

Phase 5 Phonics: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

This step-by-step explanation to phase 5 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 learning new digraphs (sounds represented by pairs of letters) or they are blending sounds together to read more complex words, you will find a step that matches where your child is at and 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.



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 However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date.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 5 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 5?

At this stage, your child will probably learn a series of new digraphs, including 'ou', 'ay', 'ie', 'oy' and 'aw'. As part of practising and learning these new digraphs, your child may explore split digraphs. A split digraph is a sound represented by two letters with a different letter between them, e.g. 'a_e' in made, 'o_e' in tone or 'i_e' in pine.

When exploring digraphs, your child will begin to look at alternative spellings for different sounds. Not all sounds are spelt the same way all of the time. For example, made, pay and grain all contain the 'ay' sound but are all spelt differently.

Your child will continue to learn more tricky words in phase 5. They will have already explored a variety of tricky words in the other phases, but these will become increasingly complex. Tricky words are words that don't follow the phonics rules, containing sounds that are not spelt with the usual phonetic letters. For example, words like 'could' (which your child would expect to be spelt something like 'cud') or 'called' (which may be expected to be spelt 'cawld').

In addition to exploring sounds and letters, your child will also be solidifying their knowledge about the past and present tense in their spoken language, reading and writing.

As well as using the resources found in the Phase 5 Phonics category and the keyword searches suggested, this guide offers a few ideas for games and activities to help your child when exploring phonics.



Phase 5 Phonics

I Spy Digraph 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 digraph sound. For example, "I spy with my little eye something with the phoneme -ie."

Rub out the Word

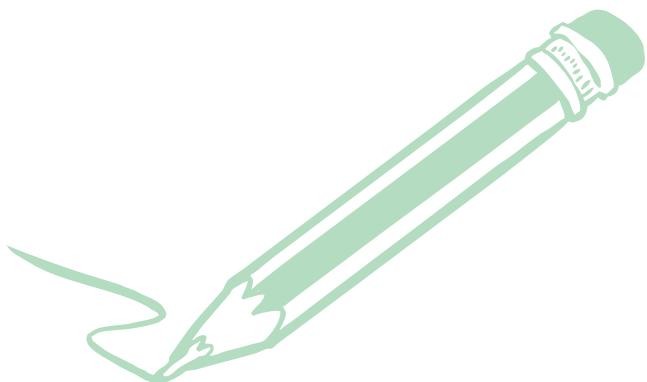
On a whiteboard or piece of paper, write down a selection of words containing the sounds your child has been learning (including digraphs and trigraphs). To play, say one of the words out loud. Your child has to find the word as quickly as they can, read it and rub (or cross) it out. Repeat for different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

Tricky Word Spotter

Choose a tricky word from the **phase 5 word mat**. On three/four strips of paper, write different versions of spelling the tricky word (one being the correct way, the others spelt incorrectly). Place them face down and have your child turn them over one at a time. Can your child identify the correct spelling? For an added challenge, you could do this activity with more than one tricky word at a time and have your child collect the ones that are correct.

Read, Read, Read

One of the best ways to explore phonics rules and practise using blending and segmenting is to read as many books as you can with your child. This can include not only your child reading books but you sharing stories with them. As your child's reading skills improve, they will be able to explore stories in more detail. Don't be afraid to ask your children questions about the stories they are reading; you could ask them about the characters' feelings, events that have happened in the story and about their opinions of the story.



Step 1

Phase 5 Digraphs

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's important to note that digraphs represent unique sounds and are different to cluster blends, which are two separate sounds said together. It is during phase 5 of phonics that your child will become familiar with these digraphs (sounds with two graphemes or letters). Your child will begin to explore a range of new digraphs, including ay, ou, ie, ue, aw, ph, ew and ey. Flashcards are a great way for your child to practise recognising these sounds on sight.



Phase 5 Split Digraphs

It is at this step that your child will be introduced to split digraphs. Split digraphs are similar to other digraphs in that they are sounds represented by two letters. However, they differ from other digraphs because the two letters are split with a gap (or intervening letter) between them. For example, the a_e in tame, the i_e in time or the o_e in bone. Matching card games are a fun way for your child to explore and recognise these split digraphs in words. In this activity, your child has to read each word that contains a split digraph and match it to the appropriate image.

Step 2

Phase 5 Alternative Spellings

Not all sounds are spelt the same way in every word; sometimes a sound can have a number of different forms, e.g. the 'ay' sound can be spelt ay, ai or a_e (may, pain, take). At this step, your child will begin to explore these different spellings for sounds and learn the different sound families. They will experiment with writing the alternative spellings and begin to read words accurately that contain them. These alternative spelling word mats are a great visual representation that combine all the different ways of spelling different sounds into one place.



Step 4

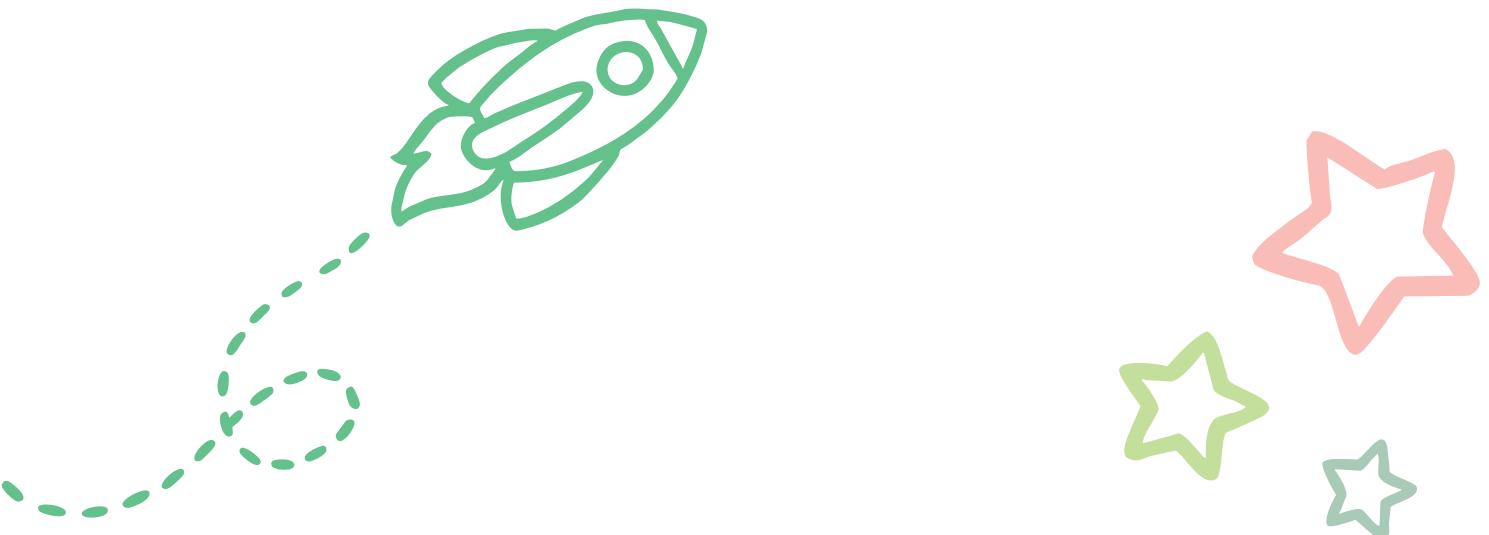
Phase 5 Blending and Segmenting

Blending is the process of combining different sounds together to read words. To blend, your child will be identifying individual sounds within a word and combining them together to read the word. For example, in the word 'replied', your child may identify the sounds r - e - p - l - ie - d in order to blend them together. Segmenting is the reverse of this process. To segment, your child will be able to break a word down to identify the sounds within it. During phase 5, your child will probably practise blending and segmenting increasingly complex words that contain five or more sounds. This will include both real and nonsense words, allowing your child to focus on the skill of blending and segmenting rather than worrying about the meaning of the word. Roll and read games are an interesting way for your child to explore blending words. Roll a die to choose a word; can your child blend the individual sounds together and read the word?

Phase 5 Tricky Words

Tricky words are ones that don't 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 5 tricky words include words like oh, looked, their, called, people, asked, Mr, Mrs and could. For example, using their phonics knowledge, your child may expect people to be spelt something like 'peep', or the word could to be spelt 'cud'. Tricky word mats act as a nice reminder for your child as to what these words look like and how they are spelt.

Step 5



Explore and Discover More

Twinkl Go! is a digital platform, hosting interactive content such as videos, games, audiobooks and more. Twinkl Go! enables digital content to be streamed to your computer or mobile device.



Twinkl Book Club is our book subscription service. Enjoy our original works of fiction in beautiful printed form, delivered to you each half-term and yours to keep!



Twinkl Boost is a range of intervention resources, created to support and lift learning with children at every level. These include our easy-to-use SATs and Phonics Screening resources.



Imagine resources are designed to help your children to think creatively, question and imagine. Every week, a new topic consisting of five photos, each with related activities, is created.



Twinkl Originals are engaging stories written to inspire children from EYFS to KS2. Designed to encourage a love of reading and help curriculum-wide learning through accompanying resources.



Twinkl Kids' TV is our wonderful YouTube channel dedicated to fun and informative video-style resources full of new and creative activities you can try at home!