



# Phonemic awareness and phonics for reading and spelling



*This resource has been developed to support teachers to improve the literacy skills of Pre-primary and Year 1 students. The document aligns with the Western Australian Curriculum: English, the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standard.*

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## Introduction

The resource has been developed within the context of a number of State and Federal initiatives that include: [The Early Years Learning Framework](#) (EYLF, 2009); the implementation of the [Western Australian Curriculum: English](#) (SCASA, 2016); [Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines \(SCASA\)](#) [The National Quality Standard](#) (NQS, 2013) and [The Early Years of School](#) (DETTWA, 2011), in which the Director General explains the need to raise our expectations of students in the first years of school.

This resource provides an overview of a sequence for teaching and learning and phonological awareness and phonics in Pre-primary and Year 1. It explains what this learning involves, why it is important and how it might be taught enjoyably and effectively. It also gives guidelines for teaching, and defines in detail what needs to be learnt, provides ideas for how it can be taught and how new learning may be monitored and assessed.

This resource informs the teaching of the Content Descriptions in the *Western Australian Curriculum: English* (Pre-primary and Year 1 levels) that are related to the teaching of

phonological awareness and phonics. The main focus is the Content Descriptions that have a direct and specific focus on words, sounds and letters, and which provide a strong foundation for fluent reading and writing. The majority of these Content Descriptions *directly* address words, letters and sounds. Others refer more generally to practising these aspects in reading and writing connected text, which assumes a working knowledge of phonological awareness and phonics. These Content Descriptions are marked with an asterisk\*.

Information is provided about the knowledge, skills and understandings about phonological awareness and phonics that students need to learn and be able to apply as they read, write and spell. It outlines what teachers can do to assist students to develop phonological awareness and phonic knowledge. Activities are provided to further assist teachers with teaching the content outlined. These activities include some detailed, downloadable sequences of learning activities from the [First Steps Literacy](#) materials. The resource also builds upon the UK [Letters and Sounds](#) program (dfes, 2007) that was developed for classroom teachers, on the basis of evidence-based research (Johnston & Watson, 2014).

The content of this document is divided into an Introduction and six sections\*. It also contains 'Teaching Notes' which provide further explanations and examples to assist teachers. Each section describes specific teaching ideas and examples of learning activities that will provide students with opportunities for practice and consolidation. It includes specific focus questions to assist teachers to identify what each student can/cannot do. This will assist with the monitoring of student's progress and the identification of teaching points that need to be taught or revised.

**\*Note:** Sections 1-4 address phonological awareness and sound letter correspondences. Sections 5 and 6 address spelling and the reading of high frequency words.

## Table of contents

Introduction	2	<b>SECTION 3:</b> Phoneme-grapheme correspondence (single letters)	54
Western Australian Curriculum: English Content Descriptions	4	Phoneme-grapheme correspondence (single letters)	54
Definition of terms	6	Teaching six sound-letter relationships	57
What is phonics?	7	Teaching 20 sound-letter relationships	61
Why is phonics important?	8		
What is phonological awareness?	9	<b>SECTION 4:</b> Graphophonics – digraphs, blends, rimes and syllables	64
Why is phonological awareness important?	10	Revising and extending phonological awareness	70
Becoming phonologically aware	11	Consonant blends for reading and spelling	74
What needs to be learnt?	12	Digraphs and trigraphs	77
TABLE 1. Common phoneme-grapheme correspondences	13	Learning alternative spellings and pronunciations	85
TABLE 2: Phonemes to graphemes (consonants)	15	Onsets and rimes	87
TABLE 3: Phonemes to graphemes (vowels)	16	Multi-syllabic words	89
High Frequency Words	17		
		<b>SECTION 5:</b> High frequency words	91
<b>Pre-primary and Year 1 phonological awareness and phonics learning</b>		Introducing high frequency words	94
Guidelines for teaching phonics and phonological awareness	19	Developing a teaching sequence for high frequency words	98
Identifying a teaching sequence	23		
References	24	<b>SECTION 6:</b> Teaching spelling	101
		Awareness of morphemes for spelling words	101
<b>SECTION 1:</b> Phonological awareness: Words, syllables and rimes	25	Teaching Spelling	103
Teaching and learning: Word awareness	27	Why is spelling important?	103
Teaching and learning: Syllables	31	What do teachers need to know about spelling?	103
Teaching and learning: Rhymes	33	Spelling strategies	105
Teaching and learning: Alphabet letters – Graphemes	36	High frequency words: individual checklist	107
<b>SECTION 2:</b> Phonemic awareness	39		
Isolation of the first and final sounds in words	41		
Blending and segmenting phonemes in words	48		

## Western Australian Curriculum: English Content Descriptions for Pre-primary

### LANGUAGE

- Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text different from letters; recognise how capital letters are used for names, and that capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences (ACELA1432).
- \*Understand concepts about print and screen, including how books, film and simple digital texts work, and know some features of print, for example directionality (ACELA1433).
- Recognise that texts are made up of words and groups of words that make meaning (ACELA1434).
- Understand how to use knowledge of letters and sounds including onset and rime to spell words (ACELA1438).
- Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).
- Recognise and name all upper and lower case letters (graphemes) and know the most common sound that each letter represents (ACELA1440).
- Know how to read and write some high-frequency words and other familiar words (ACELA 1817).
- Understand that words are units of meaning and can be made of more than one meaningful part (ACELA1818).
- Segment sentences into individual words and orally blend and segment onset and rime in single syllable spoken words, and isolate, blend and manipulate phonemes in single syllable words (ACELA1819).
- Write consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words by representing some sounds with the appropriate letters, and blend sounds associated with letters when reading CVC words (ACELA1820).

### LITERATURE

- \*Replicate the rhythms and sound patterns in stories, rhymes, songs and poems from a range of cultures (ACELT1579).

### LITERACY

- \*Read decodable and predictable texts, practising phrasing and fluency, and monitor meaning using concepts about print and emerging contextual, semantic, grammatical and phonic knowledge (ACELY1649).
- \*Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge (ACELY1651).
- \*Participate in shared editing of students' own texts for meaning, spelling, capital letters and full stops (ACELY1652).
- Produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations (ACELY1653).
- \*Construct texts using software including word processing programs (ACELY1654).

## Western Australian Curriculum: English Content Descriptions for Year 1

### LANGUAGE

- Manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words (ACELA1457).
- Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).
- Understand that a letter can represent more than one sound and that a syllable must contain a vowel sound (ACELA1459).
- Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).
- Recognise and know how to use simple grammatical morphemes to create word families (ACELA1455).
- Use visual memory to read and write high-frequency words (ACELA1821).
- Segment consonant blends or clusters into separate phonemes at the beginnings and ends of one syllable words (ACELA1822).

### LITERATURE

- \*Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme (ACELT1585).

### LITERACY

- \*Read decodable and predictable texts using developing phrasing, fluency, contextual, semantic, grammatical and phonic knowledge and emerging text processing strategies, for example prediction, monitoring meaning and re-reading (ACELY1659).
- \*Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams (ACELY1661).
- \*Re-read students' own texts and discuss possible changes to improve meaning, spelling and punctuation (ACELY1662).
- Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters (ACELY1663).

## Definition of terms

*Terms are defined as in the Western Australian Curriculum: English Glossary, except for those marked with an asterisk which are not addressed in that glossary.*

- **\*Alphabetic principle** - The notion that there are systematic correspondences between the sounds of language and the letters of the alphabet.
- **Blending** - A process of saying the individual sounds in a word then running them together to make the word. The sounds must be said quickly so the word is clear (for example, sounding out /b/-/i/-/g/ to make 'big').
- **CVC words** – words containing a consonant, followed by a vowel followed by a consonant, for example 'cat'; **VC words** – words containing a vowel, followed by a consonant, for example at. More complex combinations in words include **CVCC, CCVC, CVCVC** etc.
- **Graphemes** - A letter or group of letters that spell a phoneme in a word (for example, /f/ in the word 'fog'; /ph/ in the word 'photo').
- **High-frequency words** - The most common words used in written English text. They are sometimes called 'irregular words' or 'sight words'. Many common or high-frequency words in English cannot be decoded using sound-letter correspondence because they do not use regular or common letter patterns.
- **\*Metalinguistic awareness** - The ability to reflect on language as an object of thought.
- **Onset** - Separate phonemes in a syllable can normally be broken into two parts – onset and rime. An onset is the initial consonant (for example, in 'cat' the onset is /c/); or consonant blend (for example, in 'shop' the onset is /sh/). Word families can be constructed using common onsets such as /t/ in 'top', 'town'.
- **Phoneme** - The smallest unit of sound in a word (for example, the word 'is' has two phonemes: /i/ and /s/; the word 'ship' has three phonemes: /sh/, /i/, /p/).
- **Phonemic awareness** - An ability to hear, identify and manipulate separate, individual phonemes in words.
- **Phonics** - The term used to refer to the ability to identify the relationships between letters and sounds when reading and spelling.
- **\*Phonics instruction** - Refers to 'explicit instruction and practice with reading words in and out of text' (Rowe, 2005, p. 88).
- **Phonological awareness** - A broad concept that relates to the sounds of spoken language. It includes understandings about words, rhyme, syllables and onset and rime. NOTE: the term 'sound' relates to a sound we make when we say a letter or word, not to a letter in print. A letter may have more than one sound, such as the letter 'a' in 'was', 'can' or 'father', and a sound can be represented by more than one letter such as the sound /k/ in 'cat' and 'walk'. The word 'ship' has three sounds /sh/, /i/, /p/, but has four letters 's', 'h', 'i', 'p'. Teachers should use the terms 'sound' and 'letter' accurately to help students clearly distinguish between the two items.
- **Rime** - Separate phonemes in a syllable can normally be broken into two parts – onset and rime. The rime is a vowel and any subsequent consonants (for example, in the word 'cat' the rime is /at/). Word families can be constructed using common rimes such as /at/ in 'cat', 'pat'.
- **Segmenting** - Recognising and separating out phonemes in a word. Students may say each sound as they tap it out. Stretching (for example, mmmmaannn) is an example of segmenting. When segmenting words, there is a pause between each phoneme (for example, /m/-/a/-/n/ is an example of segmenting).
- **Syllables** - Elements of speech that can be heard as a complete sound unit. They may be individual words, such as man, dog, spring, or may be parts of a word such as 'mon-key' or 'an-i-mal'.



# What is phonics?

Phonics (also called graphophonics) refers to knowledge of the sound-letter relationships that are used in reading and writing. Phonics involves knowledge of sounds (phonological awareness), alphabet letters and groups of letters (graphemes), and their systematic relationships.

The fundamental elements of phonics are:

- ▶ identifying sound units in spoken words
- ▶ recognising the common spellings of each phoneme
- ▶ blending phonemes into words for reading
- ▶ segmenting words into phonemes for spelling.

Phonics is also used to refer to a teaching method that emphasises the explicit teaching of sound-letter correspondences. According to The Australian National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy:

- ▶ **Phonics instruction** refers to ‘explicit instruction and practice with reading words in and out of text. Several approaches have been used to teach phonics systematically, including: synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, embedded phonics, analogy phonics... Key features of these approaches are summarised below, drawn from Ehri et al. (2001):
  - ▶ **Analytic phonics** uses a whole-to-part approach that avoids having students pronounce sounds in isolation to recognise words. Rather, students are taught to analyse letter-sound relations once the word is identified. For example, a teacher might write the letter ‘p’ followed by several words: put, pig, pet, play. The teacher would help students to read the words by noting that each word begins with the same sound that is associated with ‘p’.
  - ▶ **Synthetic phonics** programs use a part-to-whole approach that teaches students to convert graphemes into phonemes (e.g. to pronounce each letter in ‘stop’, s/-/t/-/o/-/p/) and then blend the phonemes into a recognisable word.
  - ▶ **Embedded phonics** and onset-rime phonics approaches teach students to use letter- sound relationships with context clues to identify and spell unfamiliar words encountered in text.
  - ▶ **Analogy phonics** teaches students to use parts of written words they already know to identify new words. For example, students are taught a set of key words that are posted on the classroom wall (e.g., tent, make, pig) and are then taught to use these words to decode unfamiliar words by segmenting the shared rime and blending it with a new onset (e.g. rent, bake, jig). (Rowe, 2005, p. 88)

In Australia and the UK there has been much recent interest in synthetic phonics programs. As explained by Deslea Konza

“ A synthetic approach begins with a strong focus on individual letters... Blending is the underlying process involved in reading an alphabetic language and, for this reason, the letters are taught in an order that facilitates blending into common consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) words. As soon as students know letters that can make a word, they practise blending the sounds together (Konza, in press, 2016, p. 159). ”

## Why is phonics important?

Phonics provides students with the knowledge and skills to unlock the code of the English writing system, which is built on the *alphabetic principle*, in which the sounds of the language are represented by alphabet letters. In order to be able to break the code of texts, young students need to understand that words are made up of sounds, and that these sounds correspond fairly systematically to letters or groups of letters. Learning to automatically recognise the sound-letter correspondences used in reading words in text is very important as this reduces the load on verbal working memory and makes more memory space available for higher order cognitive processes, such as making meaning from text.

The research evidence base for the importance of teaching phonics, particularly in the early years of school, is very strong. The US National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000), carried out a review of research and found that systematic phonics instruction:

- produced significant benefits for students in K-6, and for students experiencing difficulties in learning to read
- improved word reading and spelling for Kindergarten students
- improved decoding, spelling and text comprehension for first grade students
- improved the ability of good readers to spell at all grade levels.

The Australian National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (Rowe, 2005) and the UK Independent Review of Early Literacy (Rose, 2006) also endorsed the strength of the evidence base for the direct and systematic teaching of phonics. There is increasing evidence that phonics instruction is very effective in ‘the process of learning to read – both for reading skills and for reading comprehension’ (Hattie, 2009, p.134; see also Hattie, 2012).



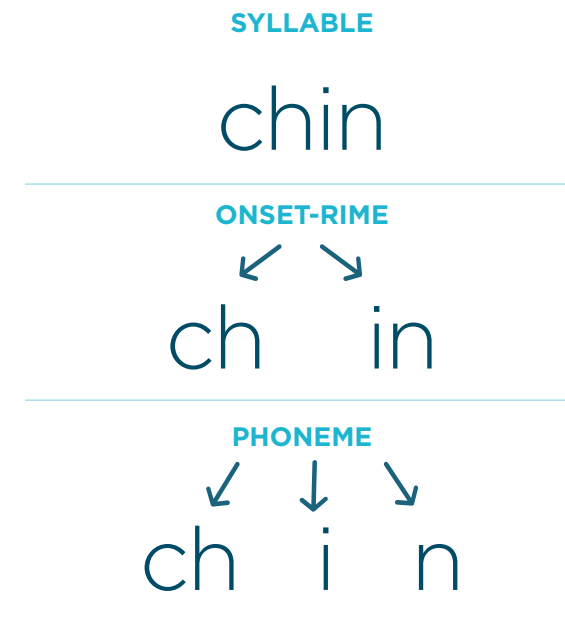
Learning to read and write in Standard Australian English is a complex learning process, as some relationships between letters and sounds are simple, as in the words *cat*, *jump* and *bland*; however some relationships are complicated, as in the words *haemoglobin*, *etymology* and *yacht*. These complicated relationships may take students much longer to achieve success in learning to read words in Standard Australian English than it does for students learning a phonologically regular language such as Italian (Seymour, Aroand & Erskine, 2003).

## What is phonological awareness?

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognise and apply sound units of language, for example recognising that there are two syllables in the word *monkey* and that the words *cat* and *hat* rhyme. Phonological awareness also involves the ability to recognise and manipulate individual phonemes, the smallest sound units of language, that can change the meaning of words. When we discuss phonological awareness we are referring to the sounds of the language, not to letters. However, phonemic awareness is most effectively taught along with letters.

Phonological awareness involves word level knowledge and skills, in that words can be divided by sound into the progressively smaller units of syllable, onset and rime and phoneme. The onset consists of the part of the syllable that comes before the vowel and the rime contains the vowel and any following consonant/s. The ways in which the syllable can be broken up into the units of onset and rime, and then to phonemes is illustrated below using the example of the single syllable word *slip*. Where words contain more than one syllable, each syllable can be broken up in this way.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognise and manipulate individual phonemes, for example, knowing that the word *cat* is composed of three phonemes and that if the middle phoneme is replaced by /u/ then the word becomes *cut*, the word *pat* can be re-arranged to form the new word *tap*.



### WHY IS PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS IMPORTANT?

In order to decode words in reading, students learn to break words up into sounds so that they can take advantage of the alphabetic principle, in which the 44 phonemes of the English language are represented by the 26 letters of the alphabet. Without this understanding, students would have to learn each word individually as a logograph or picture. Some research shows that awareness of phonemes and letter name knowledge are the two best predictors of how well students will learn to read and write (Adams, 1990). Learning to read, write and spell requires phonological awareness, however phonological awareness alone will not guarantee that students will learn to read effectively.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS UNIT	EXAMPLE
Syllable	cat-er-pil-lar
Onset-rime	c-at, p-ill
Phoneme	c-a-t, p-i-ll

The US National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) showed that for students of all abilities, teaching phonemic awareness leads to improvement in reading, and that it is most effective when students are explicitly and systematically taught to manipulate phonemes with letters. There is also evidence that shows a positive relationship between student's knowledge of larger sound elements and later success in reading and spelling (Lonigan, 2006). Teaching awareness of words, syllables and rhyming is important at the earliest levels as it helps students attend to and work successfully with words and larger parts of words, before they are able to work at the phoneme level. Knowledge of syllables and rimes is also important later on for developing the reading, spelling and word study abilities of all students.

### WHY PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR SOME STUDENTS

As the sound units of words become smaller, they become increasingly more difficult to discriminate by ear.

Whole syllables can be heard distinctly by those with normal hearing, rimes can be clearly heard when they are within a whole syllable as in *cat*, *hat*, *mat*, *bat*, but it is more difficult to break off the onset as in *c-at*, *h-at*, *m-at*, *b-at*. It becomes particularly difficult if the onset is a plosive such as /b/, which if not carefully segmented may sound like the syllable *buh*. Breaking words up into phonemes can be really difficult, as we often can't hear them individually. For example, when we hear the word *cat* we only hear one sound unit. The adjoining phonemes are co-articulated, that is, they overlap so that the /a/ is overlapped by the /c/ at the beginning, and by the /t/ at the end, and the whole word is pronounced as the one syllable, *cat*. Further, middle ear infections are quite common amongst young students, and these can cause some hearing impairment, which may make the task of discriminating and isolating phonemes even more difficult.

## BECOMING PHONOLOGICALLY AWARE

Phonological awareness generally develops progressively in students, initially from the larger word units of the syllable and onset-rime, to the smaller unit of the phoneme. (There has been some evidence that the sequence of development may in some cases, be dependent on teaching methodology (see Johnson & Watson, 2014).

Although the syllable is usually a larger unit than the rime, awareness of these units may be learnt at a similar time. Early demonstrations of phonological awareness by students might include being able to clap out the four syllables of 'caterpillar' and recognising that 'cat' and 'hat' rhyme, well before they are able to deal with the phonemes /c/ /a/ /t/ in the word cat.

There is wide variation in very young students' awareness of syllables and onset and rime. However, this becomes more stable around the age of four years when most students become involved in pre-compulsory education. Awareness of phonemes generally emerges after awareness of syllables and rhyme, often about the time that students begin to learn to read and write words. There is a reciprocal relationship between awareness of phonemes and reading and spelling development. This means that awareness of phonemes helps students benefit from reading and writing instruction, but at the same time reading and writing instruction helps students become more aware of phonemes. Awareness of phonemes is a strong predictor of later reading and spelling achievement.

By the time students enter Kindergarten they will have had extremely varied experiences of language and literacy at home, in the community, and in various out of home care settings. Some will have engaged in language practices that have many similarities to those occurring in Kindergarten and Pre-primary. These students will be used to singing rhymes and songs, interacting with books, listening to books being read aloud and taking part in related discussions around books and other texts. They may also be able to consciously attend to specific aspects of language, including sounds and words.

A common practice in child-care centres is to encourage even the youngest students to 'use your words', instead of pointing, crying or engaging in conflict. This practice focuses attention on words and helps students become aware of language as something that has a purpose, that can be talked about, and can be thought about (metalinguistic awareness). Other students will not have had these experiences, and talking and thinking about language may be difficult for them. Some of these students may speak Standard Australian English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D); some will be aware of the sounds in their home languages; some will have difficulty with the sounds of Australian Standard English. This means that the phonological awareness of students when they begin Kindergarten will vary from very little awareness, to quite sophisticated awareness of syllables and rhymes and, possibly, some knowledge of phonemes. These different levels of awareness should not be considered deficits, but rather differences in previous experiences.

Despite differences in early language experience, by the time they arrive at Pre-primary, those students who have regularly attended Kindergarten and/or other quality early learning programs will have had many opportunities for oral language development in play situations, small group and mat sessions, in addition to experiences with print and other media. There may of course still be great differences within a beginning Pre-primary class in student's knowledge and skills in receptive and expressive oral language, and with books and other forms of print. However, many students will be able to confidently recognise and play with syllables and rhymes, write their first name fairly legibly and be able to name some letters of the alphabet. Some may have more advanced skills and knowledge of sounds and letters. Careful observation is important from the beginning of the year to gauge what each student knows and can do so that the needs of all students can be addressed as soon as possible.

The On-entry assessment data, collected for Pre-primary students in weeks 3-6 Term 1, will provide highly specific information for an English teaching program that is designed to address the needs of all students.

For Pre-primary students who have knowledge and skill in working with words, syllables and rimes it is important to consolidate this knowledge and then move on to the explicit and systematic teaching of phonemes and graphemes. Students who do not have this language background will need highly targeted oral language small-group teaching to help them develop the knowledge and skills to work with words, syllables and rimes. It is important for these students' present and future success in learning that they develop positive beliefs in their capability to do the phonological tasks presented to them.

Schools are encouraged to also administer the On-entry assessments at the beginning of Year 1, in order to examine student growth and target all students' learning needs. This practice complies with [NQS Standard 1 Element 1.2.1](#): *Each student's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.*

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE LEARNT?

During Pre-primary and Year 1 an enormous amount of growth takes place in language and literacy learning, particularly at the word and sub-word levels. Most students will be moving from quite well-developed awareness of syllables and rimes, as well as some rudimentary awareness of phonemes and letter knowledge, to fairly sophisticated knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences and their use in reading and spelling, all of which will help them develop into fluent readers and writers. They will learn how the phonemes of English are systematically related, firstly to the most common graphemes and then to more complex graphemes in reading and spelling, how to write and type alphabet letters, and how to read and spell the most common words in English, some of which have highly complex grapheme-phoneme relationships.

The 44 phonemes of English, a common graphemic representation for each and an example of a word in which each appears are shown below in Table 1. These phoneme-grapheme correspondences are taught in the earlier stages of phonics teaching. A fuller picture of the phoneme-grapheme correspondences for the 44 phonemes is shown in Tables 2 and 3 that follow. It can be seen that for many phonemes there is a choice of more than one grapheme.

These more complex phoneme-grapheme correspondences should be explicitly taught once students have a good knowledge of the simple correspondences. Students will encounter words containing complex letter combinations in various reading and writing situations and should be encouraged to use and discuss them as the need arises, for example in science and technology lessons, or in modelled reading and writing. Some words containing complex phoneme-grapheme correspondences occur very frequently in student's reading materials. These need to be learnt individually, particularly for spelling. The 100 most common of these words in order of frequency are shown in Table 4.

**TABLE 1. COMMON PHONEME-GRAPHEME CORRESPONDENCES**

CONSONANT PHONEMES, WITH SAMPLE WORDS		VOWEL PHONEMES, WITH SAMPLE WORDS	
1. /b/ - bat	13. /s/ - sun	1. /a/ - ant	13. /oi/ - coin
2. /k/ - cat	14. /t/ - tap	2. /e/ - egg	14. /ar/ - farm
3. /d/ - dog	15. /v/ - van	3. /i/ - in	15. /or/ - for
4. /f/ - fan	16. /w/ - wig	4. /o/ - on	16. /ur/ - hurt
5. /g/ - go	17. /y/ - yes	5. /u/ - up	17. /air/ - fair
6. /h/ - hen	18. /z/ - zip	6. /ai/ - rain	18. /ear/ - dear
7. /j/ - jet	19. /sh/ - shop	7. /ee/ - feet	19. /ure/ - pure
8. /l/ - leg	20. /ch/ - chip	8. /ie/ - bike	20. /ə/ - corner (the 'schwa' - an unstressed vowel sound which is close to /u/)
9. /m/ - map	21. /th/ - thin	9. /oa/ - boat	
10. /n/ - net	22. /th/ - then	10. /oo/ - boot	
11. /p/ - pen	23. /ng/ - ring	11. /oo/ - look	
12. /r/ - rat	24. /zh/ - vision	12. /ow/ - cow	

Table from: Department of Education and Skills (UK) (2007), [Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics - Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers](#), reproduced under the terms of the Click-Use License. Modified for Australian Pronunciation.

Tables 2 and 3 on the following page are also from the Department of Education and Skills (UK) (2007): Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics - Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers. Reproduced under the terms of the Click-Use Licence. Modified for Australian pronunciation.



TABLE 2: PHONEMES TO GRAPHEMES (CONSONANTS)

Correspondences found in many different words			High-frequency words containing rare or unique correspondences (graphemes are underlined)
PHONEME	GRAPHEME(S)	SAMPLE WORDS	
/b/	b, bb	bat, rabbit	
/k/	c, k, ck	cat, kit, duck	<u>school</u> , <u>mosquito</u>
/d/	d, dd	dog, muddy	
/f/	f, ff, ph	fan, puff, photo	<u>rough</u>
/g/	g, gg	go, bigger	
/h/	h	hen	<u>who</u>
/j/	j, g, dge	jet, giant, badge	
/l/	l, ll	leg, bell	
/m/	m, mm	map, hammer	<u>lamb</u> , <u>autumn</u>
/n/	n, nn	net, funny	<u>gnat</u> , <u>knock</u>
/p/	p, pp	pen, happy	
/r/	r, rr	rat, carrot	<u>write</u> , <u>rhyme</u>
/s/	s, ss, c	sun, miss, cell	<u>scent</u> , <u>listen</u>
/t/	t, tt	tap, butter	<u>Thomas</u> , <u>doubt</u>
/v/	v	van	<u>of</u>
/w/	w	wig	<u>penguin</u> , <u>one</u>
/y/	y	yes	<u>onion</u>
/z/	z, zz, s, se, ze	zip, buzz, is, please, breeze	<u>scissors</u> , <u>xylophone</u>
/sh/	sh, s, ss, t (before -ion and -ial)	shop, sure, mission, mention, partial	<u>special</u> , <u>chef</u> , <u>ocean</u>
/ch/	ch, tch	chip, catch	
/th/	th	thin	
/th/	th	then	<u>breathe</u>
/ng/	ng, n (before k)	ring, pink	<u>tongue</u>
/zh/	s (before -ion and -ure)	vision, measure	<u>usual</u> , <u>beige</u>

TABLE 3: PHONEMES TO GRAPHEMES (VOWELS)

PHONEME	Correspondences found in many different words		High-frequency words containing rare or unique correspondences (graphemes are underlined)
	GRAPHEME(S)	SAMPLE WORDS	
/a/	a	ant	
/e/	e, ea	egg, head	<i>said</i> , <i>says</i> , <i>friend</i> , <i>leopard</i> , any
/i/	i, y	in, gym	<i>women</i> , <i>busy</i> , <i>build</i> , <i>pretty</i> , <i>engine</i>
/o/	o, a	on, was	
/u/	u, o, o-e	up, son, come	<i>young</i> , <i>does</i> , <i>blood</i>
/ai/	ai, ay, a-e	rain, day, make	<i>they</i> , <i>veil</i> , <i>weigh</i> , <i>straight</i>
/ee/	ee, ea, e ie	feet, sea, he, chief	<i>these</i> , <i>people</i>
/i-e/	igh, ie, y, i-e, i	night, tie, my, like, find	<i>height</i> , <i>eye</i> , <i>I</i> , <i>goodbye</i> , <i>type</i>
/oa/	oa, ow, o, oe, o-e	boat, grow, toe, go, home	<i>oh</i> , <i>though</i> , <i>folk</i>
/oo/	oo, ew, ue, u-e	boot, grew, blue, rule	<i>to</i> , <i>soup</i> , <i>through</i> , <i>two</i> , <i>lose</i>
/oo/	oo, u	look, put	<i>could</i>
/ar/	ar, a	farm, father	<i>calm</i> , <i>are</i> , <i>aunt</i> , <i>heart</i>
/or/	or, aw, au, ore, al	for, saw, Paul, more, talk	<i>caught</i> , <i>thought</i> , <i>four</i> , <i>door</i> , <i>broad</i>
/ur/	ur, er, ir, or (after 'w')	hurt, her, girl, work	<i>learn</i> , <i>journey</i> , <i>were</i>
/ow/	ow, ou	cow, out	<i>drought</i>
/oi/	oi, oy	coin, boy	
/air/	air, are, ear	fair, care, bear	<i>there</i>
/ear/	ear, eer, ere	dear, deer, here	<i>pier</i>
/ure/			<i>pure</i> , <i>tour</i>
/ə/	many different graphemes	<i>corner</i> , <i>pillar</i> , <i>motor</i> , <i>famous</i> , <i>favour</i> , <i>murmur</i> , <i>about</i> , <i>cotton</i> , <i>mountain</i> , <i>possible</i> , <i>happen</i> , <i>centre</i> , <i>thorough</i> , <i>picture</i> , <i>cupboard</i> ... and others	

## HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

Various lists of frequently used words have been compiled. A list of one hundred of the most frequently used words in students' reading materials, in order of frequency, can be found below in Table 4. It is expected that students will learn some of these words in Pre-primary (some students may know some of them before Pre-primary), and that all 100 words will

be learnt by many students by the end of Year 1. Some students will have learnt them all before then. These students may be introduced to words in other lists. Students should be encouraged to practise reading and spelling these words and to apply them to their writing.

**TABLE 4. 100 HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS IN STUDENTS' READING MATERIALS**

100 HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS				
1. the	21. that	41. not	61. look	81. put
2. and	22. with	42. then	62. don't	82. could
3. a	23. all	43. were	63. come	83. house
4. to	24. we	44. go	64. will	84. old
5. said	25. can	45. little	65. into	85. too
6. in	26. are	46. as	66. back	86. by
7. he	27. up	47. no	67. from	87. day
8. I	28. had	48. mum	68. students	88. made
9. of	29. my	49. one	69. him	89. time
10. it	30. her	50. them	70. Mr	90. I'm
11. was	31. what	51. do	71. get	91. if
12. you	32. there	52. me	72. just	92. help
13. they	33. out	53. down	73. now	93. Mrs
14. on	34. this	54. dad	74. came	94. called
15. she	35. have	55. big	75. oh	95. here
16. is	36. went	56. when	76. about	96. off
17. for	37. be	57. it's	77. got	97. asked
18. at	38. like	58. see	78. their	98. saw
19. his	39. some	59. looked	79. people	99. make
20. but	40. so	60. very	80. your	100. an

Table from: Masterson, J., et al, (2003), as reproduced in Department for Education and Skills (2007). *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics* – Appendix 1, reproduced under terms of the Click-Use Licence.

## Pre-primary and Year 1 phonological awareness and phonics learning

		TEACHING FOCUS	UNDERSTANDING ABOUT WORDS, SOUNDS AND LETTERS
Teaching of high frequency words as needed will be ongoing	Teaching of alphabet letters (upper and lower case), letter names and alphabetic order will be ongoing in Sections 1-3 Teaching focus	<b>Section 1: Phonological awareness: Words, syllables and rimes</b>	Language is made up of words. Spoken words are made up of smaller units of sound: Syllables. Spoken words are made up of smaller units of sound: Rimes. Written words are made up of alphabet letters.
		<b>Section 2: Phonemic awareness</b>	Spoken words are made up of smaller unit of sound: Phonemes. Phonemes can be blended in reading and segmented in spelling.
		<b>Section 3: Phoneme-grapheme (sound letter) correspondences (single letters)</b>	In written language phonemes may be represented by single letter graphemes and there are systematic relationships between them.
		<b>Section 4: Phoneme-grapheme (sound-letter) correspondences - digraphs and trigraphs, blends, rimes and syllables</b>	In written language phonemes may be represented by multi-letter graphemes; groups of letters represent blends and rimes, and there are relatively systematic relationships between them.
		<b>Section 5: High frequency words</b>	Some words that occur very frequently in student's texts are easily decodable and contain simple phoneme-grapheme relationships; others are not easily decodable and contain difficult phoneme-grapheme relationships. Being able to read and write these words automatically helps students become independent readers and writers.
		<b>Section 6: Teaching spelling</b>	Knowledge about spelling and associated strategies.

## GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING PHONICS AND PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

In order to ensure that all students learn the foundational word level skills, it is important for teachers to be highly systematic about teaching phonological awareness and phonics. This means that students are explicitly taught the most common phoneme-grapheme correspondences in a clearly defined sequence, are taught strategies for using these correspondences in reading and spelling words and that systematic assessment of learning is built into the program.

Two important strategies for reading and spelling are oral blending and segmenting of words, as these help students learn to read and spell new words. Some teaching sessions will involve learning a new phoneme-grapheme relationship; others will involve teacher directed practice and the application of relationships already learnt. All sessions should have a clearly defined meaningful purpose; blending and/or segmenting of words; application of phoneme-grapheme relationship/s in a wider meaningful context; and assessment of students' progress. This knowledge can be taught and practised through play and using concrete materials such as plastic letters, individual black/whiteboards, and digital resources.

Recent Australian research identified some features of early years classrooms in which phonics and phonological awareness were effectively taught. In these classrooms the more effective teachers took a highly structured systematic approach to the explicit teaching of phonics and phonological awareness (Louden et al. 2005; Louden, Rohl & Hopkins 2008; <http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/growth>). These teachers identified a sequence of what needed to be taught, taught it explicitly, persistently reinforced what was to be learnt, provided many opportunities for guided and independent practice and based their teaching on assessment of students' learning. They also provided students with specific metalinguistic terminology to refer to this knowledge, and ensured that terminology was used consistently. Their careful articulation of focus words and parts of words helped students attend to the concepts being taught, as did their embedding of these concepts within the context of student's literature, games, quizzes and other highly motivating activities that included songs and dances. The following guidelines for teaching are based on this and other related research.

Effective phonological awareness and phonics teaching in Pre-primary and Year 1 is:

- systematic, in that the teacher identifies and follows a sequence of what needs to be learnt;
- explicitly taught on a daily basis in short teacher directed sessions; and then practised in different contexts including student-initiated learning and teacher supported learning;
- purposeful, in that the teacher directs students' attention to what is to be learnt and why it is important;
- based on assessment of what students know and can do;
- highly motivating, using multi-sensory experiences, where possible.

The teacher:

- provides extremely clear explanations and demonstrations of word level concepts and skills;
- models consistent and precise metalanguage, for example always using the same term when referring to alphabet letters (letter or grapheme) and sounds (sound or phoneme);
- models very clear articulation - teaching phonological awareness and phonics requires particular skill in articulating words and parts of words;
- ensures that all students are able to see and focus on the teacher's face during articulation of words and sounds, especially for students who may have hearing difficulties;
- ensures relatively low noise levels in the classroom during explicit sound-letter teaching so that all students can hear the focus words and sounds;
- uses actions, games, puppets, toys and other concrete objects that engage students in learning;
- extends the learning of concepts and skills into a wider context, such as a theme or topic being studied, a shared book, a writing lesson or a spelling lesson;
- provides careful scaffolding, including guided practice in a variety of contexts, to ensure that concepts and skills are learnt;
- provides multiple opportunities for practice in different contexts and with different texts;
- maintains a focus also on broader text level features. Whilst phonological awareness and phonics are crucial elements of a balanced early literacy program they are only one part and need to be integrated into the wider English program. They are important means to an end that includes comprehension, use and critical analysis of text.










### WHAT MIGHT AN EXPLICIT TEACHING LESSON LOOK LIKE?

A suggested outline for an explicit teaching lesson is provided below. Teachers will need to adapt the lesson to their own individual class and context.

The teaching of phonological awareness concepts and skills, such as words, syllables and rhyming, may take various forms: some may take place in learning areas within the classroom or outside, while others are more systematic and may take place in whole group sessions. By the time students are learning specific phoneme-grapheme correspondences, they will benefit from a systematic, structured approach to learning that will involve some whole group teaching.

**An example of what the outline of an explicit teaching lesson format could look like in Pre-primary (whole class or group)**

### SUGGESTED STEPS IN A STRUCTURED EXPLICIT TEACHING LESSON:

1. **Introduce the concept and/or skill to be learnt within a meaningful context.**  

2. **Explain the purpose and outcome.**  

3. **Tuning in:**  
**Review what the students know.**  

4. **Explicitly teach the concept/skill.**  

5. **Practise the concept/skill (including blending and segmenting.)**  

6. **Apply and practise the concept/skill in a wider context.**  

7. **Assess how well students met the outcome.**  

8. **Development: Practise and extend the concept/skill across the curriculum.**

The following lesson that introduces the relationship between the phoneme /f/ and the letter **f** is provided as an out of context example only and should be adapted and developed to suit the needs of the students and the context. Some teachers may like to use a puppet or soft toy to introduce the sound and letter. The introduction may remind the students of a previously introduced book that will focus the student's attention on the sound and letter to be learnt. The students should already be familiar with the story and pictures in the book, as the purpose of the lesson is to turn the focus to sounds and letters. The picture book *Miss Llewellyn-Jones*, by award winning Western Australian author Elaine Forrester (2008), is a delightful example of the relationship between the sound /f/ and the letter **f**, with its catchy refrain of '...flew... flip flap', as each item of washing blows off the clothes line. The alliteration helps students focus on the sound of the words. The focus of the lesson is the letter **f** and its use in words, which will include blending for reading and segmenting for writing.

**Introduction**

“We are going to learn a new sound and letter today so that we can read and write more words’.

**Explain the purpose and outcome**

“We are going to learn the sound /f/ and learn to read and write the letter f.’ (The teacher says the letter name, shows a card with the upper and lower-case letter, and draws the student’s attention to them both).

**Tuning in: Review what the students know**

“What sounds have we learnt so far?’

“Who has got a /f/ sound in their name?’ (All appropriate sound responses are accepted, for example Philip is correct as it begins with the /f/ phoneme.)

**Explicitly teach the concept**

The teacher models slow, deliberate articulation of the sound /f/ and then writes lower-case **f** on the whiteboard while carefully articulating the sound and drawing student’s attention to where the letter starts and finishes, and its direction. The teacher then provides some examples of words containing /f/ that the class has talked about, seen in books or can see around the room. The teacher says the word, ‘fan’ and writes it on the whiteboard or easel articulating the sounds using stretched pronunciation, fffff-aaa-nnn, thus demonstrating segmentation. Three phoneme CVC words such as fig, fan and fish will be the easiest for students to work with.

**Practise the concept including blending & segmenting (including blending & segmenting)**

The teacher focuses the students on the articulation of /f/: ‘Watch my mouth carefully, /f/’, and writes the letter once more. Then the students practise tracing the letter with their index finger on the carpet and writing it on their own whiteboards while they say the sound. They then go on a print walk, looking for the letter Ff around the room. The teacher can demonstrate how to read the words using blending ‘f-a-n, fan’ and write the words using segmentation. As the students find each word, they say the word, and write or copy the word containing the letter on their whiteboards as they articulate the sounds.

**Apply and practise the concept in a wider context**

The teacher asks the students to think of words with the sound /f/ or shows them objects or pictures of objects, only some of which begin with /f/ and asks them to find the ones starting with /f/ and to say them s-l-ow-l-y. The teacher then writes them on the whiteboard, helping the students to stretch out the sounds as they are written. The teacher could write some of the words into a sentence.

**Assess how well students met the outcome**

The teacher checks how well the students were able to provide words beginning with the sound /f/, to recognise words containing the letter **f** and to write the letter **f** by itself and in words. The teacher records progress systematically on check-lists in order to keep track of all student’s progress.

**Development: Practise and extend the concept across the curriculum**

The teacher provides many opportunities to practise and apply this letter-sound knowledge and the skills of blending and segmenting outside the discrete lesson, and within the context of other curriculum areas, modelled reading and writing, stories, games and small group activities. These activities may include: writing the letter in finger paint, sand, or with play dough; having the students make their bodies into the shape of the letter; tracing and making a collage in the shape of the letter and other related painting, pasting and gluing experiences; making alphabet scrapbooks; playing letter/word bingo and letter matching games; and locating the letter on keyboard or tablet device. Throughout the activities, the teacher and assistant regularly remind students of the purpose of the activity, which is practising the sound-letter relationship in a new situation.

## Identifying a teaching sequence

A highly systematic sequence in which phoneme-grapheme relationships may be taught is outlined in the [Letters and Sounds](#) resource, produced in 2007 by the UK Department for Education and Skills. The teaching sequence presented here and elaborated in the following series of teaching notes is highly informed by the sequence presented in *Letters and Sounds*.

Some schools and individual teachers make highly effective use of their own programs. It is, however, most important that whatever sequence and/or program is used, it is taught **explicitly and systematically** and **integrated into the broader English classroom program**.

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## SECTION 1

# Phonological awareness and alphabet letters grapheme

Awareness of words is one of the first ways in which students become metalinguistically aware, that is being able to reflect on language as something that can be talked about and thought about, separately from its meaning. Importantly for phonological awareness, most young students have their attention drawn to the sound of words in everyday experiences, for example when they are asked to speak more clearly/loudly/quietly. They also have their attention drawn to written words when they recognise and write their names or 'read' print in the environment. Awareness of words is important in the development of phonological awareness. Being phonologically aware means being able to reflect on sound structure within words.

The larger units of sound within words are those of the syllable and onset and rime. This part of the sequence overlaps with the [Kindergarten Section 1](#) document. Pre-primary students, who have had lots of experience with words, syllables, rhyming and alphabet letters in Kindergarten and other early childhood settings, will be ready to consolidate this knowledge and quickly move onto working with phonemes. Students are generally able to deal with syllables and rhyming before they can work with phonemes, although this may depend to some extent on teaching methodology. Also, students may find onset and rime difficult to deal with until they have some knowledge of phonemes. Awareness of single phoneme onsets is addressed in [Section 2: Phonemic Awareness](#) of this document.

Most students entering Pre-primary can talk about words, and many have knowledge of syllables and rhyming. These students can consolidate this knowledge, and focus on phonemes, the smallest units of words, that are essential for reading and writing words.

Research shows a strong relationship between students' awareness of phonemes and later reading and writing. The evidence for awareness of syllables and onset and rhyming is not so strong. Nevertheless, teaching awareness of words, syllables and rimes is important at the earliest levels of literacy learning as it helps students attend to and work successfully with words and larger parts of words. Knowledge of syllables and onset and rime is important later on for developing the reading, spelling and word study skills of students as they encounter longer words and groups of letters. Research shows that teaching about alphabet letters is very important. However, the research evidence on **how** to effectively teach alphabet letters is not clear (Piasta & Wagner, 2010). In particular, the issues of whether letter names or sounds should be taught first, or whether they should be taught together from the beginning are controversial. Letter names are important for talking about letters in reading and writing as the names are constant; sounds are necessary for blending and segmenting in reading and writing. In this section of the Pre-primary/Year 1 document the emphasis is on letter names in the very beginning stages; letter sounds are emphasized as students work with phonemes. Nevertheless, both letter names and sounds need to be learnt and some teachers find that teaching them together from the very beginning is effective, particularly as students may arrive at Pre-primary knowing both letter names and letter sounds.

It is important that teachers consistently use correct terminology so that when they are talking about an alphabet letter, they use the term 'letter' or 'grapheme' and that when they are talking about a letter sound they use the term 'sound' or 'phoneme' consistently; for example, "The **name** of this **letter** is 'bee' and the **sound** it usually makes is /b/."

It is expected that many of those students who have been exposed to the teaching of awareness of words, syllables, rhyming and alphabet letters in Kindergarten students will need only to review and consolidate this knowledge at the beginning of the Pre-primary year. Some will, however, need more time for consolidation and/or extension of this knowledge, especially knowledge of alphabet letters.



# TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment
- Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, storytelling and book sharing sessions.

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### WORD AWARENESS

#### Content description:

- Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text different from letters; recognise how capital letters are used for names, and that capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences (ACELA1432).
- Understand concepts about print and screen, including how books, film and simple digital texts work, and know some features of print, for example directionality (ACELA1433).
- Recognise that texts are made up of words and groups of words that make meaning (ACELA1434).

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS

In Pre-primary, the teacher sets up situations for focusing the student's attention on words in oral and written language and take advantage of opportunities that arise during the day. Songs, finger plays, stories, drama, books and rhymes are all part of the literate environment of the classroom that provide many opportunities for focusing on words.

### Talking about words

Students enjoy playing with the sounds of their own names and this makes activities personally meaningful. Their names can be talked about as words: 'My first name is Matilda. Matilda is one 'word'. The teacher can make use of a pocket chart for students' name cards and talk about how many names/words there are: 'How many words are on each card? How many names do you have?' The cards may contain the first name and the family name.

As students use the name cards for copying their names on art and other work they can compare cards and talk about how many letters can be in a name. They can also talk about long and short words: 'Look at Abraham's name. Is it a long word or a short word? Look at Kyle's name. Is it a long word or a short word?' This is a useful opportunity to discuss the use of capital letters at the beginning of names.

[Word Walls \(RMD, p. 73-74\)](#)

[Star of the Day \(RMD, pp. 75-76\)](#)

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Teacher note

- It is most important to monitor individual student's knowledge of words and sounds. Information from checklists can be used to plan future learning that addresses the needs of all students.
- Detailed monitoring of phonological awareness activities may indicate students who have some form of speech or hearing difficulty. These students should be carefully monitored and referral to specialists considered.

# TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Language is made up of words</li> <li>› Words can be thought about</li> <li>› Words can be thought about and talked about separately from their meaning</li> <li>› Spoken words can be written down and separated by spaces</li> <li>› Words at the beginning of a sentence, names and places start with a capital letter</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Talk about words</li> <li>› Talk about words separately from their meaning</li> <li>› Talk about long and short words in terms of the sounds of the words</li> <li>› Identify a word in written text</li> <li>› Separate individual words in spoken and written language</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning that words can be thought about and talked about separately from their meaning</b></p> <p>Words can be thought about and talked about in many ways. In a group activity the students may be asked to think about words that describe feelings. ‘Can you think about the word <i>happy</i>? How does your face look when you think about the word <i>happy</i>? How does your body look when you think about the word <i>happy</i>? This activity can be extended to talking about the words <i>sad</i>, <i>excited</i>, <i>tired</i> and so on.</p> <p>Activities involving animal, bird and insect names are an appealing focus for discussion about words. Some are ‘long’ words (containing many letters and syllables) that sound very interesting, such as <i>hippopotamus</i>, <i>elephant</i> and <i>alligator</i>; others are ‘short’ words (one syllable and few letters) such as <i>cat</i> and <i>dog</i>.</p> <p>In order to become phonologically aware, students need to learn to think and talk about words separately from their meaning and to realise that a word that sounds ‘long’ may not be referring to a ‘long’ object or creature. <i>Butterfly</i> may be a ‘long’ word but it doesn’t represent a physically ‘long’ creature and <i>cow</i> may be a ‘short’ word, but it represents a long (and large) animal.</p> <p><b><u>What Comes Next (RMD, p. 82)</u></b></p> <p>When the teacher pronounces words very carefully to focus student’s attention on the sound of words, this can lead into a discussion of the number of beats or syllables in the spoken word (see the next part of this section about syllables).</p> <p>The teacher models oral language games such as, ‘I’m thinking of a word. It’s an insect and it has beautiful colours; it’s a butterfly.’ ‘I’m thinking of a word. It’s an animal and it gives us milk; it’s a cow’. Once the students are familiar with the game the teacher can introduce the idea of ‘long’ and ‘short’ words: ‘I’m thinking of a short word. It’s got wheels and takes people to town; it’s a bus’.</p>	<p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Can the student talk about how many words there are in a name card, label, sentence or other collection of words?</li> <li>› Can the student think of a spoken short/long word and say why it’s short/long? (Focus on the <b>sound</b> of the word: ‘<i>Butterfly</i> is a long word because it sounds long’.)</li> <li>› Can the student talk about words on a particular topic, such as feelings, animals or friends?</li> <li>› Can the student role play writing words, experiment with letters to make words, or write more than one word?</li> <li>› Does the student use a capital letter at the beginning of their name?</li> <li>› Can the student make words with magnetic letters?</li> <li>› Can the student identify a word in a written text?</li> <li>› When dictating a story does the student pause as the teacher scribes each word?</li> <li>› Can the student re-assemble a cut-up sentence that has been dictated?</li> </ul>

# TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p><b>Spoken words can be written down and separated by spaces</b></p> <p>The literate environment of the classroom may be used in many ways to show the connections between spoken and written words. Demonstrating these connections will help students develop knowledge about both spoken and written words.</p> <p>In discussion with the students, the teacher models making labels for areas of the classroom. These labels may contain single words (<i>door</i>) or more than one word (<i>the door</i>). The teacher says each word slowly while writing it, and the students fix each label in the correct place. The students can ‘read’ the labels and talk about the words in terms of length and number of words as they move around the room at various times of the day. They can also make their own labels in the writing area.</p> <p>The teacher models the writing of a ‘Morning Message’ or ‘Sentence of the Day’ about special events or reminders. This is a good opportunity to discuss connections between spoken and written words and special features of words, including the fact that written words have spaces between them. It is important to point out that the first word in a sentence needs a capital letter and a full stop at the end. At a transition time the teacher sets up in a line the number of hoops corresponding to the number of words in the sentence and the students can say each word as they jump in each hoop. The changing of the day, date and weather chart also can lead to discussion of words as the key words are replaced on a daily basis.</p> <p>Students dictate stories about their paintings and drawings. (The teacher prints student’s names on the left hand side of the paper). The teacher scribes, whilst saying the words aloud carefully, pausing after each word and drawing the student’s attention to the spaces between words. The teacher may then write the story or a sentence from the story, again on a strip of paper. Then, with help if necessary, the students can cut up their sentence/s into separate words and match them to the words on the painting or drawing. Some students may then be able to re-assemble their sentence/s without reference to the original dictation.</p>	

[Segmenting Sentences into Words \(RMD, p. 85\)](#)

[Matching activities \(RMD, p. 84\)](#)

[Book words \(RMD, p. 85\)](#)

There are many computer programs and apps available for young students. Some talking books highlight individual words as the story is read aloud. These may be helpful in teaching students to focus on words as individual units of language.

# TEACHING AND LEARNING: SYLLABLES

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment
- Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, storytelling and book sharing sessions

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Syllables

#### Content description:

- Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).
- Replicate the rhythms and sound patterns in stories, rhymes, songs and poems from a range of cultures (ACELT1579).
- Understand that words are units of meaning and can be made of more than one meaningful part (ACELA1818).

#### Knowledge

- Syllables are related to the rhythm of language.

#### Skills

- Segment syllables
- Blend syllables
- Delete syllables

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: SYLLABLES

Most students beginning Pre-primary will be familiar with rhythmic activities in music and movement sessions in childcare and/or Kindergarten, and many will be able to identify syllables. Teachers may introduce the concept of syllables in musical activities in which students clap or use percussion instruments to signal rhythm. Songs where syllables are strongly accentuated, such as 'Old Mac-Don- ald had a farm' are suitable to begin with. Marching songs are also enjoyable, help to emphasise rhythm and involve large body movement:

'Let's go march-ing, march-ing, march-ing

Let's go march-ing, just like this.'

Following on from musical activities, students can find the rhythm in words by clapping the number of syllables (parts) they hear in their names: One clap for Jack, two for A-lex, three for El-en-a and so on. Other motivating groups of words are those associated with animals and dinosaurs. Students and teachers can have fun blending and segmenting *tyrannosaurus, rex*, and *diplodocus*. Instead of clapping the syllables the students can jump or hop as they say each syllable.

[Odd one out: Syllable awareness \(RMD, p. 90\)](#)

[What could it be: Syllables \(RMD, p. 90\)](#)

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Focus questions

#### Can the student segment syllables:

- Can you say the parts in your name?
- Can you clap the parts in your name?
- Can you say the parts in toothbrush?
- Can you say the parts in dinosaur?

#### Can the student blend syllables:

- Can you put these parts together:  
*sun (pause) shine?*
- Can you put these parts together:  
*Ab-ra-ham?*

#### Can the student delete syllables:

- Say *moonlight*. Can you say *moonlight* without *light*?
- Say *playtime*. Can you say *playtime* without *play*?
- Say *Andrew*. Can you say *Andrew* without *And*?

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: SYLLABLES	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p>Students who may have some difficulty in recognising syllables may be helped by an activity in which they put together picture cards of objects (with one-syllable names) that make up compound words from meaningful parts, such as <i>tooth</i> and <i>brush</i>. They pronounce the words individually as they push the pictures together and then say the compound word, for example <i>tooth</i>, <i>brush</i>, <i>toothbrush</i>.</p> <p>In order to segment words, the reverse process is needed and the pictures are moved apart: <i>toothbrush</i>, <i>tooth</i>, <i>brush</i>. Some other possible words are <i>football</i>, <i>sunlight</i>, <i>starfish</i> and <i>rainbow</i>.</p> <p>For this, as in the other activities, it is most important that the teacher articulates the words very carefully and models the task, 'Put these parts together, <i>star</i>, <i>fish</i>, <i>starfish</i>'. It is also important that the teacher explicitly reinforces correct task completion: 'Well done! You put <i>star</i> and <i>fish</i> together and said <i>starfish</i>'.</p>	

# TEACHING AND LEARNING: RHYMES

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment
- Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, storytelling and book sharing sessions.

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Rhymes

#### Content descriptions:

- Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).
- Replicate the rhythms and sound patterns in stories, rhymes, songs and poems from a range of cultures (ACELT1579).
- Segment sentences into individual words and orally blend and segment onset and rime in single syllable spoken words, and isolate, blend and manipulate phonemes in single syllable words (ACELA1819).

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: RHYMES

Some students beginning Pre-primary are able to identify words that rhyme. At Kindergarten and/or childcare they will have had many experiences with rhyme in songs, books, and told stories such as *The Gingerbread Man*. They will most likely have a repertoire of nursery rhymes and other rhyming songs, such as ‘Miss Polly had a dolly...’

The continuation of daily sessions with rhymes in songs and books is a strong feature of Pre-primary routines. This is particularly important for students who have not had these experiences so that they hear repeated rhyming patterns such as: ‘Run run as fast as you can

*You can’t catch me I’m the Gingerbread Man.’*

It is important for those who have had such experiences to continue to enjoy the sounds of language and to extend their knowledge of books, poetry and rhymes that emphasise sound patterns.

After experiences with songs and rhyming stories the teacher can talk about ‘words that rhyme’, and how they ‘sound the same at the end’. The teacher can model rhyming words and ask the students for some words that rhyme. They can then discuss their favourite rhyming stories and songs.

[Rhyming Words Card Game \(RMD, p. 81\)](#)

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Teacher note

Awareness of onset and rime is usually initially taught and assessed in rhyming tasks. Awareness of single phoneme onsets is addressed in:

[Section 2: Phonemic awareness](#)

### Focus questions

- Can the student recognise words that rhyme: ‘Do these words rhyme – bat, hat?’
- Can the student recognise words that do not rhyme:
- ‘Which word doesn’t rhyme, fish, dish, hook?’
- Can the students generate a rhyme: ‘Can you tell me a word that rhyme with shelf?’



WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: RHYMES	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words are made up of smaller units of sound: onset and rime</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify words that rhyme</li> <li>Identify words that do not rhyme</li> <li>Provide a rhyming word</li> </ul>	<p>The teacher and the students can construct a big book of ‘Our Favourite Songs’. The teacher talks aloud whilst modelling the writing of the words of the songs, emphasising rhyming words. She can point out rhyming words on the page and pause and wait for the students to say the rhyme. The book can become a resource for choosing songs to sing. Students can be asked to choose songs on the basis of the rhyming words: ‘I’m thinking of a song that has the rhyming words, Polly and dolly’.</p> <p>Teachers share small and big books that contain rhymes. Dr Seuss books, such as <i>There’s a Wocket in my Pocket</i>, and other rhyming books, such as <i>Henny Penny</i> and <i>Shoes from Grandpa</i> (Fox, 1990) are fun to read and the teacher can draw the student’s attention to words that rhyme. After reading the book the teacher can ask the students if pairs of words in the book rhyme, ‘Does <i>dip</i> rhyme with <i>sip</i>?’, and reinforce the correct response, ‘Yes <i>dip</i> and <i>sip</i> rhyme. They sound the same at the end.’ The teacher and students can make big books that repeat the rhyming patterns of books they have shared.</p> <p>Students use a box of dress-ups and props to ‘dress up as a rhyme’ from a rhyme or a story that they know, such as <i>Humpty Dumpty</i>, <i>Henny Penny</i>, <i>Little Miss Muffet</i>, <i>Little Jack Horner</i> or <i>Jack and Jill</i>. They can also dress up to their own silly rhymes.</p> <p>It is important to talk about words that don’t rhyme, ‘Do <i>cat</i> and <i>ball</i> rhyme?’ ‘No, <i>cat</i> and <i>ball</i> don’t rhyme; they don’t sound the same at the end’. Pairs of words can be extended to groups of three in which only two of the words rhyme as in <i>ten</i>, <i>pen</i>, <i>dog</i>.</p>	

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: RHYMES	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p>The teacher asks, 'Ten, pen, dog - which word doesn't rhyme?', and again reinforces the correct response. For practice the teacher may introduce a bag of small objects, some which have names that rhyme and some that don't rhyme. As the students take them out of the bag they name them and sort them into those that rhyme and those that don't.</p> <p>Playing games can help students consolidate rhyming skills. Rhyming Snap and Bingo that involve identifying and matching rhyming pictures are useful, as is <i>Rhyming I Spy</i>: 'I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with...' If the students find this difficult, they can play <i>Where's Spot?</i> In this game the teacher hides a toy dog called Spot and asks, 'Where's Spot? He's hiding in something that rhymes with <i>hair</i>.' This makes the task more concrete and cuts down the number of possible answers.</p> <p>Students are encouraged to innovate on text to make their own 'silly' rhyming sequences, such as 'Run, run as fast as you can; you can't catch me I'm the gingerbread <i>can/pan/fan/nan</i>'. They can illustrate these silly rhyming sequences in art and craft activities and continue them in a running game at outdoor play.</p> <p><a href="#">Generic Games and Activities (RMD, pp. 80-85)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Play ball (RMD, p. 89)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Snap and clap (RMD, p. 89)</a></p>	

# TEACHING AND LEARNING: ALPHABET LETTERS – GRAPHEMES

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment
- Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, storytelling and book sharing sessions.

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Alphabet letters

#### Content description:

- Recognise and name all upper and lower case letters (graphemes) and know the most common sound that each letter represents (ACELA1440).
- Produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations (ACELY1653).

Learning alphabet letters (upper and lower case), letter names and alphabetical order takes place alongside the learning of phonological awareness.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: ALPHABET LETTERS – GRAPHEMES

### Teacher Note

It is important that the teacher points out that all letters have a name and all letters have at least one sound. Some students may have learnt some letter sounds as well as letter names. These students should be encouraged, but the teacher should make sure that if they are discussing letter sounds, they use the term letter sound and if they are talking about letter names then they use the term letter name consistently.

In order to develop knowledge about the alphabet the teacher shares with the students a variety of high quality alphabet books, drawing the student's attention to individual letters and letter names. If the students have learnt letter names first they will be able to talk about letters without confusing them with sounds. Most alphabet books focus on letter names, but some focus on letter sounds, and some mix them together, which can be confusing for some students. Those that focus on letter names are particularly appropriate at this stage as letter names remain constant, while letter sounds vary according to the position and relationship of other letters in the word. McGee and Morrow (2005, p. 73) have developed some criteria for suitable alphabet books for use in teaching the alphabet to young students. In these books:

- There is a page for each letter;
- The letter is prominently displayed and clear;
- There are only a few pictures of familiar objects on each page;
- The objects begin with the letter's most basic letter-sound association (vowels can be particularly tricky: single letter vowels, not digraphs are most suitable);
- The objects are highly familiar to young students so that they are correctly recognised as starting with the target letter.

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Focus questions

- Which upper case alphabet letters does the student recognise?
- Which lower case alphabet letters does the student recognise?
- How far does the student know the order of the alphabet? (How accurately can the student sing the alphabet song? How accurately can the student say the alphabet in order, pointing to the corresponding letter on an alphabet chart?)
- Can the student find specific letters in an alphabet chart/words?
- How well developed is the student's written representations of letters?
- Which letter sounds does the student know?
- How appropriate is the student's pencil grip?

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: ALPHABET LETTERS - GRAPHEMES	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Alphabet letters have names</li> <li>➤ Alphabet letters can be upper and lower case</li> <li>➤ Alphabet letters can be sequenced in a specific order</li> <li>➤ Alphabet letters make up words</li> <li>➤ Alphabet letters can be written</li> <li>➤ Alphabet letters have sounds associated with them</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Name alphabet letters, upper and lower case</li> <li>➤ Say and sing the names of the letters in alphabetical order</li> <li>➤ Identify specific alphabet letters in words and individually</li> <li>➤ Approximate writing of letters</li> <li>➤ Say a sound associated with a letter</li> </ul> <p>Letters sounds and writing are taught systematically in <a href="#">Section 3: Phoneme-grapheme correspondence</a></p>	<p><b>Note.</b> There are some very sophisticated alphabet picture books such as <i>Animalia</i> by Graeme Base, which do not conform to these criteria but which are really valuable in themselves and should certainly be included as high quality student's literature.</p> <p><a href="#">Personal alphabet chart (WMD, p. 78)</a></p> <p>Alphabet friezes and posters are an important part of the frequently used literacy environment, as are alphabet floor puzzles, games, letter cards and student's name cards. The teacher and teacher assistant can draw student's attention to letter names whenever appropriate in learning activities, for example when finding name cards to label art, craft and construction work. It is important to draw attention to the purposes for upper case letters.</p> <p>The teacher and students can make a class big book of alphabet letters, using student's names, animals, dinosaurs or other areas of interest. The book can then be shared by the teacher and students and used as a highly motivating teaching resource.</p> <p>Alphabet songs and games are useful in teaching alphabetic order and letter names (these are learnt as individual vocabulary items that can be talked about). A really exciting circle game is one in which all the students begin by standing and the teacher holds up a letter card. The students, in turn around the circle, say the alphabet sequence until it is the turn of the student who says the letter that the teacher holds. This student sits down and is 'out'. The teacher then holds up another letter and the sequence begins again with the student next to the one who is 'out'. The game continues as each student is 'out' and sitting down. The winner is the last student standing. In this game parts of the alphabet are recited many times. The teacher may need to scaffold some student's responses. It is a highly motivating learning activity for students of all abilities, as it is a game of chance.</p>	<p><b>Teacher note:</b> Letter names are the main focus in the early stages. It is, however, important to find out which letter sounds as well as names the student knows, in order to target teaching at each student's individual needs.</p>

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: ALPHABET LETTERS	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p>It is important that students have many opportunities to practise writing for their own purposes in different contexts. At the writing centre, they should be able refer to an alphabet chart for their writing.</p> <p>Students can also be encouraged to write at dramatic play centres, such as a doctor's surgery, a road-works construction site or a hairdressing salon. They should be allowed to choose from a range of writing implements, including those that are suitable for students with less developed small motor control. These will include large crayons, pencils and highlighter pens. Practising letter writing with finger paint, shaving foam, water painting with large brushes, and in the sand pit, is particularly important for these students.</p>	

## SECTION 2

## Phonemic awareness

Important prior knowledge and learning experiences for this sequence of learning:

- Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment
- Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, storytelling and book sharing sessions
- Some knowledge of phonological awareness: words, syllables and rhyming.

Words are made up of smaller units of sound:  
Phonemes

Phonemic awareness (the ability to focus on and manipulate the smallest sounds in words) has been shown to be the most important phonological skill, in that it is the most strongly related to later reading achievement. Phonemic awareness can be broken down into a hierarchical set of related skills. The skills are ordered from easiest to most difficult.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS SKILL	WHAT THE SKILL INVOLVES
<b>Isolation of the first phoneme (alliteration)</b>	➤ the ability to recognise words that begin with the same phoneme: cat, car
<b>Isolation of the final phoneme</b>	➤ the ability to recognise words that end with the same phoneme: dog, pig
<b>Isolation of the medial phoneme</b>	➤ the ability to recognise words that have the same middle phoneme: cot, dog
<b>Phoneme blending</b>	➤ the ability to merge phonemes together to articulate a word: /c/ /a/ /t/ makes cat
<b>Phoneme segmentation</b>	➤ the ability to break up and articulate the individual phonemes in a word: cat /c/ /a/ /t/
<b>Phoneme manipulation</b>	➤ the ability to remove or substitute a given phoneme in any position within a word: take away the /i/ in slip and replace it with /a/

The focus is on the skills of identification, **blending** and **segmenting**. Phoneme manipulation is a complex skill that generally emerges after students have had lots of experience with phoneme-grapheme correspondence. This is addressed in [Section 4](#).

Alliteration involves identifying the first sound in a word. It is usually the first of the phonemic skills to develop and most students will be familiar with alliterative patterns from finger plays, songs and books, such as 'Each peach, pear, plum'. Being able to hear and isolate the first sound in a word is a skill that becomes very important once students begin to read and write words, as it can give the student the first clue about the pronunciation of a word in reading and the first clue about the first letter to write in spelling.

Research has shown the reversible skills of **blending** and **segmenting** to be the most important phonemic skills as they are the basic strategies for decoding words in reading and encoding words in spelling. When teaching these skills clear articulation of sounds (phonemes) by the teacher helps students hear and focus on target sounds and words.

The learning of alphabet letters (upper and lower-case), letter names and alphabetic order is often taught alongside, but usually separately from phonemic awareness in the **beginning** stages. In the first stages of teaching phonemic awareness, the focus should be on the phoneme and correct articulation. At this stage phonemes can be represented with tokens such as blocks or counters. Once students have developed some phonemic awareness skills, letters and letter sounds should be introduced to make for more effective teaching. Nevertheless, once students have begun working with letters, it is still important that teachers continue teaching and consolidating the skills of blending and segmenting sounds in words.



# IDENTIFICATION OF SOUNDS THROUGHOUT WORDS

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment
- Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, storytelling and book sharing sessions
- Some knowledge of phonological awareness: Words, syllables and rhyming.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Isolation of the first sound in words (alliteration)</b></p> <p><b>Content description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).</li> <li>Manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words (ACELA1457).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>It is expected that the learning sequence that follows would take place over several related sessions.</p> <p><b>Explicit teaching focus</b></p> <p>The students and the teacher will have already talked about students' names that start with the same sound for example: 'Marcello and Milli and Mitchell, they all start with the same sound. They start with /m/'</p> <p><b>Introduce the concept and/or skill to be learnt</b></p> <p>A focused explicit teaching session on alliteration could take place after the re-reading of a previously read and discussed book that contains repetition of alliterative patterns.</p>	<p><b>Learning activities (practice and consolidation of concept or skill being taught in play situations)</b></p> <p><b>Creative arts</b></p> <p>Collage pictures based on the alliterative pattern in the book <i>Simply Delicious</i>: 'double-dip, chocolate-chip and cherry ice cream'.</p> <p>Sing 'sound songs' such as 'Ants on the apple a, a, a'. Draw attention to the way the shapes of the student's mouths change as they articulate different sounds: lips may be open /a/ or closed /b/ and /p/.</p>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>It is most important to monitor individual student's knowledge of sounds and letters.</p> <p>Information from checklists for each student can be used to plan future learning that addresses the needs of all students.</p> <p>Monitoring and assessment can take place as students engage in all classroom activities.</p> <p>Detailed monitoring of phonemic awareness activities may indicate students who have some form of speech or hearing difficulty. These students should be carefully monitored and referral to specialists considered.</p>

# IDENTIFICATION OF SOUNDS THROUGHOUT WORDS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spoken words begin with an identifiable phoneme.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the first phoneme in a word</li> <li>Articulate the first phoneme in a word</li> <li>Provide words that start with a target phoneme</li> <li>Identify words that do not start with a target phoneme</li> </ul>	<p><i>Simply Delicious</i> by Margaret Mahey is highly suitable as it has the repeated pattern 'double-dip and chocolate-chip and cherry ice cream'. It is important to emphasise the repeated pattern during the reading.</p> <p>Other Activities: use the alliterative text <i>Animalia</i> by Graeme Base – students to pretend to be 'crafty crimson cats'.</p> <p><b>Explain the purpose and outcome</b></p> <p>Explain that all words begin with a sound and the purpose is to find words that start with the same sound and that students will need to listen carefully for words that start with the same sound.</p> <p><b>Tuning in:</b> <b>Review what the students know</b></p> <p>Talk about students' names that start with the same sound.</p>	<p><b>Drama</b></p> <p>Practise the alliterative pattern in a drama activity as they pretend to hold and eat the 'double-dip, chocolate-chip and-cherry ice cream.'</p> <p>Using small hand-held mirrors encourage students to exaggerate and 'feel the sound in your mouth', as well as 'listen to your voice' to help them gain a multi-sensory representation of differences in phonemes.</p> <p><b>Games</b></p> <p>The students go on a treasure hunt around the classroom or the outside area looking for objects starting with a particular sound eg (/t/) and saying /t/, /t/, as they look. When they have found something they think starts with /t/ they place it in a treasure box. With the teacher they decide if each object begins with /t/ and should stay in the treasure box.</p> <p>In order to practise phoneme isolation, recognition, and discrimination between different phonemes, students can take an object from a 'surprise bag' collection that contains objects beginning with one of two phonemes, for example, /a/ and /m/.</p>	<p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <p>Can the student identify the first phoneme in words?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Do <i>cat</i> and <i>car</i> start with the same sound?'</li> <li>'Which of these words have the same first sound? <i>Car</i>, <i>sit</i>, <i>can</i>'?</li> </ul> <p>Can the student articulate the first phoneme in words?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the first sound in <i>car</i>'?</li> </ul> <p>Can the student give a word starting with the same phoneme as a target word?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Can you tell me a word that starts with the same sound as <i>dog</i>'?</li> </ul> <p>Can the student contribute to the creation of an alliterative pattern?</p> <p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>When students are able to deal with these questions then they should be ready to learn phoneme isolation of final sounds, that is identifying and articulating the last sound spoken in a word.</p>

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	<p><b>Explicitly teach the concept/skill</b></p> <p>Review the book <i>Simply Delicious</i> in terms of the sound patterns in it. Talk about the alliteration by drawing the student's attention to 'words that start with the same sound' (<i>double-dip</i>; and <i>chocolate-chip and cherry</i>).</p> <p>Engage the students in a choral re-reading of the parts of the book containing the repeated sounds. Point out the repeated sounds /d/ and /ch/.</p> <p><b>Practise the concept/skill</b></p> <p>Encourage the students to think of other words that start with the target sound/s. Whose name starts with /d/? Whose name starts with /ch/?</p> <p><b>Apply and practise the concept/skill in a wider context</b></p> <p>Create alliterative patterns with the student's assistance, 'six sleeping snails....' 'jolly, jumping, jumbucks....' 'crunchy, crackly, carrots'.</p>	<p>They then place their object in one of two boxes, either the one that already contains something beginning with /a/ or one that contains something beginning with /m/. As students become familiar with the task the sounds can become more difficult to discriminate, such as /b/ and /p/. Adding more boxes (and sounds) also raises the difficulty level of the task.</p> <p><a href="#">I say... you say ( RMD, p.89)</a>  <a href="#">A trip to the moon (RMD, p. 89)</a>  <a href="#">Odd one out matching phoneme (RMD, p. 90)</a></p> <p><b>Construction</b></p> <p>Students practise recognition of objects beginning with a given sound by making them from clay, play-dough or construction materials.</p> <p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>During all these activities students need to be reminded of the specific literacy purpose of the activity: 'You've drawn a <b>dog</b>, a <b>dish</b> and a <b>dinner</b>. They all start with /d/. Can you think of anything else you could draw that starts with /d/?'.</p>	

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	<p>These patterns can be turned into an outdoor game, such as, 'Gallop like Harry's horses'; 'Kick footballs like Francis'.</p> <p><b>Assess how well students met the outcome</b></p> <p>Assess student's progress as they engage in the activities.</p> <p><b>Development: Practise and extend the concept/skill across the curriculum</b></p> <p>Continue to use students' names to talk about words that start with the same sound. If students give a letter name it should be acknowledged as a letter name but emphasise the focus is on sounds. This is important as some names do not have conventional spellings, for example Che and Callum both begin with the letter C but the C represents a different sound in each name.</p> <p>Teach and play the game 'I-Spy'. Provide careful scaffolding in the initial stages. Begin by modelling, 'I spy someone whose name begins with /t/. It's Tom.'</p>		

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	<p>Model alliteration, eg: 'Super Sarah sizzles sausages'. Ensure the stories present positive images of the students.</p> <p>Provide props and dress-ups for students to act-out their sentences.</p> <p>Immerse students in a variety of student's literature. Books authored by Mem Fox and Pamela Allen contain alliterative patterns and other emphases on sounds.</p>		

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<p><b>Isolation of the final phoneme in words</b></p> <p><b>Content description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).</li> <li>➤ Manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words (ACELA1457).</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Spoken words end with an identifiable phoneme.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify the last phoneme in a word</li> <li>➤ Articulate the last phoneme in a word</li> <li>➤ Provide words that end with a target phoneme</li> <li>➤ Identify words that do not end with a target phoneme</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>The teaching and learning activities described for isolating the first phoneme can be adapted to teach phoneme isolation in the final position. For example, instead of thinking of words that begin with a particular phoneme, students think of words that <b>end</b> with a particular phoneme, such as /p/ - <i>sheep, dip, sleep, map, top, deep, tap, chip</i>. Students' books may emphasise final sounds as well as beginning sounds. Pamela Allen's well loved <i>Clippety-Clop</i> has repetitive sequences of 'plip-plop' and 'clip-clop' where final phonemes are the same.</p>		<p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <p>Can the student identify the <b>last</b> phoneme in words?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do <i>bat</i> and <i>sit</i> end with the same sound?</li> <li>➤ Which of these words have the same last sound? <i>Dog, leg, house</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Can the student articulate the <b>last</b> phoneme in words?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the last sound in <i>doll</i>?</li> </ul> <p>Can the student give a word, ending with the same phoneme as a target word? For example, Can you tell me a word that ends with the same sound as <i>hop</i>?</p>

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<p><b>Isolation of the medial phoneme in words</b></p> <p><b>Content description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).</li> <li>Manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words (ACELA1457).</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spoken one syllable words contain an identifiable phoneme in the middle.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the middle phoneme in a one syllable word.</li> <li>Articulate the middle phoneme in a one syllable word.</li> <li>Provide one syllable words that have the same middle phoneme.</li> <li>Identify one syllable words that do not have the same middle phoneme.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>The teaching and learning activities described for isolating the first phoneme can also be adapted to teach phoneme isolation in the <b>middle of a one syllable word</b>. This task is more difficult than isolating first and final sounds, as the middle sound is often overlapped by the first and last sounds.</p> <p>It is important to begin by choosing simple one syllable words that contain three phonemes, eg., <i>tap</i>, <i>big</i>, <i>ten</i>, <i>hop</i>, <i>bug</i>.</p>		<p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <p>Can the student identify the middle phoneme in one syllable words?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do <i>bat</i> and <i>tap</i> have the same sound in the middle?</li> <li>Which of these words have the same middle sound - <i>man</i>, <i>rat</i>, <i>leg</i>?</li> <li>Which of these words <i>doesn't</i> have the same middle sound - <i>man</i>, <i>rat</i>, <i>leg</i>?</li> </ul> <p>Can the student articulate the middle phoneme in one syllable words?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the middle sound in <i>doll</i>?</li> <li>Can the student give a word, with the same middle sound as a target word?</li> <li>Can you tell me a word that has the same sound in the middle as <i>hop</i>?</li> </ul>



# BLENDING AND SEGMENTING PHONEMES IN WORDS

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment
- Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, story-telling and book sharing sessions
- Some knowledge of phonological awareness: Words, syllables and rhyming.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Blending and segmenting phonemes in words</b></p> <p><b>Content description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).</li> <li>Segment sentences into individual words and orally blend and segment onset and rime in single syllable spoken words, and isolate, blend and manipulate phonemes in single syllable words (ACELA1819).</li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <p>Spoken words are made up of a series of phonemes that can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>blended</b> to articulate a word</li> <li><b>segmented</b> to sound out a word</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>Oral blending and segmenting are reversible skills. In the sequence presented here blending is presented first.</p> <p><b>Explicit teaching focus</b></p> <p><b>Oral blending</b></p> <p><b>Tuning in: Review what the students know</b></p> <p>Phoneme isolation can be revised before introducing oral blending and segmenting</p> <p><b>Introduce the concept and/or skill to be learnt: Sound talk</b> (DfES, 2007, Letters and Sounds Phase 1, Aspect 7)</p> <p>Introduce the students to a named puppet or doll (eg <i>Sam</i>), and explain that <i>Sam</i> says words ve-r-y s-l-ow-l-y in '<i>Sam</i>' talk (clear and slow articulation of the phonemes in a word).</p>	<p><b>Learning activities (practice and consolidation in play situations of blending and segmenting)</b></p> <p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>The students will need many experiences of teacher and teacher assistant modelling of oral blending and segmenting in addition to guided practice.</p> <p>Practice can take place during routine classroom activities so that it is meaningful as well as being enjoyable. Students read and discuss the morning message as appropriate to their stage of development.</p> <p><b>Creative arts</b></p> <p>Using play dough, ask the students to sculpt the object you are saying, p-i-g, d-o-g, m-a-t. Encourage the students to repeat what is said and to articulate the word, <i>pig</i>, <i>dog</i>, <i>mat</i>.</p>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>It is most important to monitor individual student's knowledge of sounds and letters.</p> <p>Information from checklists for each student can be used to plan future learning that addresses the needs of all students.</p> <p>Monitoring and assessment can take place as students engage in classroom activities.</p> <p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <p><b>Blending</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put the sounds together: b-a-t. What word do they make?'</li> <li>Can the student identify a matching picture when given the segmented word? Which picture is a c-a-t?</li> </ul>


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<p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Blending:</b> Hear the individual phonemes in a word and merge them to say the word</li> <li>▶ <b>Segmenting:</b> Hear a spoken word and identify (say) the individual phonemes that make up the word</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p><b>Reversible skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The skills of blending and segmenting are vital for reading and writing words. They are reversible skills: the word <i>sat</i> can be segmented into the sounds /s/ /a/ /t/ and blended to make the word <i>sat</i>.</li> <li>▶ The skill of blending is often easier for students than segmenting so may be introduced first. However, because the two skills are interdependent, in practice they are often learnt together.</li> </ul>	<p>Naming the toy or puppet, so that slow articulation of words can be related to Sam's 'talk', gives the students something to help them associate the skill of blending with hearing slow articulation of each sound (phoneme).</p> <p><i>Explain that the purpose of the activity is to be able to say the stretched words Sam is saying.</i></p> <p><b>Explicitly teach the concept/skill</b></p> <p>In role-play talking and listening to Sam, model a word in Sam's 'sound talk' and blend it to make the normal pronunciation of a word. For example, 'Where would you like to go Sam? Sam says he wants to go to the z-oo. Zoo, he wants to go to the z-oo, zoo.' This can be extended into asking Sam where else he might want to go. The teacher can model blending of other one-syllable words, such as <i>home</i>, <i>park</i> and <i>beach</i>.</p> <p><b>Practise the concept/skill</b></p> <p>Engage the group by asking them to say each word Sam says. 'What is Sam saying? Z-oo?'</p>	<p><b>Drama</b></p> <p>In the home corner ask: 'Can you put the doll in the b-e-d, <i>bed</i>?' (blending), or 'Can you say <i>bed</i> in Sam's 'talk'?' (segmenting).</p> <p><b>Games</b></p> <p>Teach and play the game 'Blending I-Spy'. Begin by modelling, 'I spy a h-a-t, <i>hat</i>. What do I spy? Yes, it is a <i>hat</i>!' Adjust the level of difficulty as the student's blending skills develop.</p> <p>Teach and play 'Sound Bingo' (this will require two identical sets of picture cards, which are illustrated with pictures of two and three phoneme words). Deal a given number of cards to the students from the first set of cards so they can see the pictures (these cards become the Bingo boards).</p> <p>Place the second set of cards in a container, draw out one card at a time and, keeping the picture hidden, segment the word that represents the picture (h-a-t) for the students.</p>	<p><b>Segmenting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Say all the sounds in the word 'cat'. What sounds can you hear?</li> <li>▶ How well can the student say all the sounds in a word when given a familiar object, the name of which is a CVC word?</li> <li>▶ When using Elkonin boxes, how well can the student represent the phonemes in a word with tokens?</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Onset and rime</b></p> <p>Some teachers prefer to introduce blending and segmenting of onset and rime, for example h-at and d-oll before segmenting all the phonemes in a word. In this case only CVC words should be used. This may be helpful for some students, but is not part of the sequence introduced here.</p> <p><b>Focus on letter sounds</b></p> <p>The focus here is on oral, not written words, as it is an introduction to blending and segmenting, before students are introduced to systematic phoneme-grapheme correspondences.</p> <p>Some students may be familiar with letter sound relationships already and this should be acknowledged. However, it is most important that students segment with letter <b>sounds, not</b> letter names.</p>	<p><b>Apply and practise the concept/skill in a wider context</b></p> <p>Once students are familiar with Sam's sound talk, the teacher can model it in many classroom situations, particularly in transitions between activities that involve movement. 'Everybody h-o-p, <i>hop</i>. Everybody j-u-m-p, <i>jump</i>. Everybody stand on one l-e-g, <i>leg</i>'. The word to be blended should be the last word in the sentence so that students hear the sounds to be blended and the blended word, next to each other. The combination of the sounds and the movement is an effective, multi-sensory way of teaching and reinforcing these skills.</p> <p><b>Assess how well students met the outcome</b></p> <p>Students' progress can be continuously monitored as they engage in activities.</p> <p><b>Development: Practise and extend the concept/skill across the curriculum</b></p> <p>Many practice and extension activities are outlined in the 'What students do' column.</p>	<p>The students blend the word and identify if they have the matching card. Repeat the segmented word and use the picture on the card to check if the student is correct. If the cards match, the student turns the card face down. The game is over when one or all students have their cards face down.</p> <p><b>Construction play</b></p> <p>Play 'Segmenting Skyscraper'. Give the students a two or three phoneme word and ask them to say it slowly, identifying each sound, as Sam would (eg <i>Sam becomes /s/-/a/-/m/</i>). Count out a block for each sound heard; 3 blocks for <i>Sam</i>. As students segment each word, they use the blocks to make a skyscraper.</p> <p>Students can use counters to represent all the individual phonemes in a word in a concrete form. Sound boxes (also known as Elkonin boxes) can be used to blend and segment words. Students will need 2 boxes for two-phoneme words (<i>at</i>) and three boxes for three phonemes (<i>cat</i>). The students put one token in a box for each sound they 'hear' in a word. The sound box below is for a three-phoneme word, such as /d/ /o/ /g/ or /sh/ /i/ /p/.</p>	

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	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>Two and three phoneme words with continuous sounds (/s/, /m/, /n/, /z/, as in <i>zoo</i>, <i>see</i>, <i>man</i>, <i>Sam</i>, are the easiest for students to process. Modelling of oral blending of these sounds needs to be very smooth and student's repetition of them needs to be carefully monitored: <i>zzzzooo</i>, <i>sssee</i>, <i>mmaaannn</i>, <i>Sssaaamm</i>. Stop sounds (/p/, /b/, /g/, /t/) are harder to blend, and care needs to be taken that /uh/ is not added to these sounds. Blending of the word pit should be p-i-t not puh-i-tuh.</p> <p><b>Explicit Teaching Focus</b></p> <p><b>Oral segmentation</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>As for blending, segmentation may be introduced through 'Sam's talk.'</p> <p><b>Explain the purpose</b> of the lesson: to listen to the sounds in words and practise talking like Sam.</p> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>Teachers may prefer to use the metalanguage; segment and blend.</p>	 <p>Another manipulative activity is the Cube Game. Objects are individually placed in small sealable plastic bags with a number of interlocking cubes that correspond to the number of phonemes in the name of the object (eg a <i>book</i> and three cubes, a <i>block</i> and four cubes). All plastic bags are contained in a box. Students choose a bag and remove the object and the cubes. They name the object and pull apart the interlocking cubes as they say each phoneme.</p> <p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>During all these activities students need to be reminded of the specific literacy purpose of the activity.</p> <p>Segmenting: 'Great! When you say <i>dog</i> slowly you hear three sounds, /d/ /o/ /g/. Now let's get one block for each sound you hear.'</p> <p>Blending: 'What word can you hear when you blend these sounds together /s/ /i/ /t/? Yes, when you blend /s/ /i/ /t/, the word is sit.'</p>	

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	<p><b>Tuning in:</b> <b>Review what the students know</b></p> <p>Review segmenting.</p> <p><b>Explicit teaching</b></p> <p>Show the students some toy animals and model segmenting: ‘This is a <i>dog</i>. It’s a d-o-g.’ ‘This is a <i>cow</i>. It’s a c-ow.’</p> <p><b>Practise the concept/skill</b></p> <p>The teacher invites the students to repeat single syllable words and then say them in ‘sound talk’.</p> <p><b>Apply and practise the concept/skill in a wider context</b></p> <p>Oral segmentation, like blending, can also be taught and practised in transition or routine activities. As segmentation is the reverse of blending, the movement activity becomes: ‘Everybody <i>hop</i>, h-o-p. Everybody <i>jump</i>, j-u-m-p’. As students become more familiar with segmentation the teacher only says the sounds, ‘Everybody j-u-m-p’.</p>		

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	<p><b>Assess how well students met the outcome</b></p> <p>Students's progress can be continuously monitored as they engage in activities.</p> <p><b>Development: Practise and extend the concept/skill across the curriculum</b></p> <p>Once students have some experience in segmenting phonemes, the teacher can introduce concrete representations of them. This might begin with a discussion of words in Sam's talk and how he says the sounds in words. As the teacher and students segment the words the teacher puts up one finger for each phoneme in the word. In the word sit, as she says /s/ she puts up one finger, another as she says /i/, and another as she says /t/, 'There are <b>three</b> sounds in the word sit'. This will be an important strategy when letters are introduced.</p>		

## SECTION 3

# Phoneme-grapheme correspondence (single letters)

### THE TEACHING SEQUENCE

This suggested sequence begins with the teaching of six phoneme-grapheme correspondences. The first letter to be taught is **s**, followed **a, t, p, i, n**. These 6 sound-letter relationships are often the first to be taught as they can easily form a number of VC and CVC words. In the second part of the single letter sequence the remaining 20 phoneme-grapheme relationships are taught. Students are taught the sound of each letter, the recognition of the letter and the writing of the letter together and learnt sounds and letters are blended for reading and segmented for spelling. The sequence has been adapted from [Letters and Sounds](#) (DfES, 2007).

### PROVIDING FOR THE DIVERSITY OF PRIOR EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING

A class of students beginning this sequence of learning will differ greatly in their individual prior knowledge and skills. It is most important that those who need more practice and consolidation of learning are given opportunities for this, in short focused sessions in a small group. Those who are already familiar with the knowledge and skills being taught should be encouraged to extend their learning. This means extending tasks and providing appropriate challenge for these students (not busy-work to keep them occupied). These students should benefit from the short teaching session in which the sound-letter relationship is introduced, particularly the instruction and practice in writing the letter correctly. However, it may not be appropriate for them to work at the same level of practice activities. Wherever possible these students need to be engaged in reading and writing meaningful connected text.

### MULTI-SENSORY CONNECTIONS

The presentation of the sound of the letter, the recognition of the letter and the writing of the letter together is important in terms of multi-sensory learning, as students:

- ▶ hear the sound (aural);
- ▶ say the sound (oral);
- ▶ write the letter (kinaesthetic);
- ▶ see the written letter (visual).

This is also important in helping students understand the connections between spoken language, reading and writing.

### USING TAUGHT RELATIONSHIPS

As soon as the first 2-6 phoneme-grapheme relationships have been learnt, students can orally blend and segment short words containing them. They can also blend them in reading and segment them in writing (a-t, s-a-t, i-t, s-i-t, etc.)



### USING CONSISTENT TERMINOLOGY (METALANGUAGE)

It is most important that teachers use key words consistently so that students do not become confused. When referring to phonemes the terms *sound* or *phoneme* should consistently be used. When referring to letters the terms *letter* or *grapheme* should be used consistently. More specific technical terms are particularly useful once students are familiar with fundamental concepts.

### CONSOLIDATION ACTIVITIES

Consolidation activities are very important in helping students recognise and use sound-letter relationships in reading and writing. When students are able to automatically recognise these relationships, more working memory space is available for making meaning in reading and expressing ideas in writing. Students need lots of enjoyable practice with sounds and letters to achieve instant word recognition.

Some suggestions for practice are given here. Many teachers will draw on their own experience and knowledge of their students to create motivating and worthwhile learning activities appropriate to the student's context, knowledge, skills and interests. Some activities may be particularly effective when integrated into a class theme.

A relevant resource such as *First Steps* (2005) can provide additional play-based ideas to further support the teaching and learning experiences, for example [WMD](#) (pp.103-104) Creative Corners.

### UPPER-AND LOWER-CASE LETTERS

In the introduction, use both upper and lower case forms. During practice sessions with each letter the teacher can discuss and teach both the upper-case and lower-case forms, ensuring that students are able to write and recognise both. When modelling blending and segmenting of written words, the teacher points out that some words begin with a capital letter for example names, places and the first word in a sentence.

In this section the 26 single letter phoneme-grapheme relationships are taught. These are included in Table 1 that contains a representation of the 44 phonemes of English.

TABLE 1. COMMON PHONEME-GRAPHEME CORRESPONDENCES

CONSONANT PHONEMES, WITH SAMPLE WORDS		VOWEL PHONEMES, WITH SAMPLE WORDS	
1. /b/ - bat	13. /s/ - sun	1. /a/ - ant	13. /oi/ - coin
2. /k/ - cat	14. /t/ - tap	2. /e/ - egg	14. /ar/ - farm
3. /d/ - dog	15. /v/ - van	3. /i/ - in	15. /or/ - for
4. /f/ - fan	16. /w/ - wig	4. /o/ - on	16. /ur/ - hurt
5. /g/ - go	17. /y/ - yes	5. /u/ - up	17. /air/ - fair
6. /h/ - hen	18. /z/ - zip	6. /ai/ - rain	18. /ear/ - dear
7. /j/ - jet	19. /sh/ - shop	7. /ee/ - feet	19. /ure/ - pure
8. /l/ - leg	20. /ch/ - chip	8. /igh/ - night	20. /ə/ - corner (the 'schwa' - an unstressed vowel sound which is close to /u/)
9. /m/ - map	21. /th/ - thin	9. /oa/ - boat	
10. /n/ - net	22. /th/ - then	10. /oo/ - boot	
11. /p/ - pen	23. /ng/ - ring	11. /oo/ - look	
12. /r/ - rat	24. /zh/ - vision	12. /ow/ - cow	

Table from: Department of Education and Skills (UK) (2007), *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics – Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers*, reproduced under the terms of the Click-Use License. Modified for Australian pronunciation.

# TEACHING SIX SOUND-LETTER RELATIONSHIPS

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Spoken words are made up of phonemes
- Phonemes in words can be blended and segmented
- In written language phonemes are represented by alphabet letters

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Phoneme-grapheme relationships: phonemes and associated single letters</b></p> <p><b>Content descriptions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text different from letters; recognise how capital letters are used for names, and that capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences (ACELA1432).</li> <li>Recognise and name all upper and lower case letters (graphemes) and know the most common sound that each letter represents (ACELA1440).</li> <li>Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).</li> <li>Produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations (ACELY1653).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explicit teaching focus</b></p> <p><b>Teaching sound-letter relationships</b></p> <p>Teaching sound-letter relationships individually takes place in an incremental sequence. In the suggestions provided here, the first letter to be taught is <b>s</b>, followed by <b>a</b>, <b>t</b>, <b>p</b>, <b>i</b> and <b>n</b>. These 6 sound-letter relationships are often the first to be taught as they can easily form a number of VC and CVC words. The following teaching example focuses on teaching the first sound-letter relationship /s/ and the letter s. The other sound-letter relationships in the sequence may be taught in a similar way.</p>	<p><b>Practice and consolidation for learning</b></p> <p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>Consolidation activities are most important in helping students recognise and use sound-letter relationships in reading and writing. Students need lots of enjoyable practice with sounds and letters.</p> <p>In the teaching example the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate words beginning with the target sound</li> <li>Articulate the target sound</li> <li>Trace and write the target letter</li> <li>Provide words containing the target letter/sound</li> </ul> <p>Students may use Elkonin boxes to blend and segment VC and CVC words. Those who have difficulty in segmenting can continue to use counters to represent sounds. Those whose phonemic skills are developing can replace the tokens with plastic letters.</p>	<p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can the student articulate the sound associated with each of the letters s,a,t,p,i,n?</li> <li>Can the student identify the letters when given the associated sound /s/, /a/, /t/, /p/, /i/, /n/?</li> <li>Can the student write the <b>lower case</b> letters s,a,t,p,i,n when given the associated sounds?</li> <li>Can the student write the <b>upper case</b> letters S,A,T,P,I,N when given the associated sounds or ask to write the letter name.</li> <li>Can the student blend and segment VC and CVC words made up from the letters s,a,t,p,i,n?</li> </ul>

# TEACHING SIX SOUND-LETTER RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).</li> <li>▶ Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters (ACELY1663).</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Phonemes may be represented by single letter graphemes.</li> <li>▶ Phonemes and graphemes may be blended in reading and segmented in writing words.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identify the initial phoneme of a word and write the single-letter grapheme that represents the phoneme.</li> <li>▶ Blend and segment words containing taught phonemes and graphemes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teaching example</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The teacher sets a meaningful context by re-reading a well-known book. The teacher emphasises the words containing the /s/ sound, reviews them after the reading and focuses the student's attention on the shape of the letter <b>s</b>.</p> <p><b>Explaining the purpose and outcome</b></p> <p>To read and write the letter <b>s</b>.</p> <p><b>Tuning in:</b></p> <p><b>Review what the students know</b></p> <p>Students are asked to think of words beginning with the sound /s/. This could be a focus on names (eg <i>Sam, Sarah</i>). The /s/ should be very clearly articulated and stretched out.</p> <p><b>Explicit teaching</b></p> <p>The teacher elongates the sound sssss, making a hissing noise and may move her arm as if it is a snake. The teacher slowly blends the sssss into the word snake and encourages the students to do the same. The teacher models writing the lower case letter <b>s</b> on the whiteboard, demonstrating the position and direction of the writing.</p>	<p><b>Elkonin Boxes (RMD, p79-80)</b></p> <p>Students divide whiteboards into a phoneme frame by drawing vertical lines to make 3 columns and write the letters for each sound they hear in a VC or CVC word.</p> <p>Students use plastic letters to blend and segment words.</p> <p>Students blend letters in words as they type on an electronic device</p> <p>It is important to draw students' attention to the use of capital letters, in particular at the beginning of names and places.</p> <p><b>Contextualised practice</b></p> <p>Students go for a print walk or to the class library to find words containing the letter <b>s</b>, write the word and draw a picture of the target word. Again draw student's attention to the use of capital letters at the beginning of names and places, as well as the beginning of sentences.</p> <p>For some students the task may be extended to writing the words in a sentence or longer text.</p>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>Some students at the beginning of Pre-primary, particularly the youngest, may not have the hand-eye coordination required for writing letters with a pencil.</p> <p>These students should be given many opportunities to practise writing letters with a thick marker pen on a whiteboard and tracing with their index finger in sand and finger-paint.</p> <p><b>Monitoring and assessment</b></p> <p>It is most important to monitor individual student's knowledge of sounds and letters. Information from checklists for each student can be used to plan future learning that addresses the needs of all students.</p> <p>The teacher monitors the student's learning as they engage in a variety of purposeful and meaningful practice activities.</p> <p>Students can be asked to read a list of learnt letters on the wall as part of the monitoring process</p>

# TEACHING SIX SOUND-LETTER RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p>The teaching sequence begins with 6 phonemes and their related single-letter graphemes. Once these are learnt, the phonemes and other associated 20 single-letter graphemes may be taught.</p> <p>Initially the emphasis is on teaching the recognition and formation of lower case letters. Nevertheless, where appropriate students' attention should be drawn to the purpose and use of capital letters.</p>	<p><b>Practising the concept/skill</b></p> <p>The teacher directs the students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ look at the letter;</li> <li>▶ hear the sound as she articulates it;</li> <li>▶ say the sound;</li> <li>▶ trace the letter in the air and on the floor with their finger;</li> <li>▶ write the letter several times on their individual whiteboards or work pads.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>During this time, the teacher monitors student's writing, providing targeted feedback and demonstration where necessary.</p> <p><b>Applying and practising the concept/skill in a wider context</b></p> <p>The teacher puts the letter back into the context of a word. The teacher models segmentation and blending when writing some /s/ words with stretched pronunciation and then blends them together. The teacher then asks the students to give examples of /s/ words that she models in the same way, after which the students repeat the blending and segmenting.</p>	<p><b>Connections with home</b></p> <p>Students bring meaningful items from home that contain the target <b>sound</b>, for class discussion.</p> <p><a href="#">The Letter Can (RMD, p. 77)</a></p> <p><b>Using the play areas</b></p> <p>Students find objects that start with the target sound in the home corner, block area or other play area. They name the objects and, with help where necessary, write or type labels for the objects.</p> <p>Students 'play schools', with one or two students being 'teachers' at a centre with a blackboard and they write labels using the target letter/s.</p>	

# TEACHING SIX SOUND-LETTER RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p><b>Practice and development</b></p> <p>With the students, the teacher constructs a list of 'sounds and letters we have learnt'. This becomes part of the literacy working environment. The teacher frequently draws the students' attention to the letters when they are writing and engaging in practice activities.</p> <p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>The ways in which the teacher integrates practice activities into the whole program, and supports student's learning, help to create students' literacy growth. It is important that in the activities, the teacher and teacher assistant model careful articulation of the target sounds.</p>		

# TEACHING 20 SOUND-LETTER RELATIONSHIPS

The teaching sequence began with the 6 phoneme-grapheme relationships s, a, t, p, i, n. In this part of the teaching sequence, students are introduced to the remaining 20 letters.

IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:			
WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Teaching 20 sound-letter relationships</b></p> <p><b>Content descriptions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text different from letters; recognise how capital letters are used for names, and that capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences (ACELA1432).</li> <li>Recognise and name all upper and lower case letters (graphemes) and know the most common sound that each letter represents (ACELA1440).</li> <li>Produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations (ACELY1653).</li> <li>Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters (ACELY1663).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explicit teaching focus</b></p> <p>The remaining 20 sound-single letter relationships are taught in an incremental sequence.</p> <p>These relationships are systematically taught in explicit lessons in a similar way to the first 6 sounds and letters.</p> <p>The teacher uses the literate environment of the classroom as a resource for teaching. The teacher makes meaningful word walls with the students. These can contain lists of taught letters, and words beginning with the taught letters, that are significant to the students. It is important that the teacher draws the student's attention to them regularly in reading and writing activities and encourages them to use the resources independently.</p>	<p><b>Development and use of taught relationships</b></p> <p>Now that students have learnt the relationships between the first group of sounds and letters, teaching and practice sessions and activities should involve lots of blending and segmenting words made up of taught letters and sounds.</p> <p>It will also involve reading and writing those words and putting them into meaningful phrases, sentences and longer connected texts. This will mean using both upper and lower case letters as appropriate.</p> <p>All taught phoneme-grapheme relationships need to be used and practised regularly so that students can recall them easily.</p>	<p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can the student articulate the sound associated with each of the 26 alphabet letters?</li> <li>Can the student identify each alphabet letter when given the associated sound?</li> <li>Can the student write each lower-case letter when given the associated sound?</li> <li>Can the student write the upper-case letter when given the associated sound?</li> <li>Can the student blend and segment VC and CVC words made up from the taught letters?</li> </ul>



# TEACHING 20 SOUND-LETTER RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).</li> <li>➤ Know how to read and write some high-frequency words and other familiar words (ACELA1817).</li> <li>➤ Write consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words by representing some sounds with the appropriate letters, and blend sounds associated with letters when reading CVC words (ACELA1820).</li> </ul> <p>Once the first 6 sound-letter relationships have been introduced, the suggested teaching sequence can be modified to follow the teacher's and student's needs and interests. It is important that the sound-letter correspondences are divided into small groups, and are explicitly taught, practised and assessed. In this way the teacher and students can see progress and be confident about what has been learnt.</p> <p>Sounds and single letters to be taught:</p> <p>m, d, g, o, c, k e, u, r, h, b, f l, j, v, w, x, y z, q</p>	<p>During daily modelled reading and writing sessions the teacher can point out the letter sounds being learnt and choose books to read that emphasise the sounds.</p> <p>The teacher continues to model blending of words in reading, and segmenting in writing.</p>	<p>Students should continue to practise using the letters and sounds in a variety of activities.</p> <p><a href="#">Elkonin boxes using letters (RMD, p. 79)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Sound Hunter (RMD, pp. 130 -131)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Building words (RMD, p. 133)</a></p> <p><a href="#">What Comes Next? (RMD, pp. 132 -133)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exploring words (RMD, p. 134)</a></p> <p>These generic First Steps activities can be used with students who are at various developmental levels of phoneme-grapheme knowledge. For those who are beginning to learn phoneme-single grapheme correspondences it is important to focus the activities on the specific letters and sounds that are being learnt. It is also important that for these students they are practised in VC and CVC words. For those with more advanced knowledge the activities should be extended to include longer words and some more complex phoneme-grapheme relationships</p>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>Regular assessment recorded on checklists should continue for all sounds and letters. This will indicate students who will need additional teaching and consolidation activities.</p> <p>It will also indicate those who have learnt the relationships and who should be using them in a wide variety of extended reading and writing situations.</p> <p>It is important to keep in mind that the teaching of graphophonics is a means to an end, which is the ability to comprehend, use and critically analyse text.</p>



# TEACHING 20 SOUND-LETTER RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
		<p><b>Making words</b></p> <p>As students learn more phoneme-grapheme relationships they will be able to create many words as they blend magnetic letters and take part in word games.</p> <p><b>One vowel lessons</b> (Cunningham, 2005)</p> <p>Students are given a cut-up word containing one vowel and the task is to make as many words as possible from the letters. For example the letters in <i>blast</i> can be made into the words <i>as, at, sat, bat, tab, stab, bats, last</i>. <i>Spent</i> can be made into <i>pen, ten, net, pet, pest, pets, nets, nest, sent, spent</i>.</p>	

## SECTION 4

# Graphophonics – digraphs, blends, rimes and syllables

### Important prior knowledge and experience for this sequence of learning:

- Knowledge of the 26 letters of the alphabet and the most common phoneme representation (recognition, articulation, and writing)
- Phonemic awareness, including blending and segmenting VC and CVC words in oral and written language
- Reading and writing words in connected text

A suggested teaching sequence for phoneme-grapheme relationships for single letters has been outlined in Section 3. During the time in which students have been learning these relationships they will have encountered many groups of letters in words in their class and personal reading and spelling. These will include:

- digraphs (ch, ai) and trigraphs (igh, ure) - groups of letters that represent one sound
- blends - a group of letters usually consonants (bl, st) that can be separated into single sounds
- rimes - the part of the word that includes the vowel and any following sounds (ack, ump)
- syllables - the beat in words (teach-er, cow-boy).

These letter groups need to be explicitly taught, practised and assessed within the context of reading and writing real words, as the sounds they represent may be determined within the context of the individual word, for example the *ow* digraph in *mow* and *cow* is pronounced differently in the two words. The teaching sequence provided here is an outline of combinations of letters and sounds that includes some of the most common combinations. Part of the sequence and some related activities have been adapted from *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics* (DfES, 2007).

This knowledge and related skills will be revisited throughout the sequence so students whose knowledge and skills are not well developed will be able to consolidate their learning during teaching and practice sessions.

### DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF TAUGHT

## RELATIONSHIPS

Students have already been taught relationships between sounds and the 26 single letters. These sounds and letters will need to be regularly revised. Teaching and practice sessions and activities should involve reading and writing real words made up of learnt letters and sounds so that words can be recognised automatically in reading, and produced automatically for spelling. When automaticity is achieved in reading and spelling words, short-term memory space is freed up for higher cognitive processing, such as making meaning in reading, and creating ideas in writing.

In teaching and practice sessions at the beginning of a sequence of learning, there should be some revision of related phonological knowledge; that is syllables, onset and rime and/or phonemes. Blending and segmenting of phonemes are particularly important skills to practise. It is important to keep in mind that teaching graphophonics is not an end in itself, rather it provides students with an essential toolkit that helps them achieve automaticity of word reading and spelling.

## PRACTICE AND CONSOLIDATION ACTIVITIES

Consolidation activities are very important in helping students recognise and use sound-letter relationships in reading and writing. Students need lots of enjoyable practice with sounds and letters to achieve automatic recognition. Some suggestions for practice are given here. However, teachers will draw on their own experience and knowledge of their students to create motivating and worthwhile learning activities appropriate to the student's context, knowledge, skills and interests. Some activities may be particularly effective when integrated into a class theme. Some highly motivating computer software and apps can help students practise spelling words containing particular graphophonetic relationships.

[First Steps Literacy](#) can provide intentional teaching play-based ideas and other activities to further support the teaching and learning experiences, for example *The Writing Map of Development*, pages 103-104, and *The Reading Map of Development*, Chapters 4 and 5.

## PROVIDING FOR THE DIVERSITY OF PRIOR LEARNING

Some students will be familiar with the relationships to be taught. Others will need revision and specific teaching in a small group to consolidate previously learnt sound-letter correspondences, in addition to specific practice in blending and segmenting phonemes. Those who already have the knowledge and skills should be challenged to extend their learning into reading and writing meaningful words, sentences and longer pieces of connected text.

## USING CONSISTENT TERMINOLOGY (METALANGUAGE)

It is most important that teachers use key words consistently. When referring to phonemes, either the terms sound or phoneme should always be used, for example, 'I'm thinking of the sound /s/'. When referring to letters the terms letter or grapheme should be used, for example, 'I'm thinking of the letter **s** (letter name)'. More specific technical terms are important once students are familiar with fundamental concepts. Some terms that students at this stage may use, include vowel, consonant, digraph, blend, syllable and rhyming. Some teachers effectively use a more extensive technical vocabulary with their students.

## READING AND SPELLING HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

During the time in which students are learning the phoneme-grapheme relationships presented in this sequence they will also be learning to read and spell high frequency words. As students are learning about more complex relationships between phonemes and graphemes correct spelling becomes important.

## READING AND SPELLING WORDS

In previous sequences of learning students will have learnt to blend phonemes in VC or CVC words for reading, and to segment them for spelling. Whilst they will have encountered many words, in reading and other classroom activities, that do not have these very simple structures, the teaching emphasis should be on phonetically regular words. In the sequence to be presented here, students will initially learn one multi-letter combination for each of the remaining phonemes. They will then be introduced to families of words that contain the same spelling for a particular phoneme and these families will be contrasted with families that contain the same spellings but different pronunciations ('Is it *ow* as in *cow*, or is it *ou* as in *house*?'). It is now that the conventional spelling of words is beginning to become important and needs to be specifically taught as a skill in its own right. Whilst reading words is predominantly a recognition task, spelling is a productive task that requires the writer to segment a word into its individual phonemes and produce, in order, the correct letter or letters for each phoneme.

By the time students are ready to begin this sequence it is assumed that they will be familiar with the 26 letters of the alphabet and the phonemes they most commonly represent. In this sequence they will firstly learn four consonant digraphs that represent phonemes already learnt (ff, ss, ck, ll) and then the most common multi-letter representations for most of the remaining phonemes of English, as shown in Table 1.

**TABLE 1. COMMON PHONEME-GRAPHEME CORRESPONDENCES**

CONSONANT PHONEMES, WITH SAMPLE WORDS		VOWEL PHONEMES, WITH SAMPLE WORDS	
1. /b/ - bat	13. /s/ - sun	1. /a/ - ant	13. /oi/ - coin
2. /k/ - cat	14. /t/ - tap	2. /e/ - egg	14. /ar/ - farm
3. /d/ - dog	15. /v/ - van	3. /i/ - in	15. /or/ - for
4. /f/ - fan	16. /w/ - wig	4. /o/ - on	16. /ur/ - hurt
5. /g/ - go	17. /y/ - yes	5. /u/ - up	17. /air/ - fair
6. /h/ - hen	18. /z/ - zip	6. /ai/ - rain	18. /ear/ - dear
7. /j/ - jet	19. /sh/ - shop	7. /ee/ - feet	19. /ure/ - pure
8. /l/ - leg	20. /ch/ - chip	8. /igh/ - night	20. /ə/ - corner (the 'schwa' - an unstressed vowel sound which is close to /u/)
9. /m/ - map	21. /th/ - thin	9. /oa/ - boat	
10. /n/ - net	22. /th/ - then	10. /oo/ - boot	
11. /p/ - pen	23. /ng/ - ring	11. /oo/ - look	
12. /r/ - rat	24. /zh/ - vision	12. /ow/ - cow	

Table from: Department of Education and Skills (UK) (2007), *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics – Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers*, reproduced under the terms of the Click-Use License. Modified for Australian pronunciation.

Once students have learnt these phoneme-grapheme relationships within the context of reading and spelling real words, they can be introduced to other multi-letter representations of phonemes (see Tables 2 and 3). It can be seen that for many phonemes there is a choice of graphemes

In the last column words printed in *italic* are from the list of 100 words occurring most frequently in student's books.

Table from: Department of Education and Skills (UK) (2007), *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics – Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers*. Reproduced under terms of the Click-Use Licence.

**TABLE 2: PHONEMES TO GRAPHEMES (CONSONANTS)**

PHONEME	Correspondences found in many different words		High-frequency words containing rare or unique correspondences (graphemes are underlined)
	GRAPHEME(S)	SAMPLE WORDS	
/b/	b, bb	bat, rabbit	
/k/	c, k, ck	cat, kit, duck	<i>school, mosquito</i>
/d/	d, dd, -ed	dog, muddy, pulled	
/f/	f, ff, ph	fan, puff, photo	<i>rough</i>
/g/	g, gg	go, bigger	
/h/	h	hen	<i>who</i>
/j/	j, g, dg	jet, giant, badge	
/l/	l, ll	leg, bell	
/m/	m, mm	map, hammer	<i>lamb, autumn</i>
/n/	n, nn	net, funny	<i>gnat, knock</i>
/p/	p, pp	pen, happy	
/r/	r, rr	rat, carrot	<i>write, rhyme</i>
/s/	s, ss, c	sun, miss, cell	<i>scent, listen</i>
/t/	t, tt, ed	tap, butter, jumped	<i>Thomas, doubt</i>
/v/	v	van	<i>of</i>
/w/	w	wig	<i>penguin, one</i>
/y/	y	yes	<i>onion</i>
/z/	z, zz, s, se, ze	zip, buzz, is, please, breeze	<i>scissors, xylophone</i>
/sh/	sh, s, ss, t (before -ion and -ial)	shop, sure, mission, mention, partial	<i>special, chef, ocean</i>
/ch/	ch, tch	chip, catch	
/th/	th	thin	
/th/	th	then	<i>breathe</i>
/ng/	ng, n (before k)	ring, pink	<i>tongue</i>
/zh/	s (before -ion and -ure)	vision, measure	<i>usual, beige</i>

**TABLE 3: PHONEMES TO GRAPHEMES (VOWELS)**

Correspondences found in many different words			High-frequency words containing rare or unique correspondences (graphemes are underlined)
PHONEME	GRAPHEME(S)	SAMPLE WORDS	
/a/	a	ant	
/e/	e, ea	egg, head	<i>said, says, friend, leopard, any</i>
/i/	i, y	in, gym	<i>women, busy, build, pretty, engine</i>
/o/	o, a	on, was	
/u/	u, o, o-e	up, son, come	<i>young, does, blood</i>
/ai/	ai, ay, a-e	rain, day, make	<i>they, veil, weigh, straight</i>
/ee/	ee, ea, e ie	feet, sea, he, chief	<i>these, people</i>
/igh/	igh, ie, y, i-e, i	night, tie, my, like, find	<i>height, eye, I, goodbye, type</i>
/oa/	oa, ow, o, oe, o-e	boat, grow, toe, go, home	<i>oh, though, folk</i>
/oo/	oo, ew, ue, u-e	boot, grew, blue, rule	<i>to, soup, through, two, lose</i>
/oo/	oo, u	look, put	<i>could</i>
/ar/	ar, a	farm, father	<i>calm, are, aunt, heart</i>
/or/	or, aw, au, ore, al	for, saw, Paul, more, talk	<i>caught, thought, four, door, broad</i>
/ur/	ur, er, ir, or (after 'w')	hurt, her, girl, work	<i>learn, journey, were</i>
/ow/	ow, ou	cow, out	<i>drought</i>
/oi/	oi, oy	coin, boy	
/air/	air, are, ear	fair, care, bear	<i>there</i>
/ear/	ear, eer, ere	dear, deer, here	<i>pier</i>
/ure/			<i>pure, tour</i>
/ə/	many different graphemes	corner, pillar, motor, famous, favour, murmur, about, cotton, mountain, possible, happen, centre, thorough, picture, cupboard ... and others	

In the last column words printed in italic are from the list of 100 words occurring most frequently in student's books.

Table from: Department of Education and Skills (UK) (2007), *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics – Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers*, reproduced under terms of the Click-Use Licence. Modified for Australian pronunciation.

**NOTE:** This sequence of learning should be taught in a systematic way. In their daily reading and writing, students will be encountering words containing both vowel and consonant digraphs, in addition to other common letter patterns. Throughout the sequence students will revise concepts already taught, in particular phoneme-grapheme correspondences, writing and recognition of graphemes and phonemic awareness, all of which are important in blending, segmenting and manipulating syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes for reading and spelling words.

# REVISING AND EXTENDING PHONEMIC AWARENESS

The teaching sequence began with the 6 phoneme-grapheme relationships s, a, t, p, i, n. In this part of the teaching sequence, students are introduced to the remaining 20 letters.

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Knowledge of the 26 letters of the alphabet and most common phoneme for each letter (recognition, articulation, and writing)
- Phonemic awareness, including blending and segmenting VC and CVC words in oral and written language
- Reading and writing words in connected text
- Syllables
- Onset and rime

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Revising and extending phonological awareness

#### Content description:

- Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).
- Manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words (ACELA1457).
- Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS

### Syllables for reading and spelling multi-syllabic words

Students clap the number of syllables (parts) they hear in their names: one clap for Jack, two for Bru-no, three for Ma-ri-a. Other motivating groups of words are those associated with animals and dinosaurs. Students and teachers can have fun blending and segmenting *tyrannosaurus* and *diplodocus*. Instead of clapping the syllables the students can jump or hop as they say each syllable.

#### [Generic Games and Activities \(RMD, pp. 86-93\)](#)

Revision and extension of phonological awareness will take place before and during the teaching of phoneme-grapheme relationships as determined by the teacher.

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Focus questions

#### Syllables

- Segmenting: Can the student put these parts together: Ib-ra-him?
- Blending: Can the student say the parts in *dinosaur*?



# REVISING AND EXTENDING PHONEMIC AWARENESS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Syllables</b></p> <p>During this sequence of learning it is important that students revisit and extend the phonemic awareness skills taught in Sections 1 and 2. This will help them learn to read and spell longer and more complex words.</p> <p>The aspects to be revisited are syllables, onset and rime, and phonemes.</p> <p><b>Onset and rime</b></p> <p><b>Content description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand how to use knowledge of letters and sounds including onset and rime to spell words (ACELA1438).</li> <li>Manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words (ACELA1457).</li> <li>Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme (ACELT1585).</li> <li>Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme (ACELY1649).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rhymes for reading and spelling words that have related onsets and rimes</b></p> <p>The teacher involves students in rhyming activities, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrating oral segmenting and blending of onset and rime (b-eat, k-iss, str-ing), as well as isolating the onset ('Take <i>br</i> away from <i>bring</i>'; 'Take <i>ain</i> away from <i>train</i>')</li> <li>Singing and chanting rhymes and songs, for example, 'Crow, crow, where do you go?', in <i>Anna the Goanna and Other Poems</i>, by Jill McDougall.</li> <li>Identifying words that rhyme (and do not rhyme) in stories, for example, Dr Seuss books, songs and poems</li> <li>Circle games where students add rhyming words, for example, 'My aunt went to town and bought a cat'; 'My aunt went to town and bought a cat and a rat'...</li> </ul> <p>Circle games could also be used when giving the students a rime and asking for the onset, for example 'Rhymes with <i>cat</i>, starts with...?' Some responses from the students could be /b/, /f/, /br/, /spl/.</p> <p>Play Rhyming Snap. A pack of cards with a word and a related picture on each card are shuffled and dealt out to four students. Players select rhyming pairs, take turns to place them on the table and name them: 'I have <i>back</i> and <i>sack</i>'. The first player asks the player on the left, 'Do you have a word that rhymes with <i>map</i>?' If the student identifies a rhyming pair it is placed on the table and the student has another turn. If not, the next student chooses a word card and questions the player on the left.</p>	<p><b>Onset and rime</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying words that rhyme: Can the student identify that <i>house</i> and <i>mouse</i> rhyme?</li> <li>Isolating the rime: Can the student say the rime in the words <i>house</i> and <i>mouse</i>?</li> <li>Isolating the onset: Can the student say what's left when you take away <i>ouse</i> from <i>house</i>?</li> </ul>

# REVISING AND EXTENDING PHONEMIC AWARENESS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Phonemes</b></p> <p><b>Content description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).</li> <li>➤ Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).</li> <li>➤ Write consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words by representing some sounds with the appropriate letters, and blend sounds associated with letters when reading CVC words (ACELA1820).</li> <li>➤ Segment consonant blends or clusters into separate phonemes at the beginnings and ends of one syllable words (ACELA1822).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Phonemes for reading and spelling words that contain digraphs</b></p> <p>Students blend and segment phonemes in spoken and written simple CVC words such as <i>cat</i>, <i>mop</i>. The teacher extends this to oral segmentation of words containing digraphs: consonant digraph (<i>chip</i>) and vowel digraph (<i>coat</i>). The number of phonemes in each word can be shown by putting up one finger for each phoneme as it is articulated (ch-i-p, c-oa-t). It is most important that blending and segmenting phonemes in words are practised regularly.</p>	<p><b>Phonemes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Segmenting: Can the student segment the sounds in <i>thin</i>?</li> <li>➤ Blending: Can the student blend the sounds /th/-/a/-/t/: what word do the sounds make?</li> </ul>

# REVISING AND EXTENDING PHONEMIC AWARENESS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	TEACHING AND LEARNING: WORD AWARENESS	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Manipulating phonemes in words</b></p> <p><b>Content description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words (ACELA1457).</li> <li>▶ Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).</li> <li>▶ Segment consonant blends or clusters into separate phonemes at the beginnings and ends of one syllable words (ACELA1822).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Manipulation of phonemes in using analogies for reading and spelling new words</b></p> <p>The teacher provides instruction in deleting and replacing phonemes in words: 'If I take away the /b/ from <i>beach</i> what word do I have left? Yes it's <i>each</i>; If I take the /m/ away from <i>meat</i> and change it to /b/, what word will I have? Yes, I'll have <i>beat</i>.' When students have these skills, they can be taught to use them as an analogy strategy to decode and spell new words: 'You know how to spell <i>meat</i> and <i>beat</i>; the word <i>heat</i> has the same sound in the middle, so it's spelt <i>ea</i> as well, <i>h-ea-t</i>, <i>heat</i>.'</p> <p>Oral phoneme deletion and manipulation (replacement) can be practised by the students in many classroom routines, such as when taking the roll. Ask the students to say their names without specific sounds, for example: 'Sanjay, can you say your name without the /ay/?' 'Charles, can you say your name without the /ch/', or, 'Emily, can you say your name without the /i/?'</p> <p>Replacement of phonemes in names is more difficult than deletion, but students find it very entertaining: 'Marco, can you change the /m/ in your name to /n/?' 'Sita, can you change the /i/ in your name to /o/?'</p>	<p><b>Manipulating Phonemes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Deleting: Can the student say <i>meat</i> without the /m/?</li> <li>▶ Can the student take away the /b/ from <i>boat</i> and put a /c/ there instead?</li> <li>▶ Can the student take the /ow/ from <i>town</i> and put an /or/ there instead?</li> </ul>

# BLENDING FOR READING AND SPELLING

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:


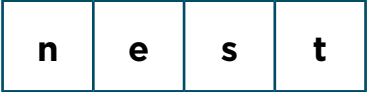
- Knowledge of the 26 letters of the alphabet and most common phonemes for each letter (recognition, articulation, and writing)
- Phonological awareness, including blending and segmenting VC and CVC words in oral and written language
- Reading and writing words in connected text
- Syllable
- Onset and rime

**Note:** The students are taught strategies for how to learn the spelling of a word. *Look, Say, Hear, Cover, Visualise, Write, Check* is effective for students who are learning to spell words. Students are taught to **look** at the word carefully, **say** and **visualise** the word. They then underline the critical features (for example *ou* in *mouse*), cover the word and try to visualise it in their mind, before they write the word

from memory. Inclusion of the *Hear* action is particularly important for students who may have difficulty. Those students who have a very well developed phonemic strategy may not need to include listening for the sounds so that the strategy becomes *Look, Say, Cover, Visualise, Write, Check*.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Consonant blends</b></p> <p><b>Content descriptions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand how to use knowledge of letters and sounds including onset and rime to spell words (ACELA1438).</li> <li>Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).</li> <li>Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).</li> <li>Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters (ACELY1663).</li> </ul>	<p>(This teaching example has been adapted from <i>Letters and Sounds</i>, 2007).</p> <p>The teacher introduces students to reading words that contain two-letter final blends (CVCC).</p> <p>This concept can be introduced as the teacher writes on the whiteboard or easel a CVC word that can be extended to become a CVCC word, for example <i>men</i>. The teacher says the sounds in the word and asks the students to sound out the word.</p>	<p>Complete cloze passages with a focus on blends: ‘The bird made a ne_ _ of t_igs in the _ _ ee.’</p> <p>Engage in word building activities involving students in building lists from key words (<i>eg stop ‘st’</i>).</p> <p>Engage in word sorts where students sort words by specific initial blends, such as <b>sp, st, dr, bl</b>; or final blends, such as <b>st, lk, ld</b>.</p> <p>Make words with blends out of longer words.</p> <p>Play games like Snap and Fish, matching words that have the same initial or final blends.</p>	<p><b>Monitoring and assessment</b></p> <p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can the student orally blend CVCC and CCVC words?</li> <li>Can the student orally segment CVCC and CCVC words?</li> <li>Can the student read CVCC and CCVC words?</li> <li>Can the student spell CVCC and CCVC words?</li> <li>Can the student read CVCC and CCVC words in connected text?</li> </ul>

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most consonants can be combined into blends</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students blend and segment initial and final blends in CVCC and CCVC words</li> <li>Students read and spell words containing groups of letters that represent consonant blends</li> <li>Students use blending and segmenting as important strategies in reading and spelling words</li> <li>Students are also able to use a <b>visual strategy</b> in reading and spelling words</li> </ul> <p>Consonant blends: Initial: for example sp, fl, pl, pr, br, tr</p> <p>Consonant blends: Final -st, -lk, -ld, -pt</p> <p>A list of <a href="#">common blends can be found in the First Steps Reading Resource Book p.78.</a></p>	<p>Then the teacher sounds the word men again, writes the final consonant /d/ and slowly articulates /m/-/e/-/n-/d/, m end. This is repeated with the students joining in. (The words could be written in the sentence: ‘The men mend the road.’)</p> <p>The sequence can be repeated with other CVCC words, for example tent, damp.</p> <p>For CCVC words a similar procedure can be followed, except that once the CVC word(for example pin) is introduced, the additional letter s is added at the beginning of the word to make spin.</p> <p>The teacher introduces the students to spelling CVCC words. The students and teacher need whiteboards with 4-phoneme frames on them.</p>	<p>Play Blend Bingo – Students cover specific initial or final blends on their Bingo cards as the teacher says and writes different words on the board.</p> <p>Make up silly sentences containing words beginning with the same consonant blend: ‘The floppy flower flapped as it began to fly’.</p> <p>Use plastic letters to make words containing a particular blend. In order to be able to read words with blends automatically, the students practise reading flash cards with the teacher, beginning at a slow pace and gradually increasing the pace. It is important that students also have practice in putting the words into meaningful sentences.</p> <p>To help develop automatic spelling of words containing blends the students practise writing them on their whiteboards or digital device. The words should also be written in meaningful sentences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can the student spell CVCC and CCVC words in connected text?</li> <li>Can the student use the <b>Look, Say, (Hear), Cover, Visualise, Write Check</b> strategy to learn correct spellings and pronunciations of words?</li> </ul> <p>It is important in these activities that the teacher makes the purpose clear and gives clear, purposeful feedback. ‘I love the way that Isaac has made some ‘bl’ words - blue, black, blink and blurt.’</p>

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p data-bbox="616 411 981 502"></p> <p data-bbox="616 544 1061 810">The teacher models careful oral segmentation of several CVCC words (b-e-s-t, d-u-m-p). The teacher says another word (<i>lost</i>) and asks the students to say the sounds then write them in the phoneme frame on the whiteboard. The students are then asked to name the letters in <i>lost</i>.</p> <p data-bbox="616 836 1061 1002">The teacher says another word (<i>nest</i>), asks the students to sound it, asks for the names of the letters to go in each box of the phoneme frame, and then writes them.</p> <p data-bbox="616 1023 981 1114"></p> <p data-bbox="616 1155 1061 1353">This is repeated with several more CVCC words that the teacher writes. The students are then given some CVCC words to write in their own phoneme frames, which the teacher monitors as the students are writing.</p> <p data-bbox="616 1378 1061 1437">Teaching spelling of CCVC words (<i>stop</i>, <i>swim</i>) can follow the same procedure.</p>		

# DIGRAPHS AND TRIGRAPHS FOR READING AND SPELLING

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- ▶ Knowledge of the 26 letters of the alphabet and the most common phoneme for each letter (recognition, articulation and writing)
- ▶ Phonological awareness, including blending and segmenting VC and CVC words in oral and written language (phonics)
- ▶ Reading and writing words in connected text
- ▶ Onset and rime
- ▶ Syllables

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Digraphs and trigraphs for reading and spelling

Content description:

- ▶ Recognise and know how to use simple grammatical morphemes to create word families (ACELA1455).
- ▶ Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).
- ▶ Understand that a letter can represent more than one sound and that a syllable must contain a vowel sound (ACELA1459).
- ▶ Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).

## WHAT TEACHERS DO

### Teacher note

Graphophonic relationships need to be explicitly and systematically taught (See Overview and Section 3).

It may be appropriate to begin this sequence of teaching with a revision of reading and writing alphabet letters and the phoneme-grapheme relationships that have already been taught.

### A suggested format for the explicit teaching of phoneme- grapheme relationships for digraphs

- ▶ Explain the purpose and outcome
- ▶ Focusing in: Review and practise previously learnt related concepts/ skills
- ▶ Explicitly teach the concept/skill

## WHAT STUDENTS DO

Students will need many opportunities for practice of taught concepts.

Students write daily for a range of purposes, for example:

- ▶ sentence level work across learning areas
- ▶ recounts
- ▶ narratives
- ▶ descriptions
- ▶ lists
- ▶ poetry

Students read daily in, for example, modelled and guided reading and writing sessions and independent reading. Students read digital and paper-based texts.

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Teacher note

It is most important to monitor individual student's knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences and patterns within words. Information from checklists for each student, can be used to plan future learning that addresses the needs of all students.

### Focus questions

- ▶ Can the student articulate the phoneme associated with each taught grapheme?
- ▶ Can the student write the taught grapheme when given the associated phoneme?
- ▶ Can the student orally blend and segment words containing the taught graphemes?



# DIGRAPHS AND TRIGRAPHS FOR READING AND SPELLING

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Segment sentences into individual words and orally blend and segment onset and rime in single syllable spoken words, and isolate, blend and manipulate phonemes in single syllable words (ACELA1819)</li> <li>➤ Read decodable and predictable texts using developing phrasing, fluency, contextual, semantic, grammatical and phonic knowledge and emerging text processing strategies, for example prediction, monitoring meaning and re-reading (ACELY1659).</li> <li>➤ Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams (ACELY1661).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Practise the concept/skill</li> <li>➤ Apply and practise the concept/skill in a wider context</li> <li>➤ Assess how well students met the outcome</li> <li>➤ Development: Practise and extend the concept/skill across the curriculum</li> </ul> <p>A sample teaching session for the phoneme /sh/, which is represented in writing by a digraph, may include the following teaching procedures.</p> <p><b>Introduce the new concept and/or skill to be learnt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The teacher explains that now the class has learnt all the alphabet letters they are ready to learn to write some phonemes that need <b>two</b> letters, beginning with the /sh/ phoneme.</li> </ul>	<p>Students practise learnt concepts and skills through games and other motivating activities. Flash cards, if not over-used, can be highly effective in helping students achieve automaticity of reading and spelling words.</p> <p><b>Practice and consolidation for learning</b></p> <p>Consolidation activities are most important in helping students recognise and use phoneme-grapheme relationships in reading and writing. Students need lots of enjoyable practice with sounds and letters.</p> <p><a href="#">Generic Games and Activities (RMD, pp. 86-93)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Generic Games and Activities 2 (RMD, pp. 139-140)</a></p> <p>It is important that the activities specifically relate to the concepts being taught. Students should understand the focus and the purpose of the activities. Activities should be monitored to ensure they are associated with intended learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Can the student read and spell words containing the taught graphemes?</li> <li>➤ Can the student read and spell words containing the taught graphemes in connected text?</li> <li>➤ Can the student read words containing a digraph, such as <i>ship</i>?</li> <li>➤ Can the student spell words containing a digraph, such as <i>fish</i>?</li> <li>➤ Can the student orally blend and segment words with digraphs?</li> <li>➤ Can the student read and spell words containing digraphs in connected text?</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>The teacher can monitor student's learning as they engage in a variety of purposeful and meaningful practice activities. Students can be asked to read from lists of learnt letters, digraphs and words on the classroom wall as part of the monitoring process. Monitoring can also take place during guided and independent reading and writing.</p>



# DIGRAPHS AND TRIGRAPHS FOR READING AND SPELLING

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct texts that incorporate supporting images using software including word processing programs (ACELY1664).</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Phoneme-grapheme relationships</b></p> <p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phonemes may be represented by more than one letter</li> <li>Blending is an important strategy for reading new words.</li> <li>Segmenting is an important strategy for spelling and writing new words.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read and spell words containing groups of letters that represent phonemes</li> <li>Use blending and segmenting as important strategies in reading and spelling words</li> <li>Becoming able to use a visual strategy when learning to read and spell words</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuning in:</b> <b>Review what the students know</b></p> <p>The teacher draws the student's attention to /sh/ sounds in words, by referring back to a modelled reading or writing session in which the /sh/ phoneme is written, for example</p> <p>Mem Fox's book <i>Where is the Green Sheep?</i></p> <p>The teacher asks the students to think of words containing the phoneme /sh/, and writes them on the whiteboard, while articulating the words very slowly and clearly. The teacher may use the mnemonic of putting a finger to the lips while whispering <i>shhhh</i>.</p> <p><b>Explicitly teach the concept/skill</b></p> <p>The teacher explains that the class are going to learn to write the phoneme /sh/, using the two letters <b>s</b> and <b>h</b>. The student's attention is drawn to the digraph <b>/sh/</b> as the teacher articulates it deliberately, underlines it in example words and again models the writing of the digraph.</p>	<p><b>Activities with a specific focus</b></p> <p>1. Play 'Tic-Tac-Toe' using consonant digraphs. The game is played in the same way as Noughts and Crosses, using words to create a sequence of three. Player A may have cards that end with <b>ss</b> and Player B may have cards that end with <b>ll</b>. Players take turns to place a word on a 3x3 grid and the winner is the first to place three words in a row (horizontally, vertically or diagonally).</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1137 842 1547 1050"> <tbody> <tr> <td>kiss</td> <td>less</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>miss</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>kill</td> <td>bell</td> <td>hiss</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>2. Engage in physical word sort activities in which students move around the classroom while holding word cards containing digraphs. Students look for words that match theirs in some way and form groups when matches are found. At the end of a whole-class word sort each group is asked to hold up their cards and explain why they are together.</p>	kiss	less			miss		kill	bell	hiss	
kiss	less											
	miss											
kill	bell	hiss										

# DIGRAPHS AND TRIGRAPHS FOR READING AND SPELLING

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Student's prior learning experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phonemes in words can be isolated, blended and segmented</li> <li>In written language phonemes are represented by graphemes (letters)</li> <li>Familiarity with, and use of sound-single letter relationships for the 26 letters of the alphabet in reading and spelling words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific relationships to be taught within the context of words</b></p> <p><b>Consonant phonemes (represented in writing by digraphs and trigraphs) and example words</b></p> <p>/k/ duck /f/ stuff /l/ will /z/ buzz /s/ kiss /ch/ chin /sh/ ship /th/ thin /th/ that /ng/ sing</p>	<p>The students practise writing the digraph /sh/ on their whiteboards with correct letter strokes as they verbalise /sh/ in a whisper. When they are able to do this they may write the /sh/ words that the teacher has demonstrated, on their whiteboards. The teacher gives individual feedback and correction where required.</p> <p><b>Apply and practise the concept/skill in a wider context</b></p> <p>The teacher writes some new /sh/ words on the whiteboard and asks students individually to underline the <b>sh</b> digraph on the whiteboard.</p> <p><b>Assess</b></p> <p>The teacher assesses the students' ability to read and write the digraph correctly in given words. Feedback given at this stage helps ensure that the concept and skills are learnt. Assessment may also be made as students recognise the digraph in reading and produce it in spelling.</p> <p>Simple dictated sentences, such as 'The fish is in the fish shop', are very useful for assessing spelling of digraphs.</p>	<p>Play <i>A Trip to the Moon</i>, as the students are invited to join the trip if they can bring a word containing a particular digraph. Students sit in a circle and take turns to respond to an invitation: 'I'm going on a trip to the moon. You can come if you bring something that has /sh/ in it.'</p> <p>Complete cloze activities using familiar texts where the missing words contain particular digraphs.</p> <p>Hunt for words containing a particular digraph or trigraph (eg <b>igh</b>) in a modelled writing or charted song text.</p> <p>Play word sorting games using words containing vowel digraphs (and trigraphs). The teacher can choose the criteria in a closed sort, or students can choose the criteria in an open sort. <i>Guess my sort</i> involves a student, groups of students, or teacher sorting the words and another group identifying the criteria. The teacher asks, "Why do the words go together?" Reinforce and extend the student's answers, "Yes they go together because they all contain the digraph <b>ch</b>." "Can you read these words that contain <b>ch</b>?"</p>	

# DIGRAPHS AND TRIGRAPHS FOR READING AND SPELLING

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Vowel phonemes (represented in writing by digraphs and trigraphs) and example words</b></p> <p>/ai/ rain</p> <p>/ee/ meet</p> <p>/igh/ high</p> <p>/oa/ coat</p> <p>/oo/ look</p> <p>/oo/ soon</p> <p>/ar/ farm</p> <p>/or/ for</p> <p>/ur/ burn</p> <p>/ow/ cow</p> <p>/oi/ join</p> <p>/ear/ hear</p> <p>/ea/ leaf</p> <p>/ir/ girl</p> <p>/er/ mother (unstressed vowel that sounds similar to /u/)</p>	<p><b>Practise and extend</b></p> <p>Students will need lots of practice of learnt concepts and skills as they learn the many graphemic representations of the phonemes of English. The teacher can provide many demonstrations of graphophonetic concepts and skills in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Daily modelled reading</li> <li>▶ Daily modelled writing</li> <li>▶ Guided reading</li> <li>▶ Guided writing</li> <li>▶ Creating <b>Word Walls</b> with the students and drawing the student's attention to them regularly as part of the literate environment of the classroom</li> <li>▶ Creating a class Wall Dictionary using envelopes as the pockets to hold the words with a 'key word card' above each pocket.</li> </ul> <p>It is particularly important to make word walls or lists of words for a particular <b>word family</b> (related because they contain the same digraph or trigraph, for example /igh/ as in <i>night, light, fight</i>) for each phoneme-grapheme relationship that is taught.</p>	<p>This can be further extended as the students write (and perhaps draw) the words containing <b>ch</b>.</p> <p><i>Making words</i> (Cunningham, 2005) involves giving students the letters of a 'secret' word that can be related to a class theme (<i>eg transport</i>) or general interest. The task is for the students to make the secret word and as many little words as they can. This becomes a multi-level activity that all students can participate in, as they find simple VC and CVC and more complex words. For example, given the word <i>teacher</i> students could make a number of simple words, such as <i>at, cat, hat</i>, as well as practising the digraphs <b>ch</b> and <b>ea</b> as in <i>eat, each, teach, cheat</i> etc, and the trigraph <b>ear</b> as in <i>ear, hear</i>.</p> <p><a href="#">Sound Hunter (RMD, p. 130)</a></p>	

# DIGRAPHS AND TRIGRAPHS FOR READING AND SPELLING

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p>It is also important for teachers to revisit, demonstrate and celebrate students' learning as they make, with the students, charts of 'What we have learnt', 'Words we know', or, 'We have learnt about the <b>sh</b> (or other digraph) word family.'</p>		
<p><b>Split digraphs</b></p> <p>a-e (make), e-e (these), i-e (time), o-e (hose), u-e (use)</p>	<p><b>The split digraph may be introduced in several ways by showing its relationship to a known grapheme.</b></p> <p>The following procedure that has been adapted from <i>Letters and Sounds</i>, provides a multi-sensory teacher directed activity for introducing the concept.</p> <p>Once the word <i>tie</i> has been taught and well practised, three students stand next to the teacher, each of them holding one large letter card <b>t</b>, <b>i</b>, and <b>e</b>, in this order, to make the word <i>tie</i>.</p>	<p>Most of the above activities for digraphs are suitable for practising split digraphs. Manipulatives such as plastic letters are particularly suitable, as these can be moved easily around, for example making <i>pie</i> into <i>pine</i> or <i>mat</i> into <i>mate</i>.</p> <p>In <i>Making Words</i> from the word <i>teacher</i>, the students can make <i>at</i> into <i>ate</i> and <i>hat</i> into <i>hate</i>.</p> <p>Students can play Bingo to practise split digraphs. In this case the Bingo cards will contain a mixture of four letter words that include a split digraph and three letter words, for example, <i>hate</i>, <i>hat</i>, <i>made</i>, <i>mad</i>, <i>mate</i>, <i>mat</i>, etc.</p> <p>Word sorts and word hunts with split digraphs are all worthwhile practice activities.</p>	<p><b>Focus questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Can the student read words containing a split digraph, such as <i>mate</i>?</li> <li>➤ Can the student spell words containing a split digraph, such as <i>made</i>?</li> <li>➤ Can the student orally blend and segment words with split digraphs?</li> <li>➤ Can the student read and spell words containing the split digraphs in connected text?</li> </ul>

# DIGRAPHS AND TRIGRAPHS FOR READING AND SPELLING

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p>The teacher draws the students' attention to the letter names and explains that these letters make the word <i>tie</i>. The teacher segments the two phonemes in <i>tie</i> /t/, /ie/, asks the students to do the same, pointing out that the letters <b>i</b> and <b>e</b> make the /ie/ phoneme so that the students holding these letters should 'hold hands' to show that they are joined to make the sound /ie/.</p> <p>The teacher asks a fourth student to hold the letter <b>m</b>, as they are going to make the word <i>time</i> and orally segments the word <i>time</i>, /t/, /ie/, /m/, asking the students to do the same. Then the teacher asks the students where they think the letter <b>m</b> should go. If the students suggest that the <b>m</b> belongs at the end of the word, the student holding the letter <b>m</b> is asked to stand after the letter <b>e</b>. The teacher again orally segments /t/, /ie/, /m/ and explains to the students that the correct spelling of <b>time</b> is t-i-m-e, so that the students holding the <b>i</b> and <b>e</b> letter cards must continue to hold hands, as they are making the /ie/ sound, but the student with the <b>m</b> card needs to stand between them.</p>	<p>In order to be able to read words with split digraphs automatically, the students practise reading flash cards with the teacher, beginning at a slow pace and gradually increasing the pace. It is important that students have practice in putting the words into meaningful sentences.</p> <p>To help develop automatic spelling of words containing digraphs the students practise writing them on their whiteboards, gradually increasing the pace. The words should also be written in meaningful sentences.</p>	

# DIGRAPHS AND TRIGRAPHS FOR READING AND SPELLING

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p>The teacher then writes <i>time</i> on the whiteboard, drawing a curved line to join the <b>i</b> and <b>e</b> letters. The activity can be repeated with <i>pie-pine</i>.</p> <p>The concept can also be taught and practised with grapheme cards for <b>t - ie -m</b>. The teacher cuts the <b>ie</b> card to demonstrate separation of the letters and then puts the letters together to make the word <b>t i m e</b>. Hence the digraph <b>i-e</b> is split by the consonant <b>t</b>.</p> <p>The teacher can demonstrate that both the <b>i</b> and <b>e</b> are necessary in the word <i>time</i> as if the <b>e</b> is forgotten, the words are pronounced differently (<b>tim, time</b>).</p> <p>In following sessions the teacher can demonstrate the split digraph in the high frequency words: <b>like, make, came, made</b>.</p> <p>This strategy which is used to introduce the concept of the split digraph can be used in a limited set of words that can be taught in this way, for example, <i>hoe</i> → <i>hose, hole, hope</i>.</p>		

# LEARNING ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS AND PRONUNCIATIONS

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- Knowledge of the 26 letters of the alphabet and most common phoneme for each letter (recognition, articulation, and writing)
- Phonological awareness, including blending and segmenting VC and CVC words in oral and written language (phonics)
- Reading and writing words in connected text
- Syllables
- Onset and rime

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Alternative spellings and pronunciations for digraphs and trigraphs

#### Content descriptions:

- Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).
- Understand that a letter can represent more than one sound and that a syllable must contain a vowel sound (ACELA1459).
- Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).
- Use visual memory to read and write high-frequency words (ACELA1821).
- Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters (ACELY1663).

## WHAT TEACHERS DO

One of the most common alternative spelling patterns to be taught is **ou** as in *house* and **ow** as in *cow*. These are effectively taught within word families. The teacher and students can make lists of the words within each family, for example:

<b>ow cow</b>	<b>ou house</b>
now	mouse
how	out
brown	scout
down	sprout
frown	about
clown	loud
crown	proud
flower	

It is essential for the digraphs in each list to have the same pronunciation and for this to be shown in the list by using a focus word for the list and a picture.

## WHAT STUDENTS DO

### Students will need many opportunities for practice of taught concepts.

**Students write** daily for a range of purposes for example:

- sentence level work across learning areas
- recounts
- narratives
- descriptions
- lists
- poetry.

**Students read** daily, for example, in modelled and guided reading and writing sessions and independent reading.

With teacher scaffolding, the students complete cloze passages with a focus on specific digraphs, 'The b--d (bird) made a nest of twigs in the b--n (brown) tr-- (tree)'.

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Monitoring and assessment

#### Focus questions

- Can the student read words containing each of the taught digraphs?
- Can the student spell words containing the taught digraphs?
- Can the student orally blend and segment words containing the taught digraphs?
- Can the student read and spell words containing the taught digraphs in connected text?
- Can the student differentiate between words that contain alternative spellings of the same phoneme?



# LEARNING ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS AND PRONUNCIATIONS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>Whilst the students have been learning mostly one graphemic representation for each phoneme, in their reading and writing they will have come across different spellings of phonemes, particularly for vowel digraphs.</p> <p>It is particularly important that students are able to <b>combine a visual strategy with the phonemic strategies</b> of blending and segmenting. This is important for both reading and spelling (see Section 6 Teaching Spelling).</p> <p>The particular words to be learnt need to be explicitly taught systematically from common to the least common.</p> <p>A list of phoneme to grapheme correspondences found in many different words can be seen in Tables 2 and 3 in the introduction for this sequence of learning.</p>	<p>In the two lists above, the focus words are <i>cow</i> and <i>house</i>, which are easy to illustrate. As the <b>ow cow</b> digraph has a different pronunciation in words such as <i>throw</i>, it will also need its own list:</p> <p><b>ow bow</b></p> <p>throw mow flow throw grow crow</p> <p><b>A visual, as well as a phonological strategy, is most important.</b> Once students are able to hear all the sounds in a word they should be taught that words must not only <b>sound</b> right but they must <b>look right</b>.</p> <p>Whenever students are shown how to spell a word, the critical feature and the pattern should be identified. They should be encouraged to visualise the words before they write them rather than copying.</p> <p>During modelled writing the teacher can use the ‘think aloud’ strategy to demonstrate how to check a word to make sure that it <b>looks right</b>.</p>	<p>In order to be able to read words with digraphs automatically, the students practise reading flash cards with the teacher, beginning at a slow pace and gradually increasing the pace. It is important that students also have practice in putting the words into meaningful sentences.</p> <p>To help develop automatic spelling of words containing digraphs the students practise writing them on their whiteboards. The words should also be written in meaningful sentences.</p> <p><a href="#">Message Board (WMD, p. 108)</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Can the student differentiate between words that contain the same digraph, but a different pronunciation?</li> <li>➤ Can the student use the <b>Look, Say, Visualise, Cover, Write Check</b> strategy (or other variation of this strategy) to learn correct spellings and pronunciations of words?</li> </ul>



# ONSET AND RIME

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- › Knowledge of the 26 letters of the alphabet and most common phoneme for each letter (recognition, articulation, and writing)
- › Phonological awareness, including blending and segmenting VC and CVC words in oral and written language (phonics)
- › Reading and writing words in connected text
- › Onset and rime
- › Syllables

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Onset and rime

#### Content descriptions:

- › Understand how to use knowledge of letters and sounds including onset and rime to spell words (ACELA1438).
- › Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).
- › Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme (ACELT1585).
- › Segment sentences into individual words and orally blend and segment onset and rime in single syllable spoken words, and isolate, blend and manipulate phonemes in single syllable words (ACELA1819).
- › Construct texts using software including word processing programs (ACELY1654).

## WHAT TEACHERS DO

The teacher orally revises rhyming words with the students and then introduces them to some of the 37 most common rimes ([First Steps Reading Resource Book](#) p.79) within the context of real words. The easiest to work with are VC rimes such as *at, in, it, ing*. Some more difficult rimes are *aw, ain, ight,*

The teacher discusses the concept of onset and rime in a 'Making Words' activity. This involves students changing one letter in three and four letter words in order to make a new word. In this case the letters are changed to make words that rhyme. Students use either individual white boards or letter cards to construct the words.

## WHAT STUDENTS DO

Create crossword clues: 'It rhymes with tree and it buzzes'.

Text innovation by replacing rhyming words in well-known rhymes or stories.

Play games in which rhyming strings are created. In groups students write words on large cards based on a given rhyming pattern, such as **sing, fling, bring**. Students see who can make the longest trail. Students say each word as they jump from word to word.

In order to be able to read words within rhyming families automatically, such as **night, flight, sight, bright** the students practise reading flash cards with the teacher, beginning at a slow pace and gradually increasing the pace. It is important that students also have practice in putting the words into meaningful sentences.

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Focus questions

- › Can the student recognise words that rhyme?
- › Can the student segment words into onset and rime?
- › Can the student blend onsets and rimes?
- › Can the student manipulate onsets and rimes to create new words?
- › Can the student use an analogy strategy to read words?
- › Can the student use an analogy strategy to spell words?
- › Can the student use the Look, Say, Cover, Visualise, Write, Check strategy (or other variation of this strategy) to learn correct spellings and pronunciations of words?

# ONSET AND RIME

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words that share common rimes may be grouped into word families</li> <li>Blending is an important strategy for reading new words; segmenting is an important strategy for spelling new words</li> <li>Manipulating onsets and rimes can create new words</li> <li>Manipulation of onsets and rimes can be important for using an analogy strategy for reading and writing unknown words</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are able to read and spell words containing groups of letters that represent commonly used rimes</li> <li>Students are able to manipulate onsets and rimes</li> <li>Students are able to manipulate onsets and rimes in order to use an analogy strategy to read and spell new words</li> <li>Students are able to use blending and segmenting in reading and spelling words</li> </ul>	<p>The teacher asks the students to print or make the word <b>at</b> which is the rime. They then add the letter <b>r</b> to make <i>rat</i> and then change the letter <b>r</b> to <b>m</b> to make <i>mat</i>, and change the letter <b>m</b> to <b>h</b> make <i>hat</i> and so on. This can be extended by adding the letter <b>t</b> before <b>h</b> to make <i>that</i> and changing the <b>t</b> to <b>c</b> to make <i>chat</i>. Some students may need additional practice in manipulating phonemes in words in order to complete the activity successfully.</p> <p>Following this activity, students can list all the rhyming words they have made on a class chart or in their individual spelling journals.</p> <p>The teacher demonstrates the use of word wheels to make words from a rime and a number of onsets. Word wheels are made from two circles of different sizes that are held together with a pin at the centre. The smaller wheel contains a rime, and the outer wheel contains onsets of single letters or blends that make a word when combined with the rime.</p>	<p>To help develop automatic spelling of words within rhyming families, the students practise writing them individually on a whiteboard/ipad/computer or other digital device. The words should also be written in meaningful sentences using a word processing program.</p>	

# MULTI-SYLLABIC WORDS

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- › Knowledge of the 26 letters of the alphabet and most common phoneme for each letter (recognition, articulation, and writing)
- › Phonological awareness, including blending and segmenting VC and CVC words in oral and written language (phonics)
- › Reading and writing words in connected text
- › Onset and rime
- › Syllables

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Multi-syllabic words

#### Content descriptions:

- › Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439).
- › Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).
- › Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).

## WHAT TEACHERS DO

### Reading and writing words of two syllables

After some oral practice activities with multi-syllabic words, the teacher explains that the class are going to read and write words of two syllables.

The teacher writes the first syllable of a two-syllable word (for example *sunlight*) on the whiteboard, sounding it out while writing it, and then blending the phonemes (for example s-u-n, *sun*).

This process is followed for the second syllable (l-igh-t, *light*). The teacher blends the syllables together (*sunlight*) and asks the students to join in.

## WHAT STUDENTS DO

Play games with students' name cards. Students can firstly clap the number of syllables they hear in their first name: one clap for *Jack*, two for *Sa-li*, three for *A-ji-ta*. They can then find their name cards, read them and sort them by the number of syllables they contain. Students can organise themselves into groups according to the number of syllables in their name. This activity can also be used with dinosaur or animal names, or other thematic groups.

Students who have difficulty in recognising syllables may be helped by an activity in which they put together picture cards of objects (with one-syllable names) that make up compound words, such as *tooth* and *brush*. They pronounce the words individually as they push the pictures together and then say the compound word, for example *tooth, brush, toothbrush*.

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Focus questions

- › Can the student blend syllables in multi-syllabic words?
- › Can the student segment syllables in multi-syllabic words?
- › Can the student blend phonemes within syllables in multi-syllabic words?
- › Can the student segment phonemes within syllables in multi-syllabic words?
- › Can the student read multisyllabic words?
- › Can the student spell multisyllabic words?
- › Can the student read multisyllabic words in connected text?

# MULTI-SYLLABIC WORDS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Some words contain more than one syllable</li> <li>› Multi-syllabic words can be blended and segmented into syllables</li> <li>› Individual syllables can be blended and segmented into phonemes</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Blending multi-syllabic words for reading</li> <li>› Segmenting multi-syllabic words for spelling</li> </ul>	<p>This process is repeated as the students say and write the word on their whiteboards. Other words (such as <i>lunchbox</i>, <i>football</i>) are also demonstrated and practised.</p> <p>When students and teacher have a list of two-syllable words on their whiteboards they read them aloud, clapping out the syllables.</p> <p>Once students have learnt to write two syllable compound words, the teacher can introduce two and three syllable words in which the syllables are not complete words, for example <i>number</i>, <i>seven</i>, <i>thirteen</i>, <i>fourteen</i>, <i>eleven</i>.</p>	<p>In order to segment words, the reverse process is needed and the pictures are moved apart: <i>toothbrush</i>, <i>tooth</i>, <i>brush</i>. Some other possible words are <i>football</i>, <i>sunlight</i>, <i>starfish</i> and <i>rainbow</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Can the student spell multi- syllabic words in connected text?</li> </ul> <p>Can the student use the <b>Look, Say, Cover, Visualise, Write Check</b> strategy (or other variation of this strategy) to learn correct spellings and pronunciations of words?</p>

## SECTION 5

# High frequency words

### Important prior knowledge and experience for this sequence of learning:

- Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment in which students have been encouraged to focus on words, the sound of words, syllables and rhymes
- Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, story telling and book sharing sessions
- Phonemic awareness, including blending and segmenting, and some sound-letter knowledge

During the teaching of these words, students will be learning sophisticated strategies for reading and writing words.

### HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

A relatively small number of words occur frequently in student's texts. Most sentences include at least one high frequency word. Some of these words are easily decodable, such as *at* and *and*. Others, such as *said* and *was*, are not so easily decodable, particularly by students who are just learning about sound-letter correspondences. It is important that students learn the most frequently used words in their beginning reading experiences, as this will help them read and write connected text. Some of the most frequent of these words, for example *the*, *and*, *a*, *to*, *of*, are words that in themselves don't carry much meaning for students, although they are very important for the structure of the sentence. They provide the 'glue' that keeps the 'meaningful' words together so that they make sense. As many of these words don't carry much meaning for students they may not be particularly aware of them. Students may need practice in oral activities with these words in meaningful phrases and sentences, before working with the written form.

### MULTI-SENSORY LEARNING

When students begin learning high frequency words, each word will need to be learnt individually. Multi-sensory learning, combined with lots of motivating practice opportunities, will help the learning of these words. A small group of these words may be practised and monitored together so that the learning of a sequence can be clearly seen by students and the teacher. It is important to teach the most frequently used words first as this will help give students access to more information in their reading and writing. The aim of explicitly teaching these words is to build automatic recognition and writing of these words so that students can become successful independent readers and writers. Multi-sensory learning involves sound, tactile, kinaesthetic and visual modalities.

## EXPLICIT TEACHING

As students learn more letter-sound correspondences, and encounter many words in reading and writing, the learning of high frequency words becomes easier, but most students will still need some explicit teaching of these words in order for them to recognise them automatically. An example of a structured teaching session for learning the first of these words is provided in the 'What Teachers Do' column of this section. Some students who have difficulty learning words, particularly the difficult to decode words, may continue to need this structure for many high frequency words. Others who are able to learn words quickly will need less support. It must be remembered that the purpose of teaching these high frequency words is to give students important tools with which to read, write and understand connected text. Because these words occur so frequently, reading and writing connected text are most important contexts for practice.

## TIMING AND PACING OF TEACHING

High frequency words are essential for fluent reading and writing of connected text. The appropriate timing of the introduction of these words will depend on the prior experiences and knowledge of the students. The pace at which they are taught will also depend on the student's knowledge and experiences. It is important that students have time and experiences to learn each word, so that they do not become confused by the introduction of too many words too soon. Some students will need many opportunities for practice of each word. Those students who are ready to move on to learning new words should be extended.

*First Steps* (2005) can provide relevant ideas to further support teaching and learning experiences with high frequency words, for example Chapters 4 and 5 in [The Writing Map of Development \(WMD\)](#) and the [Reading Map of Development \(RMD\)](#).

## HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

Various lists of frequently used words have been compiled. A relatively recent list of one hundred of the most frequently used words in student's reading materials, in order of frequency, can be seen below in Table 4. It is expected that students will begin learning these words in Pre-primary (some students may know some of these words before Pre-primary) and that all 100 words will be learnt by most students by the end of Year 1. Some students will have learnt them all before the end of Year 1. These students may be introduced to words in other word lists, such as the Fry Word Lists. Some students will need to practise even the simplest of these words many times and in many different contexts.

TABLE 4.

100 HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS IN ORDER				
1. the	21. that	41. not	61. look	81. put
2. and	22. with	42. then	62. don't	82. could
3. a	23. all	43. were	63. come	83. house
4. to	24. we	44. go	64. will	84. old
5. said	25. can	45. little	65. into	85. too
6. in	26. are	46. as	66. back	86. by
7. he	27. up	47. no	67. from	87. day
8. I	28. had	48. mum	68. students	88. made
9. of	29. my	49. one	69. him	89. time
10. it	30. her	50. them	70. Mr	90. I'm
11. was	31. what	51. do	71. get	91. if
12. you	32. there	52. me	72. just	92. help
13. they	33. out	53. down	73. now	93. Mrs
14. on	34. this	54. dad	74. came	94. called
15. she	35. have	55. big	75. oh	95. here
16. is	36. went	56. when	76. about	96. off
17. for	37. be	57. it's	77. got	97. asked
18. at	38. like	58. see	78. their	98. saw
19. his	39. some	59. looked	79. people	99. make
20. but	40. so	60. very	80. your	100. an

100 high frequency words in student's reading materials.

Table from: Masterson, J., et al, (2003), as reproduced in Department for Education and Skills (2007). *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics – Appendix 1*, reproduced under terms of the Click-Use Licence.



# INTRODUCING HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- ▶ Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment in which students have been encouraged to focus on words, the sound of
- ▶ words, syllables and rhymes
- ▶ Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, storytelling and book sharing sessions
- ▶ Phonemic awareness, including blending and segmenting, and some sound-letter knowledge

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Understanding and use of high frequency words

#### Content description:

- ▶ Know how to read and write some high-frequency words and other familiar words (ACELA1817).
- ▶ Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge (ACELY1651).
- ▶ Construct texts using software including word processing programs (ACELY1654).
- ▶ Re-read student's own texts and discuss possible changes to improve meaning, spelling and punctuation (ACELY1662).
- ▶ Use visual memory to read and write high-frequency words (ACELA1821).

## WHAT TEACHERS DO

### Explicit teaching focus

Outline of a suggested procedure for beginning the explicit teaching of high frequency words.

#### Introduction: Providing a context

The teaching of high frequency words may be introduced in the context of a big book reading. After reading and discussion, the teacher may re-read some sentences containing the word is, emphasising the word and having the students repeat the sentences.

#### Explaining the purpose and outcome

The teacher explains that 'was' is the special word to be learnt today as lots of sentences contain this word. Learning this word will help students read and write sentences.

## WHAT STUDENTS DO

### Learning activities (practice and consolidation)

Learning activities for practice should be purposeful and focused. The teacher and teacher assistant can focus student's attention on the words being learnt and ensure many opportunities for practice in different contexts.

Students go on a print walk around the room or to the class library to find the words they are learning in books, on labels, notices, captions etc.

#### [Morning Message \(WMD, p. 78\)](#)

Short lists of 'words we know' can be posted in the classroom and used as a resource for writing. If the words on the list are removable (using magnets) the teacher and students can use them individually in teaching and learning activities.

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Focus questions

- ▶ Can the student use the high frequency word in oral language?
- ▶ Can the student read the high frequency word?
- ▶ Can the student write the high frequency word?
- ▶ Can the student write a sentence containing the high frequency word?

Checklists for each group of words taught are most important and need to take into account that some students will be able to read and write many of the words that have not been taught.

# INTRODUCING HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>The learning of high frequency words will take place throughout Pre-primary and Year 1. The sequence begins with some of the most frequent words that will be most useful to the students. A sequence could begin with, <i>I, a, the, was, of</i>.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Read high frequency words, ‘a’, ‘I’, ‘the’, ‘and’, ‘to’, ‘was’, ‘of’.</li> <li>› Write high frequently words</li> <li>› Use high frequency words appropriately in oral and written language</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuning in</b></p> <p>The teacher asks the students if they can think of a sentence containing the word <i>was</i> and explain that the purpose is to learn to read and write the word <i>is</i>. A possible sentence is ‘Jim was sad.’</p> <p><b>Explicitly teaching the concept/skill</b></p> <p>The teacher models the writing of the sentence containing <i>is</i>, saying each word slowly and deliberately: ‘Jim was sad’, and then reads the sentence aloud, pointing to each word.</p> <p>The teacher may ask the students to point to and read each word: ‘Which word is <i>Jim</i>? Which word is <i>was</i>? Which word is <i>happy</i>?’ The teacher cuts the sentence into words, and asks the students to read the individual words.</p>	<p><b>Word Back Spied Her (RMD, p. 127)</b></p> <p>Students can trace the words in sand or finger paint and write them in the writing area with a variety of pencils, chalks and crayons.</p> <p>They may also type them on a tablet or computer and make labels and other meaningful messages.</p> <p>Other activities: Include sand writing tables at outdoor play so students can practise a tactile, kinaesthetic approach to learning the target high frequency words.</p> <p>Students make the words with magnetic letters and in generic games such as Scrabble.</p> <p><b>Generic Games (WMD, pp. 80-83)</b></p> <p><b>Generic Games 2 (WMD, pp. 120-129)</b></p> <p>With the teacher or teacher assistant the students can make their own little books with a repetitive decodable pattern that uses one or more of the high frequency words learnt: for example: ‘I can...’; ‘I like to .....’</p> <p>Class News Book (WMD, p. 55)</p>	<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>These words should be practised many times so that they are recalled and recognised <b>automatically</b>. If words are written on individual cards and shown for a few seconds to students, teachers can check the speed of response.</p>

# INTRODUCING HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Teacher note</b></p> <p>It is suggested that the most frequently used words are taught first. All of the 100 high frequency words are very useful for student's reading and writing and should be systematically taught over time.</p> <p>The contextualised learning of high frequency words for reading and writing may involve learning about sentences and the ways in which words go together in a sentence.</p>	<p><b>Multi-sensory learning</b></p> <p>A multi-sensory approach can be used to teach high frequency words. The teacher asks the students to <b>listen</b> to the word as they <b>hear</b> it said, and <b>look</b> while it is written. The students then <b>say</b> the word as they <b>trace</b> it in the air and on the floor and then they <b>write</b> it on their individual whiteboards.</p> <p>For relatively decodable words such as is, the students can sound the word as they write.</p> <p><b>Practice in a new context</b></p> <p>The teacher models another grammatically similar sentence, for example 'Lee was jumping' and the students read and write it on their whiteboards or digital device.</p>	<p>After big book reading and discussion the teacher can cover up one or more high frequency words to make a cloze activity where the students have to predict what the covered word/s will be.</p> <p>Other activities: Develop a 'Playing Schools' centre. Add writing materials to other dramatic play centres (eg construction area, cafeteria, home corner).</p> <p><a href="#">Postcards (WMD, p. 54)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Creative Corners (WMD, p. 103)</a></p> <p>Other activities: Fishing Game – students can use magnet rods to fish for magnetic high frequency words. Students need to have many successful experiences of reading and writing meaningful connected text. As high frequency words occur so often they will be encountered many, many times in meaningful connected text.</p>	

# INTRODUCING HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p><b>Development, practice, extension and assessment</b></p> <p>In following practice sessions, the teacher asks individual students to say and write a sentence using the same sentence format '[Name] is...'. Each student's sentence can be compiled into a class book. The teacher monitors and assesses the student's knowledge of is as they write.</p> <p>Once is has been learnt the students can learn the other words in the group <i>I, to, the, a, and, was, of</i> in a similar way. As the students become familiar with the words, the teacher models the writing of labels for the room, for example 'the door', 'a picture'.</p>	<p>Learning these words will make reading and writing much easier for students. Some teachers find it useful to display the group of words on the classroom door so that they can be regularly practised during transitions.</p>	

# DEVELOPING A TEACHING SEQUENCE FOR HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

## IMPORTANT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THIS SEQUENCE OF LEARNING:

- ▶ Experience of a rich oral language and literacy environment in which students have been encouraged to focus on words, the sound of words, syllables and rhymes
- ▶ Participation in a variety of experiences involving songs, rhymes, oral language games, story telling and book sharing sessions
- ▶ Phonemic awareness, including blending and segmenting, and some sound-letter knowledge

## WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

### Developing the sequence of High frequency words: decodable words, for example *can, went, help*

Content description:

- ▶ Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).
- ▶ Know how to read and write some high-frequency words and other familiar words (ACELA1817).

### Skills

- ▶ Read high frequency decodable words, for example *can, went, help*
- ▶ Write high frequency decodable words, for example *can, went, help*
- ▶ Use high frequency decodable words in oral and written language, for example *can, went, help*

## WHAT TEACHERS DO

Once students are able to blend and segment phonemes in words, they can apply these skills to decodable high frequency words.

### Explicit teaching

The teacher models segmenting and blending when writing the word to be taught, by stretching out the sounds and then blending the sounds together. It is helpful if the teacher holds up one finger for each phoneme as it is pronounced (3 fingers for *can*; 4 fingers for *went* and *help*).

The teacher explains that these are very important words as they are in many books and that students write them often in stories.

## WHAT STUDENTS DO

Students will need many opportunities for practising high frequency words. Most of the practice activities outlined for the beginning of the teaching sequence will still be appropriate. The following suggestions for activities from *First Steps* are very useful, provided that students understand the literacy purpose (to practise specific important words) and that student's involvement in them is monitored.

### Jumping over puddles

Make 'puddles' from card and laminate; write high frequency words on them so that they may be used a number of times. Place them across the classroom floor and have the students jump over them, saying the words as they go.

## HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?

### Focus questions

- ▶ Can the student use high frequency decodable words in oral and written language?
- ▶ Can the student read high frequency decodable words?
- ▶ Can the student write high frequency decodable words?

### Focus questions

- ▶ Can the student use high frequency words in oral and written language?
- ▶ Can the student write high frequency words?

# DEVELOPING A TEACHING SEQUENCE FOR HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
<p><b>Developing the sequence of high frequency words: for example <i>said, was, little, you, they, are</i></b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Read high frequency words, for example <i>said, was, little, you, they, are</i></li> <li>▶ Write high frequency words, for example <i>said, was, little, you, they, are</i></li> <li>▶ Use high frequency words in oral and written language, for example <i>said, was, little, you, they, are</i></li> </ul>	<p>Some words are difficult to decode and spell, students will need highly focused explicit teaching. Some students, particularly if they have some difficulties in learning words, may continue to benefit from the <b>Multi-sensory learning</b> procedure outlined in the previous section</p> <p><b>Introducing High frequency words.</b></p> <p>It is important that the word to be taught is introduced within the context of a book and a modelled sentence.</p> <p><b>Explicit multi-sensory teaching</b></p> <p>The teacher focuses on the word to be learnt within the context of a sentence and writes it separately from the sentence. The teacher orally segments the word (/s/, /ai/, /d/), putting up one finger for each of the three phonemes as they are pronounced, and then blends the word. The students then write the word several times as they segment it aloud.</p>	<p><b>Soap boxes</b></p> <p>Give students small containers into which they put cards on which are written the words they are learning. They can take these home to practise, as well as revisiting them in spare moments during the day. Encourage students to play games with their particular words.</p> <p><b>Word folders</b></p> <p>Provide each student with a folder that has six pockets. Place up to six high frequency words in the first pocket. When a word can be identified, move it to the second pocket. Repeat this daily until each word has reached pocket six. After six successful identifications, remove the word and enter it into the student's permanent word bank. As words are removed from pocket six, add new words to pocket one.</p> <p>Students may take their word folders home for practice.</p>	

# DEVELOPING A TEACHING SEQUENCE FOR HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN	WHAT TEACHERS DO	WHAT STUDENTS DO	HOW WILL TEACHERS KNOW WHAT THEIR STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT?
	<p><b>Writing</b> the word at the same time as <b>saying</b> the word is a very important strategy in this sequence. The teacher then adds the <b>visual</b> strategy of asking the students to make a picture in their minds of the word (the combination of the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic strategy is important for automatic learning of these words). The word is then put back into the context of a sentence and regularly practised.</p> <p><b>Development and Extension</b></p> <p>Modelled, shared and guided reading and writing provide excellent contexts for talking about words and supporting the development of high frequency words. In modelled reading each student can be provided with a copy of the text to read silently as the teacher reads aloud. After the reading, the teacher asks the students to find specific high frequency words in their text copy.</p>	<p><b>Tactile experiences</b></p> <p>Students may practise writing the words, in a range of different tactile experiences, for example, writing them with finger paint, in sand, tracing over sandpaper letters or on digital devices. These activities will help the students recognize the words automatically.</p>	



## SECTION 6

# Teaching spelling

### Awareness of morphemes for spelling words

This brief section on knowledge of morphemes as a support for spelling words has been included in the sequence as it addresses the Western Australian Curriculum: English Year 1 Content Description:

*Recognise and know how to use simple grammatical morphemes to create word families (ACELA1455). For example 'play' in 'played' and 'playing'.*

Knowledge about morphemes is particularly important for understanding vocabulary and grammar. And in the English writing system, which has only a relatively consistent match of graphemes to phonemes, the analysis of words into morphemes can be one of a number of effective strategies for spelling and reading. Morphemes are defined in the English Curriculum glossary as:

'...the smallest meaningful or grammatical unit in language. Morphemes are not necessarily the same as words. The word 'cat' has one morpheme, while the word 'cats' has two morphemes: 'cat' for the animal and 's' to indicate that there is more than one. Similarly, 'like' has one morpheme, while 'dislike' has two: 'like' to describe appreciation and 'dis' to indicate the opposite.

Morphemes are very useful in helping students work out how to read and spell words.'

Morphemes can be:

- ▶ base words, such as 'pack' or root words, such as 'aqua'
- ▶ prefixes (word beginnings) such as 'dis',
- ▶ suffixes (word endings) such as 'ed',

When these three morphemes are combined they make up the word 'disliked'.

In Pre-primary and Year 1, teaching and learning

about morphemes as parts of words is often informal and arises as students engage in oral and written activities. It is one part of 'word consciousness' that involves 'being aware of words, interested in them and curious and motivated enough to want to learn about them' (Fellowes & Oakley, 2010, p. 259).

Word consciousness for spelling and reading may be encouraged when students play with words and parts of words in games such as Junior Scrabble and Pictionary. Various First Steps word activities can be used to help students become aware of particular morphemes within words. Creating Word Walls with students (RMD pp. 73-74) can help them build word families from familiar base words. For example from the base word 'play' the teacher and students can add other morphemes to make: 'plays', 'playing', 'played', 'playtime', 'playground', 'playgroup', 'PlayStation', and so on.

Beginning awareness of high frequency morphemes may also be fostered in discussion

of word use in modelled and shared writing, and in shared editing of student's own writing. The use of the suffix (word ending) 'ed', that frequently<sup>1</sup> signals the past tense in a recount, can be highlighted and discussed. For example:

'Yesterday we visited the playground. We hopped, we skipped, we jumped, and we climbed up the slide'.

In discussing the spelling of the verbs in these sentences, it will be important to point out that in two of them ('hopped', and 'skipped') the letter 'p' at the end of the *base* word before the 'ed' needs to be doubled. Another issue for spelling that may be discussed when appropriate, is variation in pronunciation of the 'ed' word ending, for 'hopped', 'skipped' and 'jumped' (/t/), 'climbed' (/d/) and 'visited' (usually /e/, /d/ in Australian English.)

Another high frequency morpheme is the plural ending 's', or 'es', which when added to the *base* word 'dog', becomes 'dogs', and when added to the *base* word 'dish', becomes 'dishes'.

Recognition and use of high frequency morphemes can be encouraged through adaptation of the following First Steps activities to focus specifically on morphemes:

**Word sorting activities (RMD, pp. 74-75).** Words can be sorted into morphemic categories, for example containing/not containing the word ending 'ing', or one of several word endings such as 'ed', 'ing', 's'.

**Magic Words (RMD, p. 77).** 'I am looking for a word that ends in 's' (or 'ed', or 'ing'). 'I am looking for a word that starts with 'in'.

**Cloze Activities (RMD, pp. 78-79).** The covered words could be base words, word endings, or as students learn more morphemes, word beginnings.

1 There are some very high frequency verbs that do not take the 'ed' word ending in the past tense, such as 'was', 'went', 'saw', 'came', 'did', 'had', 'got'. These will need to be discussed in terms of grammar, vocabulary and spelling as and when appropriate.

Written by Emeritus Professor Judith Rivalland  
Edith Cowan University, 2009

# Teaching Spelling

Know how to read and write some high-frequency words and other familiar words (ACELA1817).

Participate in shared editing of students' own texts for meaning, spelling, capital letters and full stops (ACELY1652).

Understand that a letter can represent more than one sound and that a syllable must contain a vowel sound (ACELA1459).

Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778).

Recognise and know how to use simple grammatical morphemes to create word families (ACELA1455).

Use visual memory to read and write high-frequency words (ACELA1821).

## WHY IS SPELLING IMPORTANT?

Written Language skills are one of the most crucial factors determining academic success (Prior, 1996).

Social judgements regarding character and reasoning abilities are often based on spelling mistakes, so effective spellers gain cultural capital through knowing how to spell.

Spelling automaticity is essential. When spelling is not automatic, students use most of their cognitive space thinking about spelling instead of the content of what they write. Therefore, learning to be an efficient and automatic speller by the time students reach middle primary is very important in terms of facilitating effective and cohesive writing.

## WHAT DO TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SPELLING?

- a. It is important for spelling to be taught specifically and explicitly outside of the context of writing and reading.

However, learning to spell facilitates learning to read and write and similarly learning to read and write helps students learn to spell. So it is also important to allow students to read and write regularly.

b. English spelling (orthographic knowledge) has three layers (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2008):

- ① **Alphabetic** – spelling represents the relationships between letters and sounds
- ② **Patterns** – English spelling sometimes represents sounds with more than one letter, so there are layers of patterns that have been adopted. Some of them are from old English, some from Latin and some from Greek or Renaissance words. These patterns also include syllabic knowledge
- ③ **Meaning** – groups of letters represent meaning and when meaning is the same, spelling is the same. Morphemes are the smallest units of meaning in English and morphemic knowledge helps facilitate effective spelling.

c. Effective spellers have the following skills and knowledge, which they use interactively as they spell:

**Phonological awareness** (explicit awareness of the sound structure of the English language) – this includes hearing:

- ⓧ Rhyme
- ⓧ Syllables
- ⓧ Onset-rime d-og
- ⓧ Phonemes d-o-g

**Alphabet knowledge** - Knowing the letters of the alphabet

**Sound/letter correspondence** – knowing how to map sounds on to letters

**High frequency word knowledge** – knowledge of words that have evolved irregularly and must be learnt through practice of the critical visual features in these words (these words often include many of the most commonly used words in the English language, such as those found in the Dolch Sight Word List)

**Patterns within words** – knowing different letter sequences or patterns used to represent different sounds

**Syllables and Affixes** (Prefixes and Suffixes) – knowing about syllable junctures and inflected endings (addition of a morpheme as in jump – ed or hoping)

**Meaning relations** – the knowledge of the derivation of words, base words and root words and the understanding that if meaning is the same, spelling patterns will be the same. Dictionary skills are an important part of this knowledge.

d. Explicit teaching of spelling strategies is essential

Spelling strategies are not teaching activities. They refer to the in-head (meta-cognitive) strategies spellers use interactively in order to spell correctly. The explicit teaching of a range of strategies is essential for the development of effective spelling. It is important to note that students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds, including Australian Aboriginal students, may have difficulty in hearing some of the phonemes of English. These students will need to be encouraged to use visual patterns, critical features of words, morphological knowledge and the meaning-base of words (also outlined) to compensate for poor phonological analysis skills. However, such students also need to be supported to learn to ‘hear’ the sounds in English words.

Strategy instruction is most effective when it is based on the developmental needs of students, usually demonstrated through the analysis of errors they make.

## SPELLING STRATEGIES

### I. Phonemic and graphophonic strategies

Teach students to listen for the sequential order of sounds in a word. If students ask how a particular word is spelt, prepare a frame that helps them know how many sounds are needed. Then tell them how many letters there are in the word. Begin by asking students to map one sound against one letter and then as students develop their understandings move on to teaching students that sometimes two or more letters represent a sound. For young students this can be done with plastic letters. As the students learn to form the letters they can write the letters in the word frames:

--	--	--	--	--

s	t	o	p	
---	---	---	---	--

d	u	ck		
---	---	----	--	--

- Teach students that letter-sound correlation is different in different words. They need to learn that:

One letter can represent a number of sounds (eg *cat, able, car, probable, apparent, father, any*).

The same sound can be represented by different letters (eg *the sound in lay – ate, ray, rain, obey, steak, veil, gauge, reign*).

Teach students that sounds can be represented by one or more symbols. Ask students the following types of questions.

What is the first sound you hear?

What letter(s) can be used for that sound? In which box should it be written?

Parts of syllables in words can be taught by using syllable boxes. Students then learn that the different syllables in a word must occur in the correct sequence. Many older students find multi-syllabic words difficult as they miss out one or two of the middle phonemes or syllables in a word.

### II. Patterns in words

Teach students to look for patterns or letter sequences in words.

- Word sorting and categorising activities are useful. Ensure that explicit discussion about patterns and generalisations takes place as students are sorting words into categories.
- Encourage students to focus on common sequential letter patterns. That is, encourage them to talk about which particular letters in the English language are most likely to follow other letters or sets of letters.
- Help students look for the common patterns in words. Mark them as you write them (eg *need, feed, seed*). Relate the spelling of new words to known word patterns and ask students to predict the pattern that might be used.
- Encourage students to group words containing common patterns (eg *other, brother, mother, bother*).

### III. Visual memory

Teach students that words must not only sound right, but they must also look right. This should not be done until students can hear all of the phonemes in words and know how to represent these with a letter or letters. Once students have the capacity to hear all of the sounds and syllables in words then:

- ▶ Encourage them to use taught phonemes and graphemes to spell accurately. When they feel a word does not look right, they can test and experiment with possible alternatives, until they think it looks right. Model this process on the blackboard/whiteboard, chart paper at easel, on paper in a one-to-one mini-conference.
- ▶ Encourage students to quickly build up a spelling vocabulary of high frequency words.
- ▶ Identify the **critical features** of words (i.e. the most significant features and patterns).
- ▶ Assist students to develop automaticity through repeated writing.

- ▶ Give students try out cards. As they write, they jot down difficult to spell words on these cards, then quickly keep on writing. **When they have finished their writing,** they can experiment with alternate ways of spelling the words and/or check them with a dictionary or teacher.
- ▶ Mnemonics can be used to help students remember different words:

Place names all have **here** in them – here, there, where and everywhere.

Questions begin with **wh** – who, where, what, when, why.

My **pal** is the principal.

- ▶ Visual imagery can be reinforced by encouraging students to ‘feel’ (by tracing on the desk) the way a word is written on the board. The movement will reinforce the visual picture.

*For more information about teaching spelling see the spelling booklets written for Years 2/3, Years 4/5, and Years 6/7.*

## High frequency words: Individual checklist

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
--------------	--------------

1	the		21	that		41	not		61	look		81	put	
2	and		22	with		42	then		62	don't		82	could	
3	a		23	all		43	were		63	come		83	house	
4	to		24	we		44	go		64	will		84	old	
5	said		25	can		45	little		65	into		85	too	
6	in		26	are		46	as		66	back		86	by	
7	he		27	up		47	no		67	from		87	day	
8	I		28	had		48	mum		68	students		88	made	
9	of		29	my		49	one		69	him		89	time	
10	it		30	her		50	them		70	Mr		90	I'm	
11	was		31	what		51	do		71	get		91	if	
12	you		32	there		52	me		72	just		92	help	
13	they		33	out		53	down		73	now		93	Mrs	
14	on		34	this		54	dad		74	came		94	called	
15	she		35	have		55	big		75	oh		95	here	
16	is		36	went		56	when		76	about		96	off	
17	for		37	be		57	It's		77	got		97	asked	
18	at		38	like		58	see		78	their		98	saw	
19	his		39	some		59	looked		79	people		99	make	
20	but		40	so		60	very		80	your		100	an	