



Sounds-Write: A guide for parents (Reception)

What is Sounds-Write?

At our school, we teach phonics using a linguistic phonics programme called Sounds-Write – a proven Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme validated by the Department for Education (DfE). It is based on the science of reading and provides a structured, cumulative, and code-oriented approach to teaching reading and spelling. It starts with what children learn naturally, the sounds of their own language, and teaches them to represent those sounds in writing. Sounds-Write is a complete phonics curriculum that teaches the skills, concepts, and code knowledge necessary for children to read and spell.

What will my child learn in Reception?

In Reception, children are taught the 'Initial Code' in daily phonics lessons. We will be introducing these sounds in the following order:

NB. Sounds-Write always shows sounds between forward slashes / / and spellings inside chevron brackets < >.

Unit 1 a, i, m, s, t	/a/ as in 'cat', /i/ as in 'pin', /m/ as in 'map', /s/ as in 'sip' and /t/ as in 'ten'
Unit 2 n, o, p	/n/ as in 'not', /o/ as in 'pop', and /p/ as in 'pen'
Unit 3 b, c, g, h	/b/ as in 'big', /k/ as in 'cup', /g/ as in 'get', and /h/ as in 'hen'

Unit 4 d, f, v, e	/d/ as in 'dog', /f/ as in 'fun', /v/ as in 'vet', and /e/ as in 'leg'
Unit 5 k, l, r, u	/k/ as in 'kit', /l/ as in 'leg', /r/ as in 'run', and /u/ as in 'bun'
Unit 6 j, w, z	/j/ as in 'jug', /w/ as in 'wig', and /z/ as in 'zip'
Unit 7 x, y, ff, ll, ss, zz	< x > represents two sounds /k/ /s/ as in 'box' /y/ as in 'yes' < ff > spells /f/ as in 'huff', < ll > spells /l/ as in 'hill', < ss > spells /s/ as in 'miss', < zz > spells /z/ as in 'buzz'

Every two weeks or so, we'll begin a new unit and build the new sounds into what we have already introduced. We always talk about 'sounds', so please help by using sounds with your child rather than letter names. We also use precise language. For example, we say that letters 'spell' or 'represent' sounds rather than 'make' or 'say' sounds.

To begin with, children are taught to segment, blend and manipulate sounds in two- and three-sound words, such as 'mat'. Later, they are also taught that some spellings can be written with two of the same letter (e.g. < ll >) in words such as 'fill'.

After this, children begin to read and spell words with more than three sounds. They also learn that some sounds can be written with two different letters (e.g. < sh >) and sounds can be represented by more than one spelling (e.g. /ch/ can be spelt as < ch > in 'church' and as < tch > in 'watch').

When is Sounds-Write taught?

Children in Reception have a 30-minute Sounds-Write session every day. Some children require more time and practice when learning to read and spell, and provision is made for

them through 'keep-up' and 'catch-up' intervention sessions in addition to the whole class phonics sessions.

How can I help my child to learn to read and spell?

School and home can work together to support your child's learning. Here are some ways in which you can help at home.

Saying the sounds

We want your child to learn that letters are symbols that represent sounds. When they see the letters < m > < a > < t >, we want them to say and hear the sounds /m/ /a/ /t/ and then blend those sounds to say and hear the word 'mat'. Your child needs to say the sounds aloud and **listen** to hear the word. They need to learn to say the sounds very carefully – this means saying /m/ and not 'muh' when they see the spelling < m >.

You can help your child by modelling the correct way to say the sounds. You may want to watch this video to see how your child will be learning to say the sounds:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8ZMfYjdN-s>

Writing the spellings of the sounds

After your child has said the sounds and read the word, ask them to write the word saying each sound as they do this. You can model doing this when you write a word, too.

Playing games with sounds

Playing games with the sounds in words is great fun and can help your child to understand that the words they use in everyday speech are made up of sounds and can be pulled apart (segmented) and put back together (blended). You can try this at home with words such as 'sat' segmented as /s/ /a/ /t/ and then blended as 'sat'. It can also be done with names such as 'Jack', segmented as /j/ /a/ /k/ and blended as 'Jack' or 'Emily' segmented as /e/ /m/ /i/ /l/ /ee/ and blended as 'Emily'. If you are not sure, just read the word, close your eyes and say the sounds in the word to yourself.

Reading with your child

When you are sharing a book with your child, do all of the things you would usually do when reading for enjoyment, such as talking about the story, discussing the characters, predicting what is going to happen next and so on.

Supporting your child with reading practice is the best way to help them learn and grow in confidence as a reader. Your child will have specific reading books ('decodable books') to help them practise at home. Encourage your child to say the sounds and listen for the word when they are reading these books.

If your child needs some help when they are reading you can:

- Encourage them to use their finger under the word from left to right.
- Ask them to 'say the sounds and read the word'.
- Tell them to 'listen' for the word as they say the sounds.
- If they need more help, tell them the sounds in the word and ask them to listen and blend them to say the whole word.

A free course for parents/carers

We encourage all parents/carers to access the free Sounds-Write online course so that they are well informed about how best to support their children with reading and spelling at home. Please visit: <https://sounds-write.co.uk/support-for-parents-and-carers/> for more information.

If you have any questions about reading and spelling, please do not hesitate to speak with your child's class teacher.