EYFS/KS1 Phonics Glossary

Introduction to Phonics

The way children are taught to read, write and spell in schools today is called phonics or sometimes 'letters and sounds.' This guide tells you about some of the terms you may hear teachers use when talking about phonics or how your child is making progress in Literacy. There are also some top tips to help your child with phonics at home.

Word	What Does It Mean?
blend	Saying the individual sounds that make up a word and then merging or blending the sounds together to say the word – used when reading.
consonant	Most letters of the alphabet (excluding the vowels: a,e,i,o,u).
CVC words	Abbreviation used for consonant-vowel-consonant words, used to describe the order of sounds. Some examples of CVC words are: cat, pen, top, chat (because ch makes one sound). Other similar abbreviations include: • VC words e.g. on, is, it. • CCVC words e.g. trap and black. • CVCC words e.g. milk and fast.
digraph	Two letters which together make one sound e.g. ee, oa, ea, ch, ay. There are different types of digraph: • **Vowel digraph:** a digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel, for example; boat or day. • **Consonant digraph:** two consonants which can go together, for example shop or thin. • **Split digraph** (previously called magic e): two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated within the word e.g. a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e, u-e. For example cake or pine.
grapheme	Written letters or a group of letters which represent one single sound (phoneme) e.g. a, l, sh, air, ck.

Word	What Does It Mean?
letters and sounds	A Government document detailing the teaching of phonics. There are 6 phases described: • **Phase 1:** This is split into 7 aspects, which focus on hearing and talking about environmental sounds and letter sounds. • **Phase 2:** Learning 19 letters of the alphabet, along with the first 5 'tricky words and using them to read and spell simple words and captions'. • **Phase 3:** Learning the remaining letters of the alphabet, some 2 and 3 letter digraphs, along with the next set of 'tricky words'. Reading and writing captions and sentences. • **Phase 4:** Learning to blend and segment longer words, including words with adjacent consonants and more than one syllable. Reading and writing using these and the next 'tricky words', within sentences. • **Phase 5:** Learning alternative spellings and pronunciations for phonemes, including their common usage within words. Reading and writing using these and the next 'tricky words', within sentences. • **Phase 6:** Learning longer words and spelling rules. Children may work from another document from this point, called 'Support for Spelling'.
phoneme	A single sound that can be made by one or more letters – e.g. s, k, z, oo, ph, igh. **Top Tip!** When starting phonics, avoid using the letter names (see, ay, tee etc) and use the sounds instead (c, a, t)! This will help your child with spelling and recognising letter sounds when reading. Letter names can be introduced more gradually.
phonics	Phonics teaches children to listen to and identify the sounds that make up words. This helps them to read and write words.
pure sound	Pronouncing each letter sound clearly and distinctly without adding additional sounds to the end e.g. 'f' not 'fuh.' **Top Tip!** It is tricky to say some sounds without the 'uh' sound at the end – like b, d, v and g! Try to emphasise the main letter sound when talking about these letter sounds. Some are easier to say by dragging the sound out e.g. ffffff rather than 'fuh' or mmmmmm rather than 'muh.'

Word	What Does It Mean?
segment	This is the opposite of blending (see above). Splitting a word up into individual sounds – used when spelling and writing.
tricky words	Words that are difficult to sound out e.g. said, the, because.
trigraph	Three letters which go together make one sound e.g. ear, air, igh, dge, tch.
vowel	The letters a, e, i, o, u.

Top Tip!
Play word games with your child that encourage them to build words and recognise individual sounds in words e.g. word jigsaw puzzles, Hangman style games, I-Spy and making collections of objects that contain the same letter sounds at either the beginning, middle or end.

Top Tip!
Have some tricky word flashcards around and use them to practise reading and word recognition.