

Learning to read



In the beginning...

Pre-school
and the beginning
of Reception

What skills do children need
to learn before they can read?

1. First be able to **hear and say the sound** of letters
2. Then **recognise letter sounds** when they see them written down.
3. Next be able to **hear** how letter sounds **blend** to make words.

Then they will be ready to...

1. Read simple two or three letter words by sounding them out loud and blending the sounds together.
2. Begin to read simple, decodable books, that have only a few words on each page.

How to help your child in this beginning stage.

Hearing and saying sounds

Helping your child to develop their listening skills, auditory memory, thinking skills and speech, at this early stage, will have a **massive** impact on the speed of their reading development.

It is really important to:

- Read stories to them daily and talk with them about the stories
- Sing nursery rhymes and children's songs to them and help them to join in and learn the words.
- Spend plenty of time talking with your child

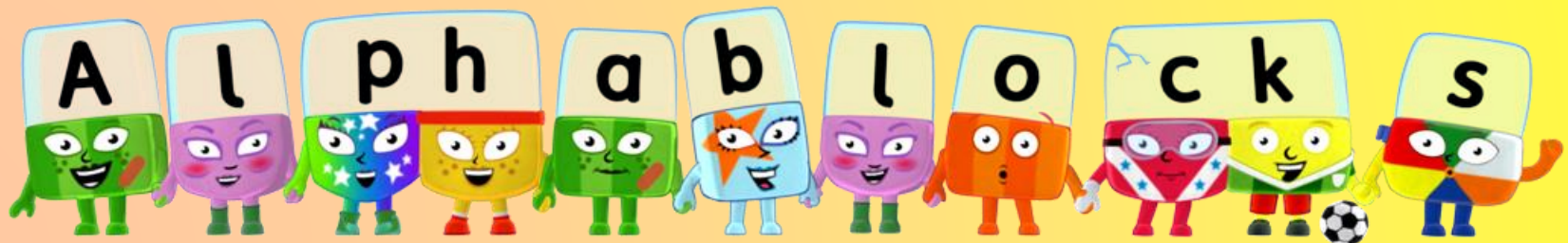
- Games:
- I Spy something beginning with...
 - Copying games (sounds, silly words)
 - Treasure hunt - find things beginning with 'm' etc.
 - Make groups of toys/objects beginning with 'b' etc.

Recognising letters

- Ideas:
 - Play with foam letters in the bath
 - Spot letters on signs when out and about
 - Identify letters in own name.



Read Write Inc., Alphablocks, Jolly phonics - all useful resources.



Set 1 sounds:

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

(taught in Reception)

Hear how sounds blend

- **Games:**

1) Adult says “I can see a b-a-t”
and child ‘guesses’ what they can see.



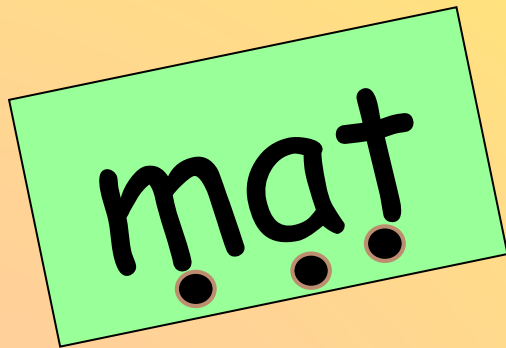
2) “I’m thinking of an animal, it’s a d-o-g”
(adult leads at first, then child has a go when more confident)

3) Selection of toys on table. “I’m looking for a
d-o-ll”

Lots of repetition, with adult showing how they stretch and sound out the words.

Beginning to read short words

- Play together with magnetic/wooden/foam letters to build words.
- CVC games and word cards



mat



Words that can be sounded out are introduced to the children as 'green words' - green for 'go'. Children press the sound buttons under each letter as they sound out the word.

Later in
Reception,
and beginning of
Year One

Moving on...

What are children doing now?

1. Becoming faster at sounding out and blending.
2. Having a go at blending some very small words in their heads
3. Learning a few whole words.

chat

track

when

Children learn that some words cannot be sounded out and blended successfully. These are known as 'red words'. They need to be learnt as whole words.

Set 2 sounds:

ay

ee

igh

ow (as in snow)

oo

oo

ar

or

air

ir

ou

oy

(Begun in Reception, consolidated in Year 1)

Gaining fluency

Year One and
Year Two

What are children doing now?

1. Blending more quickly
2. Gradually reading more words without needing to sound them out loud.
3. Recognising more red words and other whole words.
4. Taking more notice of punctuation when reading.



Set 3 sounds (the last set!) :

ea	ow (as in cow)
oi	ai
a-e	ew
i-e	ire
o-e	ear
u-e	ure
aw	tion
are (as in care)	cious
ur	tious
er	

- Taught in Year 1 (set 1, 2 and 3 are assessed in the Year 1 phonics screening). Revisited in Year 2.

Fluent readers

What are children doing now?

1. Reading most words without needing to sound out and blend.
2. Still using blending skills for new words.



What should we encourage them to do?

- Read with expression
- Take notice of punctuation

What else can we do?

- Explain the meaning of new words
- Ask questions to check understanding

Important tips for all reading levels.

- **Pick a good time** and place to read
- Start with lots of talk about the cover and the pictures – ‘I wonder’ questions.

Relate to own experiences.

- **A bit of acting** – be excited about the book! Share in the emotions of the exciting bits, the sad bits, the scary bits.
- Together, look at what difficult words are coming up. before starting to read the story.
- **Buckets full of praise** and encouragement
- **Children don't have to read the whole book in one sitting.**



If they get stuck or get it wrong...

- **Do help to correct words, but be gentle.....**

“Ooo, that was a great try - that’s a tricky word. Let’s sound it out together”

“Have we seen that word before? Let’s have a look together”.

- **If struggling to blend**, sound it out for them – they might be able to blend your sounds.
- **Break down long words** into chunks.

stay calm and positive



Mix it up!

Alternative activities:

- Word spotting eg. can you find the word 'then' on this page?
- Sound spotting eg. can you see 'ch' on this page?
- Speed words (found at the back of the reading book)
- Take in turns to read a page/a sentence/different characters' words.
- Ask them comprehension questions about the story
- Read a sentence to them and play at getting it wrong - can they see what you've read incorrectly.



Rewards and incentives

What works
for you?

