



Early Reading/ Phonics Glossary



Adjacent consonants	Two or three consonants next to each other that represent different sounds. For example, bl in black. Notice here that bl makes the two different sounds b and l, whereas ck makes the single sound ck.
Alliteration	Alliteration is the repetition of an initial letter or sound in closely connected words.
Author	The person(s) who wrote the book.
Blending	Blending involves merging the sounds in a word together in order to pronounce it. This is important for reading. For example, j-a-m blended together reads the word jam.
Consonants	The letters of the alphabet (apart from the vowels a, e, i, o and u).
CVC/ CCVC / CVCC Words	A CVC word is a word that is made up of a consonant, vowel and consonant. CCVC words are made up of a consonant, a consonant, a vowel and a consonant. In CVCC words the sequence is: consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant.
Decoding	Decoding is the process of seeing written words on a page and being able to say them out loud.
Digraph	Two letters that make one sound. Digraphs can be made up of vowels or consonants.
Encoding	The process of hearing a sound and being able to write a symbol to represent that sound.
Exception words	Exception words are words in which the English spelling code works in an unusual or uncommon way. Children learn to read and spell common exception words throughout their time in primary school, particularly in Reception, Y1 and Y2.
Fiction	A text that is made up from imagination.
Fluency	The ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression.
Grapheme	A written symbol that represents a sound (a phoneme). This can be a single letter, or could be a sequence of letters (ai, sh, igh, tch, for example).
High-frequency words	High-frequency words are some of the most common words in the English language. A number of them don't follow phonetic rules, so they must be learned individually by heart. Children start to learn to read and write high-frequency words in Reception, and are given more words to memorise in KS1 and KS2.
Homophones	Words that sound the same but have different meanings. Some homophones are pronounced the same way and spelled the same way but have different meanings; others are pronounced the same way but are spelled differently and have different meanings.
Inference	Using clues from the text to form an idea or opinion about a character, place or event in a story.
Information text	An information text is a non-fiction text which gives information about a particular thing. Information texts are sometimes called non-chronological reports, because they are reporting information about something without mentioning the order of events.
Non-fiction	Any text that is not a story is non-fiction. Non-fiction texts studied at primary school include instruction texts, recounts, information texts, explanation texts, persuasive texts, biography, journalistic writing and argument texts.
Past tense	The past perfect is the verb tense we use to describe actions that were completed by a particular time in the past.

Phoneme	A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound.
Phonics	Phonics is a method of teaching children to read by linking sounds (phonemes) and the symbols that represent them (graphemes, or letters). Phonics is the method used in primary schools in the UK today to teach children to read.
Prediction	An important reading strategy which encourages children to use details and clues from the text to anticipate what happens next in the story.
Prefix	A string of letters that are added to the beginning of a root word, changing its meaning.
Pure Sounds	The way of sounding phonemes without adding an extra 'uh', known as a schwa, at the end of each letter.
Reading comprehension	Reading comprehension means understanding what is being read and being able to engage with a text on many levels, understanding its layers of meaning.
Retrieval	The ability to select parts of a text to answer a question about what has been read.
Rhyme	Rhyme is the repetition of similar sounds in words, usually at the end of lines in poems and songs.
Segmenting	Segmenting involves breaking up a word that you hear into its sounds. This helps with spelling because if you know what graphemes represent the sounds in the word, you can write it! For example, the word jam is segmented into the sounds j-a-m.
Split digraph	A digraph is two vowels which together make one sound (as in the words tail, boat, found or read). When a digraph is split by a consonant it becomes a split digraph, sometimes known as 'magic e'.
Standard English	The "correct" form of English, taught in schools and used in formal written communication.
Story setting	The location where a story takes place. The setting could be anywhere, from a shop to an alien planet.
Suffix	A string of letters that go at the end of a word, changing or adding to its meaning. Suffixes can show if a word is a noun, an adjective, an adverb or a verb.
Summarising	Children will tell the most important parts of a text, in their own words, in a much shorter way.
Syllable	A single, unbroken sound of a spoken (or written) word. Syllables are sometimes called the 'beats' of a word.
Trigraph	A single sound that is represented by three letters. For example igh in fight or ear in bear.
Vowel	The alphabet is made up of 26 letters, 5 of which are vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and the rest of which are consonants. A vowel is a sound that is made by allowing breath to flow out of the mouth, without closing any part of the mouth or throat.