

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Phonics Screening Check?

The Phonics Screening Check is a short assessment, set by the Government to identify whether children have learnt how to phonetically decode words. The check is made up of 40 real and 'alien' or nonsense words that your child will be asked to read with a teacher.

The test is designed to identify children who need a little extra support in order to develop their reading skills. These children then retake the following year so that schools can track children until they are able to decode.

Who is it for?

The Phonics Screening Check is for all Year 1 pupils and children in Year 2 who previously did not meet the standard of the check in Year 1.

It is a statutory requirement for all schools to carry out the screening check.

When does it happen?

Our school will carry out the check the week commencing Monday 8th June 2026. This is straight after our half term break.

Who carries out the screening check?

A familiar teacher who your child knows will carry out the test. The check is done 1:1 in a relaxed setting to enable your child to feel at ease.

What are alien/nonsense words?

The check contains real words and 'alien'/nonsense words which your child is told before the test begins. These are used in Read Write Inc. and when teaching phonics, so your child will be familiar.

Nonsense words are important because children have to use their decoding skills as they have never seen them before and cannot automatically read them. These words are unfamiliar and test their ability to decode.

What should my child be able to do to pass Phonics Screening Check?

Children in Year 1 need to be able to identify individual letter sounds and combinations of letters that make a sound to then blend these sounds together to say/read words. This technique applies to any word, real or nonsense word.

Throughout Section 1 and 2 of the check the words gradually get more complex as the letter combinations become increasingly complicated with children needing to recognise alternative sounds.

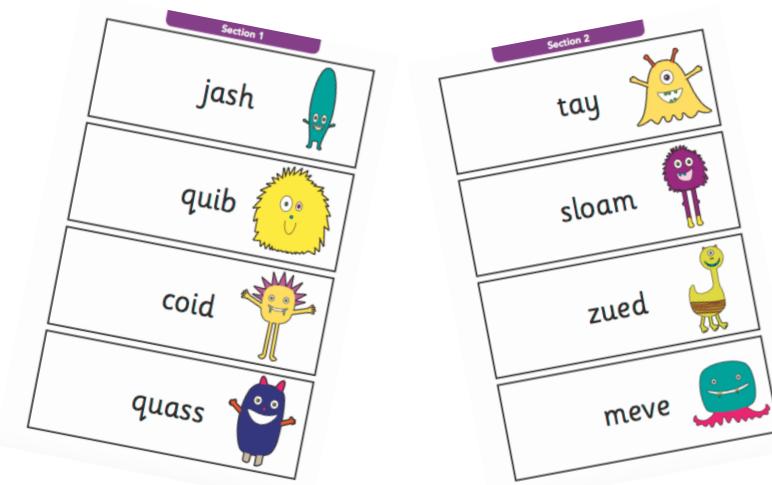
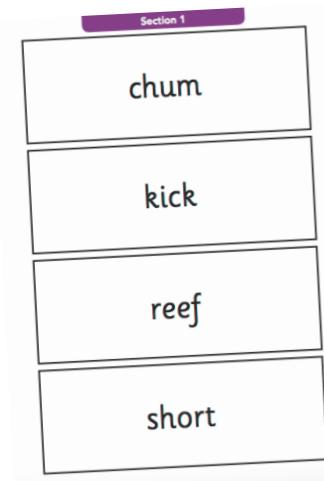
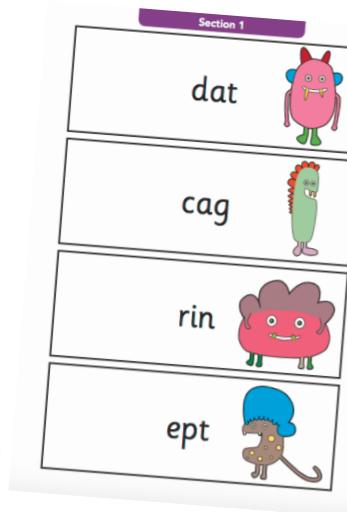
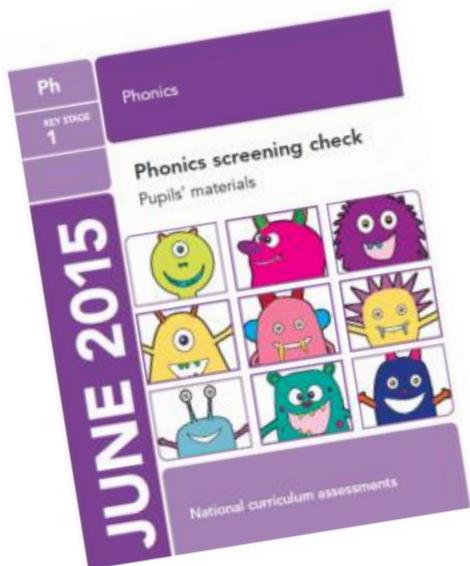
What is the pass mark?

In recent years the pass mark has been 32 words correct out of 40. The score required for 2025 is unknown until after the test has been carried out in June.

What does the Phonics Screening Check look like?

Here are some examples of what the check looks like.

As you can see there are real words such as kick, reef, chum and short as well as nonsense words such as rin, coid, jash or sloam.



A bit more about Phonics!

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read and spell/write by encouraging them to hear and identify the phonemes that make up each word.

Phoneme – The smallest unit of sound in a word.

Grapheme - A letter or group of letters representing one sound. (Phoneme)
E.g. ck, igh, p, th

Digraph - Two letters that together make one sound. These are split in to three types. Consonant Digraph, Vowel Digraph or Split Digraph.

Consonant Digraph - Two consonants that make one sound.
E.g. ch, th, ph

Vowel Digraph - A digraph where at least one of the letters is a vowel.
E.g. ea, ay, ai, ar

Split Digraph – Two letters that are separated in the word but work together to make one sound.
E.g. a-e as in **cake**, u-e as in **cube** or i-e as in **shine**

Trigraph - Three letters that together make one sound.
E.g. air, igh

CVC/CCVC - The abbreviations used for consonant and vowel positions in words to describe the order of sounds.

E.g. Dog, chip and shell are all CVC words. Drink, trap and graze are CCVC words.

Segmenting - The method of listening to a word and breaking it down into the phonemes. When writing an appropriate grapheme to represent each phoneme is selected.

E.g. drop can be segmented as d-r-o-p or chess as ch-e-ss.

Blending - The process of identifying and then merging the sounds/phonemes together to hear or make a word when reading.

E.g. b-r-i-ck, blended together, reads brick.

GPC - This stands for grapheme phoneme correspondences which means children are taught all the phonemes within the English language and the ways in which these can be represented.

How to help your child at home!

Practise these sounds with your child as frequently as possible.

Read Write Inc. Set 1 Sounds

m mat	a pan	s sun	d dog	t hat	i bib	n nap	p cap
g bag	o mop	c cat	k kip	u bun	b ban	f fat	e ten
l lip	h him	sh bush	r rag	j jam	v van	y yell	w win
th thin that	z zip	ch chin	qu queen	x fox	ng king	nk bank	

*The word below each sound represents the sound the letter/letters make in a word.

Read Write Inc. Set 2 Sounds

Sound	Rhyme	Word Examples
ay	May I play?	stay crayon
ee	What can you see?	peel feeling
igh	Fly high.	Might lightening
ow	Blow the snow.	throw owner
oo	Poo at the zoo.	room kangeroo
oo	Look at a book.	wool cooking
ar	Start the car.	farm alarm
or	Shut the door.	corn morning
air	That's not fair.	stairs airport
ir	Whirl and twirl.	dirt skirt
ou	Shout it out.	house bounce
oy	Toy for a boy.	joy destroy

Read Write Inc. Set 3 Sounds

Sound	Rhyme	Word Examples
ea	Cup of tea.	meat feast
oi	Spoil the boy.	soil boiling
a-e	Make a cake.	take shake
i-e	Nice smile.	mine shine
o-e	Phone home.	bone stone
u-e	Huge brute.	cube flute
e-e	Go Pete and Steve!	swede evening
aw	Yawn at dawn.	awful raw
are	Care and share.	hare aware
ur	Nurse with a purse	turn burns
er	A better letter.	sister waiter
ow	Brown cow.	town owl
ai	Snail in the rain.	wait aims
oa	Goat in a coat.	boat floats
ew	Chew the stew.	flew grew
ire	Fire fire!	wire hire
ear	Hear with your ear.	fear appear
ure	Sure it's pure.	cure mixture
ck	Tick, tock, clock	sock shocked

kn	Knock, knock who's there?	knee knows
au	Paul the astronaught.	Autumn author
ie	Terrible pie!	tie tried
ue	Come to the rescue.	blue glue
tion	Pay attention, it's a celebration.	action creation
cious	Scrumptious, delicious!	spacious ferocious

At School we use the 'Oxford Owl' website as part of our Read Write Inc. and Language and Literacy lessons. There are also a number of free resources for Parents including audio clips to listen to the spoken sounds in words to ensure pronunciation is correct.



Mr Thorne does Phonics are videos which demonstrate correct pronunciation and also give other words examples for you and your child. These are available on You Tube or you can download the App for 99p.



Phonics Play is a great website we use in school to practice recognition of sounds as well as play games involving segmenting and blending real or nonsense words.



How else can I help my child?

Practice reading a mixture of real words and nonsense words.

- Focus on segmenting each word into the separate sounds to ensure they can identify each one correctly before blending the sounds to read them.
- Encourage your children to use 'pure' sounds. For example, 'h' not 'huh'.
- Ask your children to identify 'special friends' or 'best friends' in words. These are sounds made up of two or three letters together. For example in the word 'goat' the special friends are 'oa' so your children would say g-oa-t to read the word.
- Children benefit from using Sound Buttons and Sound Bars to represent the sounds in words to help them in the process of segmenting and blending to read. Sound Buttons represent individual letters that make a sound, such as t, d or I for example. Sound Bars represent sounds made up of two or three letters. (Digraphs or Trigraphs)

s-t-e-ck = steck

h-i-l-d = hild

qu-e-m-p = quemp



steck

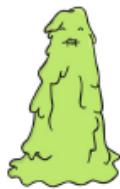
g-e-ck = geck



hild

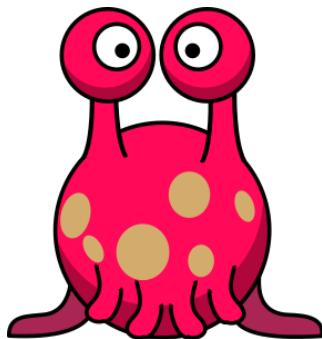
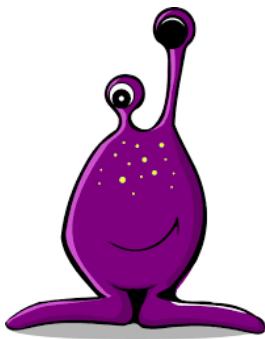


quemp



geck

Alien Words



vot
zoot
rudd
yize
intue
shicker
tairsh
griving
wopt

arb
shash
drepher
stuse
thrawn
vrow
poss
flanter
inphew

gruz
thighn
hurz
croge
braup
cleam
droys
wrute
wheck

scem
brugs
twoath
epe
flirzz
yurker
kraynub
anide
frew

frish
driak
encang
jaisher
quooch
bighest
swaups
ting
toin

quall
staw
drabe
hoat
heeg
jie
blick
grosh
thoyll

Real Words

tip
waiting
broomstick
farmer
role
scarecrow
delicious
diving
lightning

chew
elephant
quiet
stock
moon
rain
ground
tantrum
roundabout

tie
then
eat
paint
born
butterfly
fair
bell
whirl

boat
soup
drawer
evening
tune
toes
play
fuzzy
catches

argue
crown
smile
crash
snowstorm
graze
scream
plodded
fur

choose
bread
think
knight
name
function
chess
open
spelt

Make learning fun with games!

There are lots of games and simple activities you can play or download from various websites to help your children develop and practice their phonics.

By making learning phonics an enjoyable experience your children is likely to want to revisit these activities hence continuously practicing their phonic skills.

<http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/phonics/>

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/freeIndex.htm>

<https://gb.education.com/games/phonological-awareness/>

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/5-7-years/letters-and-sounds>

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-3-games.html>

http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games.html

<http://www.crickweb.co.uk/phonics.html>

Various website have printable real and alien word cards to practice with.

A simple but fun activity is making sounds cards on paper to create your own alien words!

Remember your child's Guided Reading and Library Books. By practicing daily your child will become increasingly confident in identifying sounds and blending.