

# Synthetic Phonics



## What is a synthetic phonic approach?

Synthetic phonics is a system that teaches reading and spelling. It is used in the majority of schools in the UK and involves the explicit teaching of phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) which are blended together (synthesized) to make words. For example, children are taught to split a single-syllable word such as 'cat' into its three letters, pronounce a sound for each letter in turn /k, a, t/, and blend the sounds together to form a word. As the structured program progresses, children learn larger, more complex units of sound that contain two and three letters and are able to use this process to recognise an increasing the number of words. Phonic instruction aids the development of word recognition by providing children with an important and useful way to figure out unfamiliar words while reading which improves fluency, accuracy and reading comprehension.

Phonics, if delivered frequently, provides a code for children to break words down into parts and then blend these together to make words.

Phonics was introduced in 2007 with the publication of the Letters and Sounds programme, which is still in used in many schools today.

There are numerous suggestions about what percentage of English words can be read using a phonic approach however not all words can be read this way and have to be learnt as whole words. So, alongside a phonic approach, there are a list of words that should be taught as whole words as they appear commonly in texts and cannot be read using a phonic approach. A list of these words can be found on the link: <http://www.highfrequencywords.org/>



Warning !



- Synthetic phonics must be taught using a structured programme that should be taught daily.
- Synthetic phonics use 'pure sounds' which **MUST** be taught explicitly. If children do not learn the pure sounds then they will normally add on an extra sound to consonants which are known as 'schwa' sounds. An example of this is when sounding out the word 'ban'. If pure sounds are not used then children will add the 'uh' sounds to consonants which means they are blending five sounds together and not three. Ban would then be sounded out like this: 'buh' 'ah' 'nuh'

and would be pronounced 'buh-ah-nuh' which would sound like 'banner' . This would confuse many children.

- It would be beneficial to provide training to parents regarding how they should pronounce phonemes and use a phonic approach. They can then model/reinforce the correct strategy of reading at home.
- You also need to inform parents that some apps do not teach phonics using a synthetic approach and ideally provide alternative apps that they should use if they decide to reinforce learning in this way.
- All staff involved with teaching phonics must be taught how to pronounce sounds correctly.

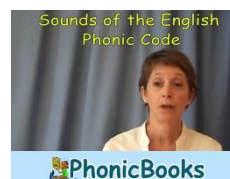
## Pure sound articulation

The YouTube videos below show how to pronounce synthetic phonics correctly. Please ensure that everybody in the school is doing this correctly and that parents understand how to do this .

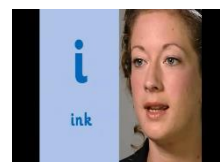
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW\\_v-1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJx1NSineE>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ksblMiliA8>



American accent :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpVQQv4noZk>



Phonic games are available on the following websites:

Matching letters to sounds : <http://www.ictgames.com/phonicsPop/index.html>

Blending bingo : <http://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/bingoOriginal/index.html>

Odd and Bob : <https://www.phonicsbloom.com/uk/game/odd-and-bob?phase=2>

<http://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/literacy.html>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zgkw2hv> - Information about phase 2 and 3 sounds