

Phonics Glossary of Terms

Adjacent consonants	Two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds. E.g. the first three letters of <i>strap</i> are adjacent consonants. Previously known as a <i>consonant cluster</i> .
Blending	The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and synthesise/blend the phonemes in order to make a word. E.g. <i>s-n-a-p</i> , blended together, reads <i>snap</i> .
Consonant digraph	Two consonants which make one sound. E.g. sh, ch, th, ph
CVC, CCVCC etc.	The abbreviations used for consonant-vowel-consonant and consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant words, used to describe the order of sounds. E.g. <i>cat</i> , <i>ship</i> and <i>sheep</i> are all CVC words. <i>Black</i> and <i>prize</i> could be described as CCVC words.
Digraph	Two letters which together make one sound. There are different types of digraph – vowel, consonant and split.
Grapheme	A letter or group of letters representing one sound (phoneme) E.g. ck, igh, t, sh
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a word.
Segmenting	The process of using phonics for writing. Children listen to the whole word and break it down into the constituent phonemes, choosing an appropriate grapheme to represent each phoneme. E.g. <i>ship</i> can be segmented as <i>sh-i-p</i> .
Split digraph	Two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated within the word. E.g. <i>a-e</i> as in <i>make</i> or <i>late</i> ; <i>i-e</i> as in <i>size</i> or <i>write</i> .
Synthesising	The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and synthesise/blend the phonemes in order to make a word. E.g. <i>s-n-a-p</i> , blended together, reads <i>snap</i> .
Trigraph	Three letters which together make one sound. E.g. <i>dge</i> , <i>igh</i>
Vowel digraph	A digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel E.g. <i>ea</i> , <i>ay</i> , <i>ai</i> , <i>ar</i>