

The Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles:

Teach the **alphabetic code knowledge** (the relationship, or links, between the smallest sounds of speech and the letters or letter groups) by systematically introducing the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code and teach that the code is **reversible**: **print-to-sound** for decoding and **sound-to-print** for encoding.

Model how to put the letter/s-sound correspondences introduced to immediate use with **cumulative** real written and spoken words, sentences and texts teaching the **three core skills** of:

1. Decoding (reading):

- i. Scan the printed word from left to right to recognise any letter groups: **t r ay**
- ii. Say the sounds for the letters and letter groups all through the **printed** word and blend (synthesise) the sounds to 'hear', or 'discern', the target word: /t/ /r/ /ai/ "tray"
- iii. Modify the pronunciation of the word to sound like the actual spoken word if necessary.

2. Encoding (spelling):

- i. Orally segment (split up) all through the **spoken** word to identify the phonemes (sounds): "tray /t/ /r/ /ai/"
- ii. Allot graphemes (letters and letter groups) as the correct code for the identified sounds: **t r ay**

3. Handwriting:

- i. Hold the writing implement with the tripod grip.
- ii. Learn to write the 26 lower case letters and 26 upper case (capital) letters of the alphabet correctly (starting points and direction of formation, position on a writing line, relative sizes).

Note: *Sounds* are shown in *slash marks*: blue for consonant sounds /t/, /r/; and red for vowel sounds /ai/.

In the **Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles**, learners are **not** taught to *guess* the words in books from picture, context or initial letter cues and they are not asked, or expected, to read books **independently** when the words are *beyond* their current alphabetic code knowledge. Provide memorable activities to raise awareness of the need to learn **spelling word banks** where words are spelt with the same sounds and spelling alternatives.

The English Alphabetic Code has three complexities:

The English language has a fascinating history of invasion or migration of many peoples from different countries over many centuries. This has resulted in a *rich spoken language* but a very *complex alphabetic code* for the writing system whereby the **26** letters of the **alphabet** (upper and lower case shapes) represent the **44** or so smallest sounds (phonemes) identifiable in English speech in three complicated ways resulting in nearly two hundred main spelling alternatives (letter/s-sound correspondences):

1. One sound (**phoneme**) can be represented by *one, two, three or four letters*:
e.g. /a/ a, /f/ ph, /ch/ tch, /oa/ ough
2. One sound can be represented by *multiple spelling alternatives (graphemes)*:
e.g. /oa/: o, oa, ow, oe, o-e, eau, ough
3. One grapheme (letter or letter group) can represent *multiple sounds*:
e.g. 'ough': /oa/ though, /or/ thought, long /oo/ through, /ou/ plough, /u/ thorough

The English Alphabetic Code should be taught explicitly and systematically for reading, spelling and handwriting. In addition, teach **any** letter/s-sound correspondences **incidentally as required** for individuals, groups and whole classes – within the phonics lessons, to support wider experience with literature, and to support reading and writing in the wider curriculum. Refer to an **Alphabetic Code Chart** routinely for both systematic and incidental teaching.

The English Alphabetic Code in Phonics International:

The **Alphabetic Code Chart** below illustrates the **sounds of speech** and the **spelling alternatives** of the Phonics International programme as featured on the many FREE versions of the **Alphabetic Code Charts** at <https://alphabeticcodecharts.com> (select your preferred 'giant' teaching chart and 'mini' learning chart) - and as shown on the **Alphabetic Code Frieze Posters** provided in the 12 units of the Phonics International programme:

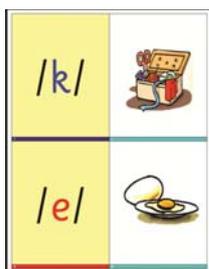
units of sound phoneme/s	graphemes, or spelling alternatives, in key words which are code for the sounds
/s/	snake glass palace house scissors [cents city bicycle] castle pseudonym
/a/	apple
/t/	teddy letter skipped
/i/	insect cymbals
/p/	pan puppet
/n/	net bonnet knot gnome engine
/k/	kit cat duck chameleon bouquet plaque
/e/	egg head said
/h/	hat who
/r/	rat arrow write rhinoceros
/m/	map hammer welcome thumb column
/d/	dig puddle rained
/g/	girl juggle guitar ghost catalogue
/o/	orange [watch qualify salt]
/u/	umbrella son touch thoroughfare
/l/	ladder shell
/u/	kettle pencil hospital camel
/f/	feathers cliff photograph laugh
/b/	bat rabbit building
/j/	jug cabbage [gerbil giraffe gymnast] fridge
/y/	yawn
/ai/	aid tray table sundae cake prey eight break straight
/w/	web wheel penguin
/oa/	oak bow yo-yo oboe rope dough plateau
/igh/	night tie behind fly bike eider duck

units of sound phoneme/s	graphemes, or spelling alternatives, in key words which are code for the sounds
/ee/	eel eat emu concrete key chief sardines
or /i-ee/	sunny monkey movie
/or/	fork oars door snore four [wardrobe quarter] water
or /aw/	dawn sauce chalk caught thought
/z/	zebra jazz fries cheese breeze
/ng/	gong jungle /ngk/ ink uncle
/v/	violin dove
short /oo/	book should push
long /oo/	moon blue flute crew fruit soup move through
/ks/	fox plurals: books ducks cakes
/gz/	exam plurals: pegs eggs catalogues
/ch/	chairs patch /chu/ picture
/sh/	sheep chef station magician admission
/th/	unvoiced: thistle voiced: there
/kw/	queen
/ou/	ouch owl plough
/oi/	ointment toy
/yoo/	unicorn statue tube new pneumatic
/er/	mermaid birthday nurse earth world
schwa /er/ (or /u/)	mixer humour theatre
/ar/	artist father [palm half calves]
/air/	hair hare bear where
/eer/	deer ears adhere cashier
/zh/	television treasure azure courgette collage

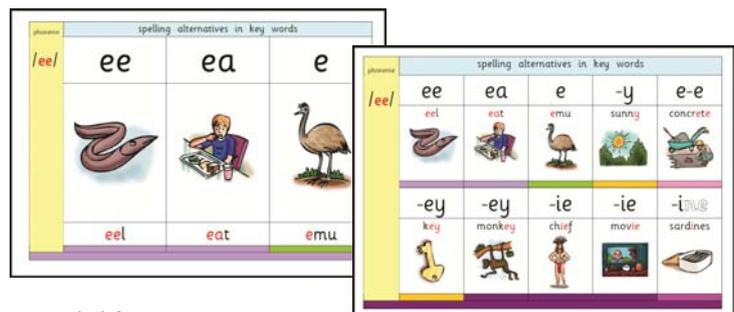
No alphabetic code chart can be definitive because of variations in accent and occasional differences in spelling (e.g. UK compared to the USA). Hollow letters (e i y w qu lt m f ves) show patterns which alert readers to pronunciations or possible pronunciations dependent on the words.

The Mnemonic System in Phonics International:

Key **picture-words** provide an 'aid to memory' system for prompting the sounds:



Key **printed words and their pictures** with highlighted graphemes provide examples of the spelling alternatives linked to the sounds:



Optional actions are provided for very young learners for the key picture-words in units 1 to 5.

The Systematic Steps:

The Phonics International programme provides many 'strands' of highly practical, flexible teaching and learning resources divided into 12 units. Each unit has its own webpage which includes resources for **code to word**, to **sentence** and **text level** activities with an extensive range of supporting posters. Phonics International includes a further comprehensive body of resources called the **Early Years Starter Package** which, in effect, is like a 'programme within a programme'. This additional bank of resources provides for the same letter/s-sound correspondences in the same order as in units 1 to 6 of the Phonics International programme so all the resources are complementary. The resources in the Early Years Starter Package for units 1 to 6 are provided on one webpage.

The letter/s-sound correspondences featured on the **Alphabetic Code Charts** are introduced and revisited in the following order, with cumulative texts and spelling word banks, in the full Phonics International programme:

Grapheme order based on the core and essential multi-skills Sounds Book Activity Sheets									
Unit 1	s	a	t	i	p	n			
	c	k	-ck	e	h	r			
Unit 2	m	d	g	o	u	l	l, -ll	f, -ff	s, -ss
	b	j	y	ai	ay	ai, ay	w	oa	/oa/ ow
	oa, ow	-ie	-igh	-ie, -igh	-le	/u/ o			
	/ai/ a	/ee/ e	/igh/ i	/oa/ o	/yoo/ u	/igh/ -y			
Unit 3	ee	or	z	z, -zz	w	wh	w, wh		
	/ee/ ea	ee, ea	/e/ e, -ea	/z/ z -zz s -se -ze					
Unit 4	-ng	-nk	v	v, -ve	short oo	long oo	oo, oo	y	-y, -ey
	/ks/ -x	ch	sh	th, th	-ed	double consonant letters			
Unit 5	qu	/ou/ ou	/ou/ ow	ou, ow	ow, ow	oi	oy	-ue	-ue, -ue
	er	ar	-ve	-ce	s, -ss, -ce	-ge	j, -ge	-se	y, -y, -y
Unit 6	ce ci cy	ge gi gy	o, -oe	'o' 'oes'	-ie, i-e	ee, e-e	-oe, o-e	-ae, a-e	-ue, u-e
	/air/ air	-are	-ear	-ere	/eer/ eer	ear	-ere	-ier	
	/er/ ir	ur	ear	wor	-er, -our	-re (-er)			
	Optional extra resources for schools undertaking the statutory Year One phonics screening check in England:			/f/ f ph	/or/ or au aw	ou /ou/ /oo/	ie /igh/ /ee/	ew /yoo/ /oo/	ch /ch/ /k/ /sh/
Unit 7	-le	-il	-al	-el	aw	au	-al	oar	-oor
	ore	-our	/ch/ -tch	ch, -tch	/j/ -dge	-ge, -dge	-x, -x	/n/ kn	/r/ wr
	/m/ -mb	/s/ sc	/g/ gu	/b/ bu	/k/ ch	/r/ rh			
Unit 8	/sh/ sh, ch	/sh/ -ti	/sh/ -ci	/sh/ -ssi	/zh/ -si -s -z g -ge	/u/ -ou	'ous'	/f/ ph	
	/f/ -gh	g, -gg, gh	ch, ch, ch	/o/ wa	/o/ qua	/or/ war	/n/ gn	/s/ -st-	
Unit 9	/ai/ -ey	eigh	/ai/ -ea	-aigh	/i-ee/ -ey	/i-ee/ -ie	/i/ -y	/ee/ -ie	/igh/ ei
Unit 10	/u/ o	/oo/ -ew	/oo/ -ui	/oo/ -ou	/yoo/ eu	/yoo/ ew	/yoo/ -iew		
Unit 11	/or/ ough	augh	'ough' as code for different sounds			/k/ ch	/k/ qu	/k/ -que	/or/ quar
Unit 12	/g/ -gue	/igh+n/ -ine	/i+n/ -ine	/ee+n/ -ine	/m/ -mn	/s/ ps	/ar/ al ^m -alf -alves	/o/ alt	/ch+u/ -ture
	/oa/ -eau	schwa /u/ -re	/ng/ -n						
Extras	Additional resources which are non-unit specific are provided on a further webpage								

Phonics International as a spelling programme:

Please note that the order of introducing the letter/s-sound correspondences can be planned flexibly when Phonics International is used as a **spelling programme for older learners**. Focus on a specific sound, for example, and teach all the spelling alternatives for that sound using resources from whichever units the focus sound is featured. Alternatively, **look at the level of vocabulary** in the core *Sounds Book Activity Sheets* and parallel *I can read* texts and *Questions* to ascertain their suitability for providing **language comprehension** and **spelling word bank** activities.

Phonics International as an intervention programme:

Phonics International can be used as an 'intervention programme' for learners of all ages with gaps in their alphabetic code knowledge and/or weak phonics skills.

Phonics International with learners for whom English is a new or additional language:

The Phonics International resources are appropriate for any age learner whether English is the main spoken language or additional language. It is the *same* alphabetic code knowledge (the letter/s-sound correspondences) and the *same* three core skills and their *sub*-skills that need to be taught and learned to proficiency.

The Sounds Book Activity Sheets:

The alphabetic code information and focused practice of the core skills and their *sub*-skills are provided by the *Sounds Book Activity Sheets* which are **central** to the Phonics International programme. The *Sounds Book Activity Sheets* are available in all 12 units with detailed guidance for the 'teacher' on every sheet - share this information with learners' parents wherever possible (for example, by keeping the paper-based work in **learners' own phonics folders** which can become part of the **school's bookbag routine**). Other Phonics International resources support the core teaching and learning provided on the *Sounds Book Activity Sheets*. Teachers need to decide how best to select and use additional material in their context but only if required for their learners' needs. The *Sounds Book Activity Sheets* are essential for **ALL** learners and should be used systematically and regularly for each learner to **practise personally** so these particular resources **really need to be paper-based**. Where necessary – provide activities in a 'layered' way - that is, go back to earlier work and revise as required whilst pressing ahead to teach new alphabetic code. As an overarching principle, when learners are able to decode at **word level**, **aim to alternate the Sounds Book Activity Sheets with parallel resources at sentence or text level** such as the *Sentences* resource (in units 1 to 5) and/or *I can read* texts (in units 1 to 12) or the *Simple Sentences* in the Early Years Starter Package (units 1 to 6).

The Basic Phonics Lesson Format:

The suggested lesson format, for teachers to introduce the letter/s-sound correspondences and for each learner to practise his or her phonics skills, is a very simple and routine '**Teaching and Learning Cycle**':

1. **Revisit and review**: Revise **old learning** of the letter/s-sound correspondences of the **alphabetic code** taught to date with 'quick-fire' activities (for example, with grapheme flash cards for younger learners and *Say the Sounds Posters* with learners of any age). Practise from **print-to-sound** for reading and from **sound-to-print** for spelling. Include **re-reading** word banks, sentences and texts from previous lessons.
2. **Teach**: Adult introduces **new learning** of the next, or focus, letter/s-sound correspondence and **models** blending (decoding for reading), oral segmenting (encoding for spelling) and handwriting with a few selected cumulative words. (The *Core Teacher Modelling Cards* in the Early Years Starter Package are designed specifically to be supportive of the teacher-led introduction as they provide all the words for modelling.)
3. **Learner-practice at word level**: Include the new or focus letter/s-sound correspondence for intensive, personal practice of the three core skills of blending, segmenting and handwriting at word level using the **cumulative** word banks (words consisting of code already taught along with the new code). Sometimes there may be an emphasis on a particular skill as decided by the teacher. Note that the *Sounds Book Activity Sheets* build up the main cumulative word bank as letter/s-sound correspondences are taught or revisited and they provide the routine word-level multi-skills activities. **Ultimately, spelling word banks need to be familiar.**
4. **Apply and extend**: Further learner-practice with cumulative *Simple Sentences*, *Sentences* and *I can read* text level resources – remember these **alternate** with the **parallel Sounds Book Activity Sheets**. See wider variety of resources in units 1 to 6 for additional **beginner** or **special needs** activities.

See the blue box labelled **IMPORTANT** on the **Free Resources** page for the Simple View of Reading & Writing models and the posters for the core skills and *sub*-skills of the Phonics Routines: www.phonicsinternational.com/new_free_resources.html