

Understanding **Phonics**

IN RESPONSE TO TUTOR

FEEDBACK, we'd like to give you a list of helpful resources you can dip into to learn more about the teaching of phonics in Year 1 in UK primary schools. All of our TutorMate pupils are in Year 1 (5 to 6 years old).

We do appreciate that phonics is a fascinating subject and that many of you are keen to learn more. However, we don't expect our reading volunteers to become phonics experts. Your role is to enjoy reading stories with your pupil and to gently encourage them to be more fluent and confident through consistent practice.

As you review the material, please keep in mind that different schools follow specific phonics programmes/schemes which may have subtle variations. The information shared here is designed to provide you with a general overview of the basics of early reading.

What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write. It helps children hear, identify and use different sounds that distinguish one word from another in the English language. Phonics involves matching the sounds of spoken English with individual letters or groups of letters. For example, the sound "k" can be spelled as c, k, ck, or ch.

Teaching children to blend the sounds of letters together helps them decode unfamiliar or unknown words by sounding them out.

There are some great videos, designed for parents, that help you understand the basics of phonics. We like the Oxford Owl resources, including the 'What is Phonics video?' and Ruth Miskins 10 Top Tips found [HERE](#).

Phonics teaching: dividing into phases

Phases 1 to 4. Nursery and Reception children spend time on identifying and understanding basic letter sounds and letter names.

Phase 5. Year 1 is mostly spent on Phase 5 sounds. The start of the year will include a recap of Phase 3 and 4 sounds.

You can view more resources below

- Click [HERE](#) to learn about the order in which children learn the sound Phases and which sounds and blends are in each Phase.
- For a detailed video on the Phase 5 (Year 1 sounds), including how they are pronounced, blended and taught, click [HERE](#).
- And last, but not least, click [HERE](#) for the Department of Education Letters and Sounds 'bible' which sets out the curriculum recommendations for all of phonics teaching, from nursery to Year 2.