat and then ask the children to repeat the process with you. Then ask the children to tell you the word you have sounded out.
- Repeat with four other 'a-e' words from the set.
- Repeat this with five words from each of the other sets ('i-e', 'o-e' and 'u-e').
- From time to time, don't tell children the sounds, but point to them in each word and ask the children to say each sound first and then blend them to read the word.
- Each time, turn the card over and show the picture to check the children understand the word.

Step 3

- Choose a word from one set of word cards without pictures on the back.
- Hold the word up and ask a child to read the word by sounding out the letters and blending them.
- Display several pictures of words from the same set, using the set of word cards with pictures on the back.
- Ask the child to find and hold up the correct picture.
- Ask the class to say if it is the correct one.
- To finish, point to each sound in the word and ask the class to say the sounds and then blend them to read the word.

Step 4

- Divide the class into two groups. (A and B)
- Give five words from one set (without pictures on the reverse) to different children in group A.
- Give the five corresponding pictures to five different children in group B.
- Ask the children with cards in group A to hold up their cards and read the words on them to their group.
- Ask the group to say if they agree or not.
- Ask the children in group B to hold up their pictures.
- A child in group A with a word card must then go and choose the correct picture from the group B cards.
- Continue the game until all the words have been matched with all the pictures.

Step 5

- Choose a number of words from different sets of word cards (with pictures on the reverse).
- Hold up each word, one at a time.
- Point to each sound and ask the class to say each sound, then blend the sounds and say what word they have made.
- Turn the card round and look at the picture to check if their answer is correct each time.

Teaching and practising segmenting words with split digraphs (modifying 'e' or magic 'e' words) for spelling

Resources

- *Phonics Workbooks for Young Explorers 1 and 2*
- *Phonics Readers for Young Explorers 1*
- 26 letter cards (one for each letter), plus letter cards for 'ch', 'sh' and 'th'. Make them large enough for classwork. (It would be helpful to photocopy these and have some extra sets, too.)
- Sticky tape for sticking letters to the whiteboard.
- Some sets of smaller-sized letter cards (or plastic letter shapes) for children to practise with.
- Sheets of photocopied phoneme frames (two columns of ten frames on each sheet, with spaces large enough for two letters) for children to write on. Do some sheets with four phoneme spaces in each frame, and some with five phoneme spaces in each frame.

Step 1

- Choose five words from one of the sets in the wordbank above. Write these on a piece of paper for your own reference.
- Stick the letter cards required to make the five chosen words on the left side of the whiteboard.
- Say one of the words, e.g. *gate* to the class. Write the letters 'gat' on the board. Ask the class what letter is needed at the end to make the word *gate*. Add the 'e' and sound out the word. Point to the 'g' and say the sound. Point to the 'a' and slide your finger to the 'e' at the end and say the sound /ae/. Point to the 't' and say the sound. Do this again and ask the class to say it with you and then on their own.
- Ask one child to come out and make up the word under the word you wrote, using the letter cards at the side of the board.
- Ask the children to write the word a couple of times on their sheets of phoneme frames.
- Repeat the process with the rest of the words you chose.
- N.B. This game can be used as many times as you like with each of the sets of words in the wordbank.
- If possible, allow the children to work in pairs and to practise making the words with the appropriate letters from sets of smaller letter cards.

Step 2

- Choose any five words from the wordbank (above). Write these on a piece of paper for your own reference.
- Have the letter cards required to make the five chosen words on your desk so the children can't see them.
- Say one of the words, e.g. *nose* to the class. Say it slowly twice and write it on the whiteboard. Sound it out, as you did in Step 1 above.
- Ask a child to come and find the correct letters to spell the word and stick them on the whiteboard correctly.
- Ask the children to write the word twice on their sheets of phoneme frames and to sound out each phoneme as they do so, sliding their fingers from the 'o' to the 'e' to make the /oa/ sound.
- Take the letter cards down from the board, rub out the word and repeat the process with the next word on your list. Do this until you have done all the words on your list.
- Encourage the children to make up oral sentences containing the five words.
- N.B. This game can be used as many times as you like with the words from the wordbank.
- If possible, allow the children to work in pairs and to practise making the words with the appropriate letters from sets of smaller letter cards.