



# Phonics Glossary

There are 44 phonetic sounds or phonemes in the English language:  
20 vowel sounds and 24 consonant sounds.

They are each represented by the 26 letters of the alphabet individually and in combination.

## Phoneme

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound. Each different sound in a word is a phoneme.

Examples: a, l, k, m, oo, sh, igh

## Blending

Blending involves merging the individual sounds in a word together in order to pronounce it.

Example: p-o-t = pot

## Segmenting

Segmenting is the ability to break up spoken words into their separate sounds.

Example: m-a-t = mat

## High Frequency Words

High frequency words (HFWs) are words that appear frequently in written and spoken language.

Examples: and, come, up, I, my

## Digraph

A digraph is a combination of two letters representing one sound.

Examples: ng, wh, ai, ck, oa

## Tricky Words

Tricky words are words that are tricky to sound out, read or spell as they use difficult spelling patterns.

Examples: the, said, was, of

## CVC Words

CVC words are words that follow the pattern of consonant-vowel-consonant.

Examples: pit, hat, pin, set, mop

## Trigraphs

A trigraph is a combination of three letters representing one sound.

Examples: igh, ear, air, tch

## Grapheme

Graphemes are the written representation of sounds.

Examples: o, s, ch, th, igh, air, eigh

## Decoding

Decoding is using phonetical knowledge to read words.

Example: sp-i-n = spin

## Split digraph

A split digraph is when two letters are separated by a consonant to make one sound.

Examples: late, mile, rule, made

## Pure Sounds

Pure sounds are the clear and distinct pronunciation of letters without adding extra sounds.

Example: m = 'mmm' not 'muh'

