

Phonics Glossary of Terms

Adjacent consonants	Two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds. Example: the first three letters of <i>strap</i> are adjacent consonants. Previously known as a consonant cluster.
Blending	The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and synthesise/blend the phonemes in order to make a word. Example: <i>s-n-a-p</i> , blended together, reads <i>snap</i> .
CVC, CCVC, CCVCC etc.	The abbreviations used to describe the order of sounds such as consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) and consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant words (CCVCC). Example: <i>cat</i> , <i>ship</i> and <i>sheep</i> are all <i>CVC</i> words. The words <i>black</i> and <i>prize</i> could be described as <i>CCVC</i> words.
Grapheme	A letter or group of letters representing one sound (phoneme) Example: <i>ck</i> , <i>igh</i> , <i>t</i> , <i>sh</i>
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a word.
Segmenting	The process of using phonics for writing. Children listen to the whole word and break it down into the constituent phonemes, choosing an appropriate grapheme to represent each phoneme. Example: <i>ship</i> can be segmented as <i>sh-i-p</i> .
Synthesising	The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and synthesise/blend the phonemes in order to make a word. Example: <i>s-n-a-p</i> , blended together, reads <i>snap</i> .
Digraph	Two letters which together make one sound. There are different types of digraph: vowel, consonant and split digraphs.
Vowel digraph	A digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel Example: <i>ea</i> , <i>ay</i> , <i>ai</i> , <i>ar</i>
Consonant digraph	Two consonants which make one sound. Example: <i>sh</i> , <i>ch</i> , <i>th</i> , <i>ph</i>
Split digraph	Two letters, which work as a pair to make one sound, but are separated within the word. Example <i>a-e</i> as in <i>make</i> or <i>late</i> ; <i>i-e</i> as in <i>size</i> or <i>write</i> .
Trigraph	Three letters which together make one sound. Example: <i>dge</i> , <i>igh</i>