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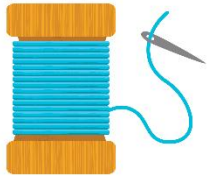
ELS Essential Letters and Sounds

developed by Knowledge Schools Trust

Getting all children to read well, quickly.

What are we going to cover?

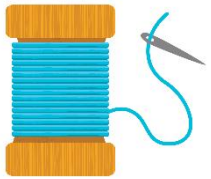
- What is Phonics?
- What is Essential Letters and Sounds?
- How we teach phonics
- Getting children ready to read
- Supporting your child with reading at home
- Pronouncing pure sounds
- Using the letter formations and spelling sequence to support writing at home



What is phonics?

A method of teaching beginners to read and pronounce words by learning to associate letters or letter groups with the sounds they represent.

There are 44 main sounds in the English Language. Each sound is represented by a grapheme (the written representation of a sound).



What is phonics?

Phoneme: the smallest single identifiable sound in a word.

For example, in the word 'cat' there are three phonemes c/a/t.

Grapheme: the written representation of a sound.

Digraph: two letters making one sound. For example, /sh/ in the word 'shop'.

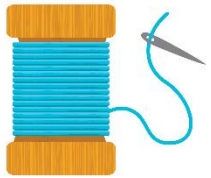
Trigraph: three letters making one sound. For example, /igh/ in the word 'night'.

Split digraph: two vowel letters split but are split by one or more consonants. For example, /a-e/ in the word 'cake'.

What is ELS?

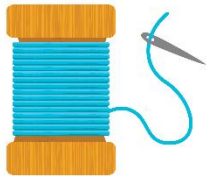
Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen phonics programme

Children will experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers.



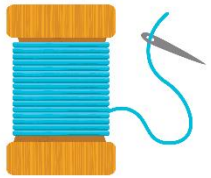
How do we teach phonics?

- We use a simple, consistent approach to teaching phonics.
- We have mnemonics and rhymes to support learning and recall
- We teach phonics every single day from the first days of Reception



How do we teach phonics?

- Phonics throughout the day to review new sounds and graphemes taught
- Lots of opportunities for oral blending: /c/ /oa/ /t/
- We teach the ‘code’ for reading, alongside teaching vocabulary.



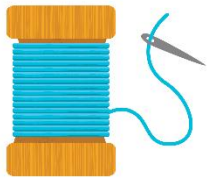
How do we teach phonics?

Teach

These objects all have the /ng/ sound in.

ng

ng … ng … ring
ng … ng … wing
ng … ng … sing



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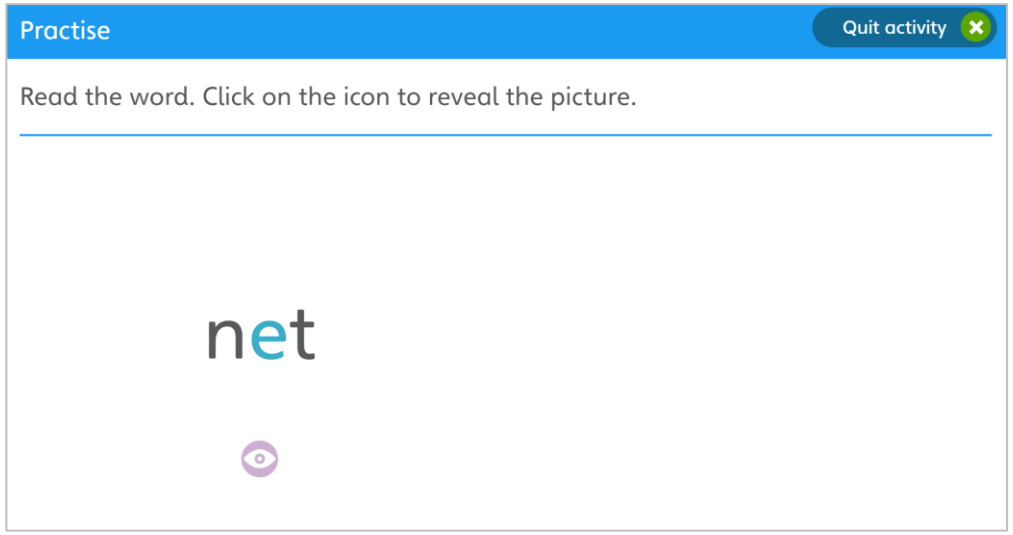

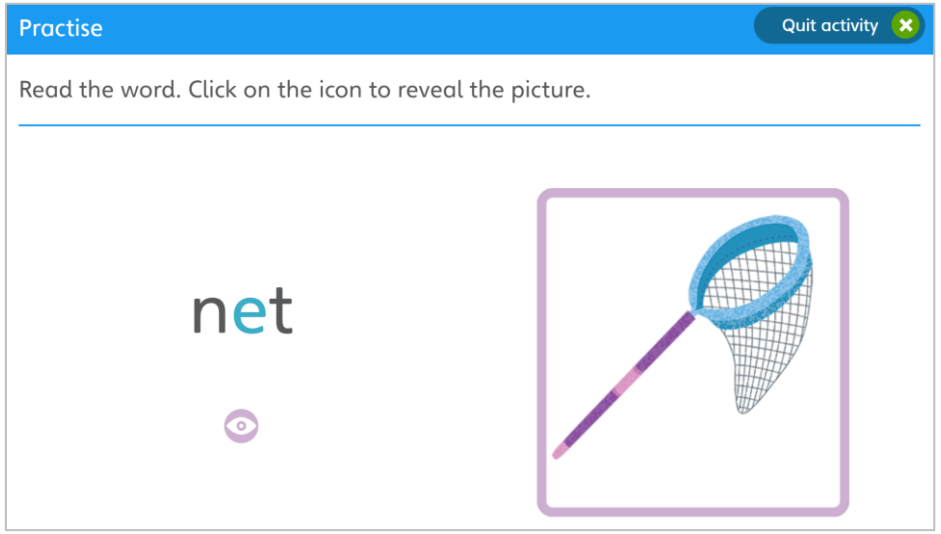

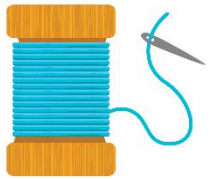

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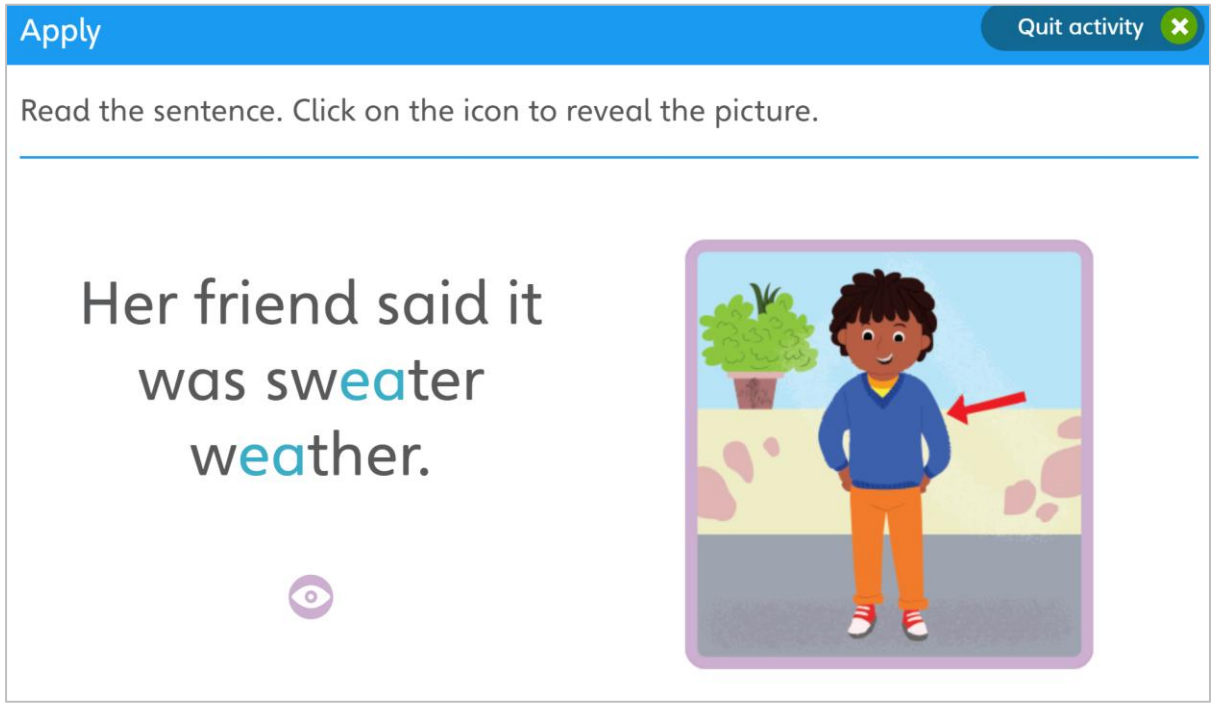
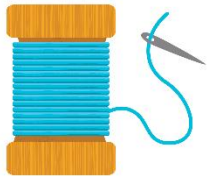
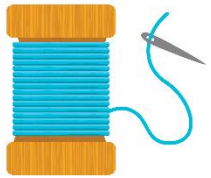




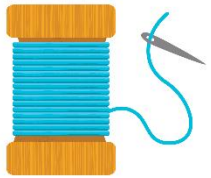
ELS Progression

Phase 1*	Phase 2	Phase 3**
Nursery/Pre-School Seven aspects: • Environmental sounds • Instrumental sounds • Body percussion • Rhythm and rhyme • Alliteration • Voice sounds • Oral blending	*Reception Autumn 1* • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 23 new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) • 12 new harder to read and spell (HRS) words	*Reception Autumn 2, Spring 1 and Spring 2* • Oral blending • Sounding out and blending with 29 new GPCs • 32 new HRS words • Revision of Phase 2



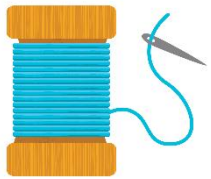
ELS Progression

Phase 4**	Phase 5 including alternatives and lesser-known GPCs	Beyond Phase 5
Reception Summer 1 • Oral blending • No new GPCs • No new HRS words • Word structures – cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc • Suffixes • Revision of Phase 2 and Phase 3	*Reception Summer 2* • Introduction to Phase 5 for reading • 20 new GPCs • 16 new HRS words *Year 1 Autumn 1 and 2* • Revision of previously taught Phase 5 GPCs • 2 new GPCs • 9 new HRS words *Year 1 Spring 1 and 2* • Alternative spellings for previously taught sounds • 49 new GPCs • 4 new HRS words • Oral blending • Revision of Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4	*Year 1 Summer, Year 2 and Key Stage 2* • With ELS, phonics teaching does not stop at the end of Year 1, but continues as children move through the school, with links being made between their GPC knowledge and spelling • Revision of all previously taught GPCs for reading and spelling • Wider reading, spelling and writing curriculum



Supporting your child with reading at home

- Only 1 in 3 children are read a bedtime story night
- Reading a bedtime story every night to your child improves their outcomes
- If your child views themselves as a ‘good reader’ when they leave Primary School they are more likely to earn a higher salary in their 40s.



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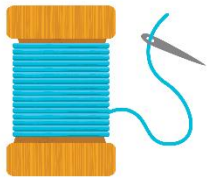
Supporting your child with reading at home

- Children are only reading from books that are entirely decodable
- Your child should be able to read their book confidently
- We only use pure sounds when decoding words (no ‘uh’ after the sound)
- We want them to practise reading their book four times across the week working on these skills:

  -decoding

  -fluency

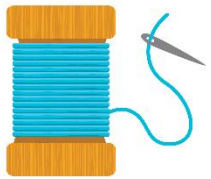
  -expression



Supporting your child with reading at home

We want children to create a strong orthographic map. This means that they learn sounds spelt by the letters or groups of letters in each word.
To read fluently, or well, we need a strong orthographic map.

To consistently recognise that the <ea> in bread spells /e/ we need to read it at least 4 times. This means we need to read the word many times to build fluency for reading.

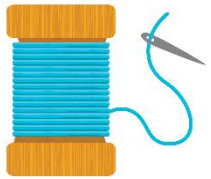


Pronouncing pure sounds

We must use pure sounds when we are pronouncing the sounds and supporting children in reading words.

c a t **not** **cuh a tuh**

If we mispronounce these sounds, we will make reading harder for our children.

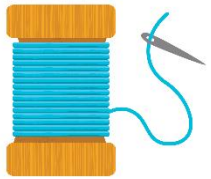


There are videos for this on our school website where you can hear the correct pronunciation of the sounds.

Supporting your child with writing at home

You can use the spelling sequence with your children at home to support them with their writing.

Let’s try this with the word: rain



We also practise saying our sentences before we write them to make sure we write the sentence we have planned and to ensure it makes sense!

Questions