

What is Letters and Sounds?

Letters and Sounds is a phonics resource published by the U.K. Department for Education and Skills.. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven.



Introduction to Letters

In Phase 2, letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time. A set of letters is taught each week, in the following sequence:



Set 1: s, a, t, p

Set 2: i, n, m, d

Set 3: g, o, c, k

Set 4: ck, e, u, r

Set 5: h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

As soon as each set of letters is introduced, children will be encouraged to use their knowledge of the letter sounds to

blend and sound out words. For example, they will learn to blend the sounds s-a-t to make the word sat. They will also start learning to segment words. For example, they might be asked to find the letter sounds that make the word tap from a small selection of magnetic letters.

Phase 2 Set 1 Letters and Words

In Set 1, the first four letters are introduced and seven words can be used for segmenting and blending (high frequency words are shown in italics):

s, a, t, p *at, a, sat, pat, tap, sap, as*

Phase 2 Set 2 Letters and Words

Set 2 includes four new letters. As each new letter is learnt, children will be able to sound out several new words, as follows:

i it, is, sit, sat, pit, tip, pip, sip

n an, in, nip, pan, pin, tin, tan, nap

m am, man, mam, mat, map, Pam, Tim, Sam

d dad, and, sad, dim, dip, din, did, Sid

Phase 2 Set 3 Letters and Words

Set 3 introduces four new letters, with 28 new decodable words suggested, including four high frequency words, shown in italics below:

- g** tag, gag, gig, gap, nag, sag, gas, pig, dig
- o** got, on, not, pot, top, dog, pop, *God*, *Mog*
- c** can, cot, cop, cap, cat, cod
- k** kid, kit, *Kim*, *Ken*

Phase 2 Set 4 Letters and Words

Set 4 introduces four new graphemes, with 36 new decodable words suggested. For the first time, some of the suggested words contain two syllables, such as pocket, sunset etc., which some young children might find too difficult at this stage. Personally, I would leave these out if they cause problems. At this stage, it is more important for children to experience success at sounding out short words. Their ability to decode longer words will improve as their short-term memory develops.

At this point, two "tricky words" (not fully decodable at this stage) are taught: the and to.

ck kick, sock, sack, dock, pick, sick, pack, ticket, pocket

e get, pet, ten, net, pen, peg, met, men, neck

u up, mum, run, mug, cup, sun, tuck, mud, sunset

r rim, rip, ram, rat, rag, rug, rot, rocket, carrot

Phase 2 Set 5 Letters and Words

Set 5 introduces seven graphemes (three of which are doubled letters), with 69 new decodable words suggested.

New "tricky" words: **no, go and I.**

h had, him, his, hot, hut, hop, hum, hit, hat, has, hack, hug

b but, big, back, bet, bad, bag, bed, bud, beg, bug, bun, bus, Ben, bat, bit, bucket, beckon, rabbit

f, ff of, if, off, fit, fin, fun, fig, fog, puff, huff, cuff,
fan, fat

l, ll lap, let, leg, lot, lit, bell, fill, doll, tell, sell, Bill, Nell,
dull, laptop

ss less, hiss, mass, mess, boss, fuss, hiss, pass, kiss,
Tess, fusspot