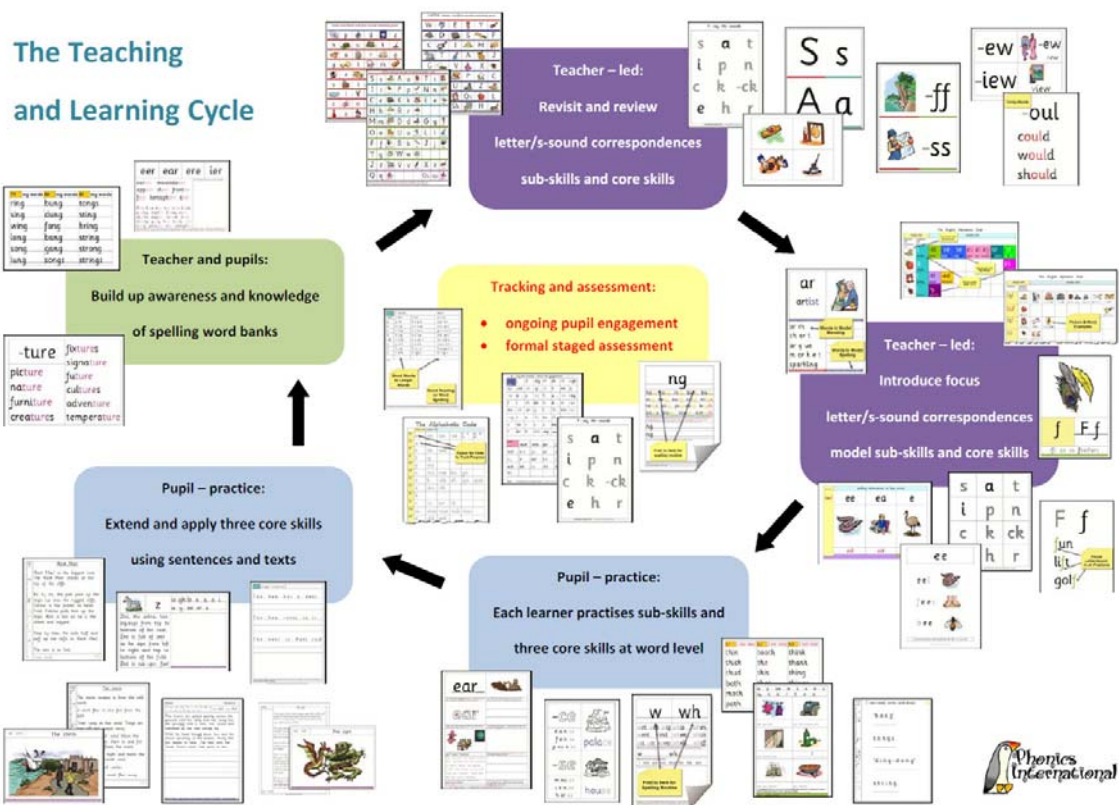


It is straightforward to start a synthetic phonics programme from the *beginning* as the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code and the cumulative word banks are introduced incrementally from the **first letter-sound correspondence s /s/**. When a programme is introduced for the first time at a *later stage*, one of the challenges for the teacher, tutor or parent is to decide ‘where in the programme’ to start and ‘how’ to use the programme’s **resources** and **routines**. This is particularly challenging with older learners in a *whole class* scenario when the learners may have individual levels of alphabetic code knowledge and decoding, encoding and handwriting skills. They may also have different levels of spoken language in English. For some learners, the English language may be new to them as a second, or third, language! This presents organisational challenges for teachers – and the need to plan carefully how best to use the Phonics International programme in the circumstances.

The **Teaching and Learning Cycle** is the routine lesson format whatever the age of the learners: the teacher *revisits and reviews* previously introduced letter/s-sound correspondences (for example, with flash cards of the letters and letter groups and/or with the **Say the Sounds Posters**); then the teacher *introduces* the next focus letter/s-sound correspondence as required (with a selected flash card, and/or **Frieze Poster**, or simply write the correspondence on the teacher’s board); then the teacher models some blending for reading and segmenting for spelling (with the preferred handwriting style); then each learner uses his or her own copy of the essential **Sounds Book Activity Sheets** to learn the focus letter/s-sound correspondence/s and to practise blending, segmenting and handwriting at word level. A further resource as appropriate is provided *along with* the Sounds Book Activity Sheets for extending the focus learning according to the stage of the individual (e.g. more code or word level resources, or sentence/text level resources such as: ‘Simple Sentences’, ‘Sentences’, ‘I can read’ texts and ‘Questions’).



Teachers need to distinguish between the *two main processes* required for learning to read - **word decoding** and **language comprehension** - to consider the *reading profiles* of the learners and to plan appropriately for the learners' basic alphabetic code knowledge and skills practice as well as their spoken language needs. A useful conceptual framework to support this is the *Simple View of Reading* model. For learners with English as a new or additional language, it may be helpful to consider the learners' profiles in *both* the mother tongue and in the English language.

See http://www.phonicsinternational.com/The_Simple_View_of_Reading_model.pdf

Before starting the synthetic phonics programme, establish a **baseline** of existing alphabetic code knowledge and phonics skills for each learner if possible. Resources to help with this assessment include the **Range of free Assessments** on the FREE RESOURCES webpage at <http://www.phonicsinternational.com/assessment.html> or select the most suitable **Say the Sounds Posters** (three versions of which are available via the webpage for each of the Units of work in Phonics International). Alternatively, use your preferred sets of Flash Cards of letters and letter groups which can be found via the *Early Years Starter Package* webpage, the Unit 1 webpage and the Unit 6 webpage.

Having assessed learners' alphabetic code knowledge (that is, which letter/s-sound correspondences do they know, or not know), decide whether it is possible to plan for a 'best fit' whole class approach, or whether it is necessary to establish two main groups. Learners who have very specific learning difficulties will need additional time and support.

Display the Alphabetic Code Chart

- 1) In the classroom or teaching area, display a version of a 'Giant' **Alphabetic Code Chart** in an easy-to-reach position for the teacher to refer to routinely and for learners to see and reach easily. Ideally, each of the (10) A4 sheets of a Giant Alphabetic Code Chart can be printed and then enlarged by photocopying to A3 for maximum visibility. This chart can then be displayed in **two columns** (of 5 sheets each) side-by-side. There are also giant 'pull-up' and 'hang down' **Alphabetic Code Charts** available *to purchase separately* in durable plasticised material if preferred.
- 2) To use the Alphabetic Code Chart as a **spelling reference chart**, the learner identifies the sounds all-through-the-spoken-word, tallying each sound to thumb and fingers of the left hand, palm facing, then asks the teacher, if necessary, which spelling alternatives are needed in that particular word. Find the focus SOUND in the left hand 'phoneme' column of the chart, and then track along the ROW of that sound to point out which spelling alternative (or grapheme) is used in that particular word. For example: the learner wants to spell the word '**complete**' and asks the teacher, "Which spelling do I need for the /ee/ sound in 'complete'?" The teacher looks down the left-hand 'phoneme' column to find the /ee/ sound on the chart, then tracks along the row and points and says, "You need this *spelling* [or *grapheme*] [e-e] as in the word 'concrete'." The teacher may use the terminology such as, "You need the **split digraph** as in the word 'concrete'" if preferred.
- 3) When the teacher has modelled this use of the Alphabetic Code Chart, learners themselves will start to use it and self-teach. Occasionally, they may discover graphemes which are not displayed on the chart – and these can be added to the chart or quickly make an A4 poster of the new grapheme to add to the main phonics display wall.

For examples of posters for unusual words, see:

http://www.phonicsinternational.com/unusual_words_posters.pdf

4) Set up each learner with a clip folder (phonics folder) which becomes part of the bookbag routine for school-aged learners. Supply a **Mini Alphabetic Code Chart**, and a **Say the Sounds Poster** to match the stage of leaning, for the folder. As part of the *revisit and review* routine at the beginning of lessons, learners can sometimes say the sounds using their own copy of the Say the Sounds Poster – ticking what they think they know well – and underlining or circling what they need to learn better. Periodically, a supporting adult needs to hear each learner say the sounds and can tick (and date) with a coloured pen.

5) The Phonics International programme can be used as a spelling programme in Key Stage Two (and for older learners). There will be learners, however, whose *decoding* (reading) skill will also benefit from the core routines using the **Sounds Book Activity Sheets** alternating with the **'I can read'** texts.

6) There may be insufficient time left in a primary school to teach older pupils the Phonics International programme in consecutive units from a lower unit. Teachers in upper Key Stage Two may want to select focus 'sounds' and then **create their own order of introducing the work** by tracking across the row of the focus sound. The Sounds Book Activity Sheets for the graphemes in the lower units may be too easy for some learners and at the correct level for others, therefore the teachers can select the most appropriate letter/s-sound correspondences (via the core Sounds Book Activity Sheets and corresponding 'I can read' texts) for their classes – or as appropriate for groups in their classes - using a 'best fit' approach wherever possible.

7) Teachers may decide to focus on one **sound** for the whole class and provide one group of learners with the Sounds Book Activity Sheets and 'I can read' texts from a lower unit than the remaining learners who can focus on a different spelling alternative for the sound.

8) It is recommended that class teachers, wherever possible, divide the learners into **no more than two groups** unless there are some learners with particular special needs. In this case, the learners with *many* gaps in alphabetic code knowledge (the letter/s-sound correspondences) will require extra daily activities of whatever they need for their level. The class teacher needs to *ensure* that learners with real difficulties are getting the daily provision that they need as individuals, or within very small groups, which will help them to learn. Analyse carefully what they need **exactly**, avoid 'busy-work' and 'time-fillers', and make sure that they can, and do, progress. Take care that the supervising adult **does not do the work for the learners**. It is only the application and effort of the learners themselves which will help them to learn and there is always a danger of **over-modelling** for learners with slower processing or shorter-term memories.

9) The teacher delivers the **teacher-led introduction** with the **whole class** where possible – even if one group needs to focus on a different letter/s-sound correspondence. The teacher can introduce TO THE WHOLE CLASS which sound and which grapheme/s one of the groups is going to focus upon. Then the teacher introduces TO THE WHOLE CLASS which sound and grapheme/s the other group is going to focus upon. This should amount to **'looking ahead'** information for the slower-to-learn learners (or learners who simply have gaps in alphabetic code knowledge) and it should amount to **'revision'** for the other group.

This routine should be as simple and precise and as 'crisp' as possible and does not need to take up much time. Avoid *over-elaborating* the teacher-led introduction – that is, when using printed words to show blending all-through-the-printed word, and using spoken words to demonstrate, or practise, the oral segmenting routine – just model (or collectively practise) a **few** examples so the learners themselves can start their *own* practice.

- 10) The teacher should have prepared beforehand copies of the **Sounds Book Activity Sheets** (one per learner) and the selected 'extension' activity (one per learner) as appropriate. The learners should be **trained in the routines** and be very clear about completing the first side of the Sounds Book Activity Sheet then continuing with their extension activity until the teacher is ready to conduct with the whole class (or each group) the **spelling-with-editing routine** on the *folded-up* part of the Sounds Book Activity Sheets. (Before the spelling routine, however, go through the cumulative printed words and their meanings with the whole class as an oral activity.)

The teacher may decide to conduct this spelling part of the lesson with one group at a time, or alternate the words she or he gives to each group. It may well be that a teaching assistant can oversee one group and provide the spellings and the teacher may provide the spellings for the other group. Teachers and teaching assistants need to decide what works best for them in the classroom. This may take some experimentation at first. Teachers and teaching assistants can work as a partnership so that ALL adults are familiar with ALL the learners' needs and capabilities. Of course the groups may be different sizes according to the needs of the learners.

- 11) Whilst it is suggested that teachers find a BEST FIT entry point into the programme, it is recognised that teachers must make the programme effective and easy-to-manage according to their context and ways of working. The overarching guidance for the use of Phonics International, however, is to **avoid the setting up of multiple groups** within classes as these become very difficult to plan for, resource and manage.
- 12) DIFFERENTIATION: The design features underpinning the Phonics International programme include the teacher being aware that the learners will '**access the resources at their level**' and can '**work at their own speed**' -and they all have '**extension activities**' provided routinely for their needs. A **combination** of shorter words and longer, more challenging words are always provided in the resources. Some learners may need **additional supervision**, and some learners may need to revisit, or complete, activities later in the day, or at home, for **little and often** practice to raise their levels of learning. The teacher is aware that some learners learn almost immediately and some learners need plenty of revision and consolidation.
- 13) The collating of each learner's resources in the phonics folder provides instant access to a rich, cumulative bank of words, sentences and texts and resources required at letter/s-sound correspondence level (including a mini Alphabetic Code Chart and a Say the Sounds Poster). This enables quick revision and consolidation in school and at home which can be supervised by any supporting adult as required. It also facilitates maximum engagement for the learners as learning can be noted, celebrated and tracked on the resources themselves as they are used. Both teachers and learners can write on the paper-based resources.
- 14) SPECIAL NEEDS INTERVENTION: The resources in the learners' phonics folders build-up to create a significant bank of cumulative resources from code level to text level and this provides an instant and impressive body of work for any over-learning and additional practice as required. It is, therefore, the exact content required for any literacy INTERVENTION. It provides, in effect, the basic skills literacy intervention programme and there should be no requirement for using 'another' intervention programme!
- 15) Remember that ALL the Phonics International resources can be used in multiple ways for decoding, encoding, handwriting, vocabulary enrichment, speaking-and-listening, comprehension and 'extension' purposes.

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