




Phonics Terminology

The following are words used in phonics teaching.

blend (verb)	To put individual phonemes (sounds) together to read a word e.g. sh-i-p blended together makes 'ship'.			
common exemption words	These are common words that are the 'tricky words'. They are words which may be exceptions to spelling rules, or words which use a particular combination of letters to represent sound patterns in a rare or unique way, for example 'because'.			
digraph	Two letters, which together make one sound. A consonant digraph contains two consonants: sh ck th ll A vowel digraph contains at least one vowel: ai ee ar oy			
grapheme	A letter or a group of letters representing one phoneme (sound), for example: sh, ch, igh,			
grapheme–phoneme correspondence (GPC)	The relationship between the smallest units of sound in speech (phonemes) and the letters which represent those speech sounds (graphemes).			
common words	These are the high frequency words that appear most frequently in written material, for example 'and', 'the', 'as', 'it'.			
oral blending	Hearing a series of spoken sounds and merging them together to make a spoken word – no text is used . For example, when a teacher calls out 'm-a-t', the children say 'mat'. This skill is usually taught before blending printed words			
phonemes	The phonological units of speech. A <i>phoneme</i> is the smallest unit of sound in a word. There are 26 letters in alphabet .But most varieties of spoken English use about 44 phonemes.			
phoneme frame	This is used to support segmenting and spelling words. For example this phoneme frame with 3 boxes <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table> would be used for boat as it has 3 phonemes so the one phoneme is entered in each box (b-oa-t).			
phonemic awareness	The insight that every spoken word can be conceived as a sequence of phonemes.			
phonics	Instructional practices that emphasise how spellings are related to speech sounds in systematic ways.			
phonological awareness	The awareness of sounds within words, as demonstrated in the ability to generate rhymes and rhythms. Usually the basis of phonemic awareness.			
segment (verb)	To split a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, for example the word 'boat' has three phonemes b-oa-t			
sound buttons	These are used to support blend a 'button' is drawn under each grapheme-phoneme correspondence, each phoneme is then sounded out and blended together. For example <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">swim </div><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">train </div><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">mixer </div></div>			
split digraph	A digraph in which the two letters work as a pair to represent one sound but are split, for example a-e in make or i-e in site.			
syllables	The 'beats' in a word. Words with one syllable are monosyllabic. Those with two or more are polysyllabic.			
VC, CVC, CCVC, CVCC	Abbreviations to describe the order of sounds in a word. V for vowel sound e.g. 'a', 'ai', 'igh', 'air'. C for a consonant sound e.g. 't', 'sh', 'ng'			
word discrimination	The ability to identify words in a stream of speech.			
trigraph	Three letters which make one phoneme (sound). E.g. igh dge			