

Phase 4 Phonics: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

This step-by-step explanation to phase 4 phonics can help you support your child's learning at home. Each subject is broken down into manageable chunks, providing you with a simple guide to follow when exploring phonics together, either as part of homework or if you decide to give your child some extra support. Whether your child is recapping and learning new phonemes (sounds), in single letter form or in digraphs (sounds represented by two letters) and trigraphs (sounds represented by three letters), or they are beginning to blend sounds into clusters (sounds that often appear together and almost produce a sound of their own - for example, 'tr' is actually the sound 't' and 'r' blended, but almost makes a sound together) and identifying tricky words that are used regularly in sentences (including words like 'said', 'one' and 'some'), you will find a step that matches where your child is at, then have ideas for where to go next.

Within **this area of the website**, you will find a selection of resources intended to help your child learn about each step of this guide. Each step also contains a keyword or phrase that you can use to search the Twinkl site for more resources and activities, designed to support your child in achieving that stage. Simply type the keyword or phrase into the search bar and press enter to explore together. more resources and activities, designed to support your child in achieving that stage. Simply type the keyword or phrase into the search bar and press enter to explore together.



We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. The contents of this resource are for general, informational purposes only. This guide is intended to offer parents general guidance on what subject areas tend to be covered in their child's year group and where they could support their children at home. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. There are some subject areas that we have intentionally not covered due to the nature of how they are taught or because a trained professional needs to teach these areas. We try to ensure that the information in our resources is correct but every school teaches the national curriculum in its own way. If you would like further guidance or are unsure in any way, we recommend that you speak to your child's teacher or another suitably qualified professional.

Phase 4 Phonics

What Is Phonics?

Phonics is the process of learning to read using sounds and symbols that combine to create a phonetic alphabet that can be used to blend words together. At this stage, your child will probably recap and practise the range of phonemes (sounds) that they have studied so far. They will practise identifying the single grapheme, digraph and trigraph sounds (sounds represented by one, two or three letters). For example, s, a, t, p, ch, ai, ee, ow, air, ear.

What Phonics Language Do I Need to Know?

The language of phonics is very specific and involves more than just phonemes (sounds in words) learnt in previous phases. Graphemes are the letters or groups of letters that represent a sound. Digraphs refer to the sounds represented by two letters combined; trigraphs are represented by three letters combined.

In previous phases, your child will most likely have been blending and segmenting CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words such as dog, tin or leg, CCVC (consonant, consonant, vowel, consonant) words like clap, drag or chip and CVCC (consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant) words such as cash, burn or doll.

Which Elements of Phonics Are Learnt in Phase 4?

In previous phases, your child will have learnt about blending together several sounds to create increasingly complex words. The reverse of blending is segmenting. Rather than taking separate sounds and combining them to form words, segmenting involves breaking down a word into the sounds that make it. This is a useful way for your child to begin exploring spelling patterns of simple words.

When exploring blending in phase 4, your child may begin to form sound clusters. These are when single letter sounds are joined together to almost make a sound of their own. For example, 'nd' in the word stand almost sounds like a single sound, but actually consists of 'n' and 'd' blended together. These clusters are great for using when reading and blending words containing more phonemes.

Phase 4 also builds on your child's phonics knowledge through nonsense words. These are words that are not real, but require your child to use their phonics knowledge to break them down and read them. For example, reading the word 'phoyb' consists of the cluster 'ph' and the sounds 'oy' and 'b' to read the whole word. This is a good skill for your child to learn to practise sounding out unfamiliar words in the future. Some words in the stories and texts they read will seem like nonsense words to them and being able to use their phonics knowledge to decode these is a key skill.

As well as using the resources found in the Phase 4 Phonics category and the keyword searches suggested, this guide offers a few ideas for games and activities to help your child with exploring phonics.



Phase 4 Phonics

Rub out the Word

On a whiteboard or piece of paper, write down a selection of words containing the sounds your child has been learning (including digraphs and trigraphs). To play, say one of the words out loud. Your child has to find the word as quickly as they can, read it and rub (or cross) it out. Repeat for different words until they are all gone.

If you want to do this activity outside, you could use chalk to write on the pavement and a dustpan brush to rub away.

Phonic Water Object Hunt

Fill a container (e.g. bucket or washing up bowl etc) with water and place a variety of objects inside whose names contain the sounds that your child has been learning. Next to the container, write some phonic sounds on a piece of paper. One at a time, your child can pull an object out of the water and place it next to the corresponding phonic sounds (that it begins with or contains). Continue until all the objects have been taken out of the water.

Phonics Baskets

In a series of baskets (or other suitable containers), place a written phonics sound (e.g. ch, ear, s). Using playdough, your child can build different objects that contain the phonics sound and place it into the correct basket. For example, for the sound 'ch', your child could build a chicken, chip or torch.

I Spy Phoneme Hunt

I Spy is a great game to play with your child when practising phonics. Rather than searching for words that begin with a certain letter, your child could try spotting words that contain a specific sound. For example, "I spy with my little eye, something with the phoneme -ee."



Step 1

Phase 4 Graphemes

Graphemes are the letter representations of phonemes, which are the sounds used in phonics to help your child learn to read. Specifically, graphemes refer to the written form of sounds represented by a single letter. By the end of phase 4, your child will hopefully have been able to recognise all the graphemes and will be working on becoming fully accurate when identifying them on sight. Sound mats are a great way to help your child practise identifying the phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) used in phase 4 phonics.

Phase 4 Digraphs and Trigraphs

Not all phonetic sounds are represented by single letters. Some can be represented by two letters together, e.g. ee, ai, ch and sh. It is during phase 4 of phonics that your child will hopefully become fully familiar with these digraphs (sounds with two graphemes or letters). They will start to identify and say the sound that corresponds to each digraph, becoming more familiar with them as time progresses. As well as grapheme and digraph sounds, there are also trigraphs that your child will learn. Trigraphs are sounds that are represented by three written letters together, e.g. air, igh or ear. It is during this step that your child will be working towards accurately recognising and naming these increasingly complex sounds. Recapping the digraphs and trigraphs from phase 3 by using sound mats is a nice way for your child to become more and more familiar with identifying sounds and helping them to get faster at this.

Step 2

Step 3

Phase 4 Blends and Clusters

Phonics clusters are pairs of letters that when blended together, almost form a sound of their own. For example, the 'lf' in the word shelf blended together almost sounds like a separate phoneme, but is actually made up of the sounds 'l' and 'f'. During phase 4, your child will blend these clusters more accurately and recognise different words that contain them. This read and race board game encourages your child to read a variety of words containing many different clusters and have fun while practising this skill.

Step 4

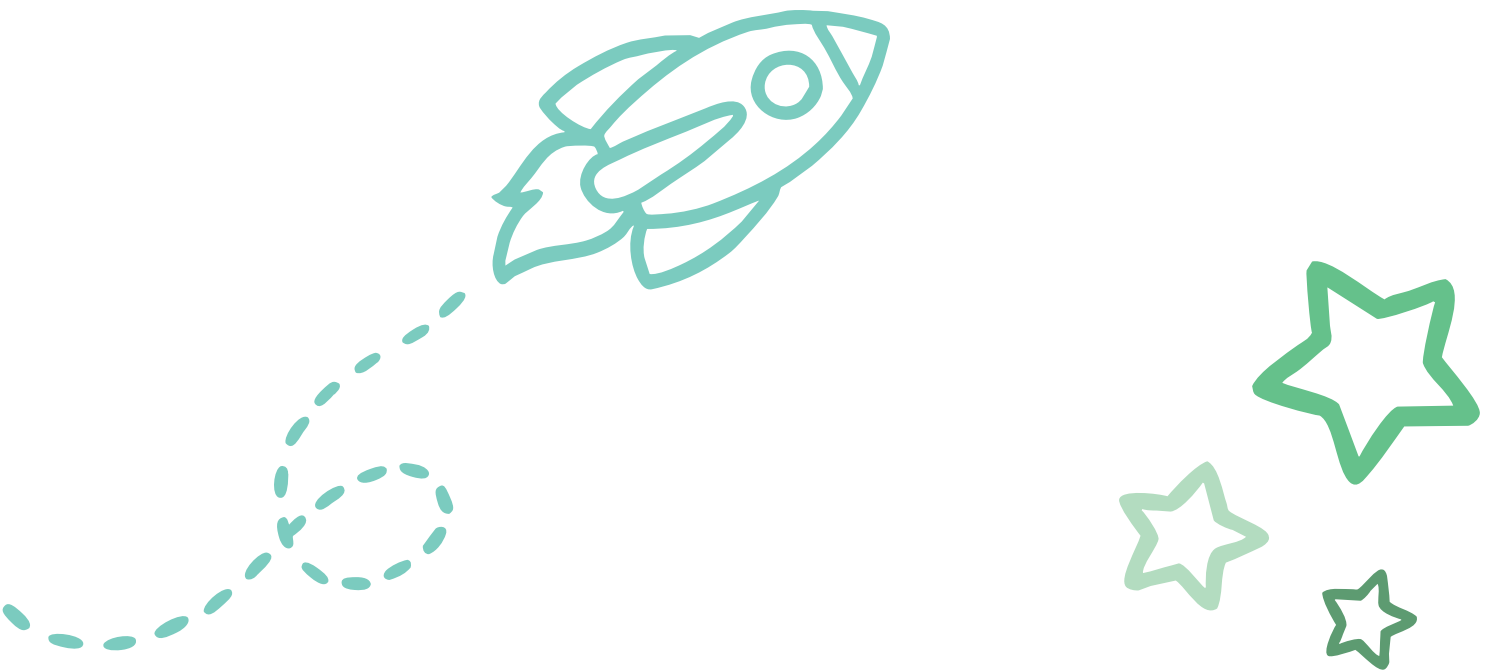
Phase 4 Blending and Segmenting

Blending is the process of combining letters together to form words. At this step, your child will probably be focusing on blending words that contain four or five sounds, e.g. 'b-l-i-n-k', 's-n-a-ck' and 'b-r-ow-n'. Segmenting is the reverse of blending. In blending, your child combines sounds together to form words. With segmenting, your child hears a word and identifies the different sounds that make up that word. This is a good way for your child to practise not only the phonics sounds they have learnt so far, but also to breakdown spelling patterns and rules. This blending snakes and ladders board game is a fun way for your child to practise using blending at home.

Phase 4 Tricky Words

Tricky words are ones that don't necessarily follow the phonics rules, but appear often in common sentences. They contain groups of letters that make unique or different sounds to the ones your child would expect if they were to use blending or segmenting. As these words don't follow the normal phonics rules, your child will need to memorise them and learn to read them on sight. Phase 4 Tricky words include 'said', 'like', 'some', 'come', 'there', 'little', 'one', 'when' and 'what'. Tricky word flashcards and word mats can be an effective way of practising reading these words on sight.

Step 5

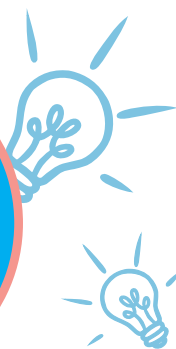


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