

Phonics and spellings terminology



Phonics – the way we teach children about letters and the sounds they make in different words.

Phoneme – a unit of sound. The number of phonemes or sounds in a word is not always the same as the number of letters. For example, the word '**sheep**' has 5 letters but only 3 phonemes

sh - ee - p.

Grapheme – a letter or group of letters.

Digraph – this is when two letters work together to make one sound. For example, the word '**church**' has 3 digraphs **ch – ur - ch**. There are *lots* of digraphs which the children learn at school. Here are just a few examples:

ee in meet, ea in beans, oo in spoon, oi in coin, or in fork.

Trigraph - this is when three letters work together to make one sound. For example, the word '**light**' has a trigraph in it: **l - igh - t**. There are quite a few trigraphs that the children learn at school. Here are a few examples:

ear in fear, air in chair, ure in sure.

Split vowel digraph – This is a digraph that is split round another letter. For example:

oe in toe can be split around letter 'p' to make **hope**

ie in pie can be split around the letter 't' to make **bite**

Others include **a- e in cake, e-e in Steve and u-e in tune.**

Vowel - The vowels are **a, e, i, o, u**. They can also be represented by two or more letters e.g. vowel digraphs include:

ai in rain, ea in beach and ay in day.

Vowel sounds can sometimes be represented by the letter **y** e.g. **gym, funny, sky.**

Consonants - These are all other letters of the alphabet.

Short vowel sounds: a, e, i, o and u when they make their sound.

For example: a in 'cat'

u in 'up'

e in 'pet'

i in 'pick'

o in 'dog'

Knowing the short vowel sounds is very handy for learning some spellings rules.