

Phonics Terminology

Phonics has a large technical vocabulary. As part of a cohesive whole-school approach, it is vital that everyone uses the same terminology. Using 'phoneme' in one classroom and 'sound' in another could lead to misconceptions. These are some of the key terms you will see in Twinkl Phonics:

phoneme - the smallest unit of sound within a word.

For example, the word 'dog' consists of three phonemes (d-o-g). The word 'charm' also consists of three phonemes (ch-ar-m).

grapheme - the written representation of a sound.

A letter (or letters) that represent one sound, for example 'o', 'ch' or 'igh'.

digraph - two letters making one sound

rain: The letters 'a' and 'i' make the /ay/ sound.

trigraph - three letters making one sound

night: The letters 'i', 'g' and 'h' make the /igh/ sound.

split digraph - two letters making one sound and divided by a consonant

cake: The letters 'a' and 'e' are divided by the letter 'k'.

GPC (grapheme phoneme correspondence) - being able to match a phoneme with the correct grapheme and vice versa

For example, reading the letter 's' and knowing that it makes the /sss/ sound or hearing a 'mmmm' sound and knowing it is the letter 'm'.

blending - joining individual speech sounds together to read a word

For example, joining 'c' 'a' and 't' to say the word 'cat'.

segmenting - breaking down words into individual speech sounds to spell

For example, breaking the word 'cat' into the letters 'c', 'a' and 't'.