



KS2 PHONICS

The Alphabetic code

KS2 children are introduced to phonics as the notion of a 'code'.

It is the relationship between the sounds of speech and their spelling alternatives (the graphemes). To work out 'the code', they must be taught to start from a whole spoken word said slowly. Next they orally segment the word into its sounds and map those onto the graphemes in the written word.

Y2 and KS2 use – "The English Alphabetic Code" mats

KS2 children are taught that the English language is one of the most difficult languages to decode/encode.

Because there are:

- 26 letters of the alphabet – 26 lower case graphemes 26 upper case graphemes
- 44 sounds

The Alphabetic Code is a complex code for the writing system where the 26 letters of the alphabet represent the 44 smallest sounds identifiable in English speech in three complicated ways:

1. one sound (**phoneme**) can be represented by one, two, three or four letters: e.g. /a/ a, /f/ ph, /igh/ igh, /oa/ ough
2. one sound can be represented by multiple spelling alternatives (**graphemes**): e.g. /oa/: o, oa, ow, oe, o-e, eau, ough
3. one grapheme (letter or letter group) can represent multiple sounds: e.g. 'ough': /oa/ though, /or/ thought, long /oo/ through, /ou/ plough, /u/ thorough

Simple Code – common use of sound

Complex code – spelling alternatives used in the English language

Phonic knowledge – letter/s – sound correspondences

On the mats, the units of sound (phonemes or combined phonemes) are shown in slash marks. Vowel sounds are shown in red and consonant sounds are shown in blue. The vowel sounds provide the main volume and depth in spoken words whereas the consonant sounds are generally much quieter and sometimes very high-pitched such as /s/ and /t/.

Note: Teachers need to teach the separate units of sounds carefully, avoiding the added 'schwa' or "uh" sound: e.g. "sss" not "suh"; "t" not "tuh".

Skills

1. **DECODING:** Sound out and **blend** all-through-the-printed-word for reading unknown words.
2. **ENCODING:** Orally **segment** (identify) the sounds all-through-the-spoken-word for spelling; then select the correct graphemes **AS CODE FOR** the identified sounds in that particular word.
3. **HANDWRITING:** Hold the pencil with **the tripod grip** and form correctly the 26 upper case letters and lower case letters on **writing lines**

Progression in teaching:

KS1

Simple Code – “**Letters and Sounds**” **DfE** will be used to teach this part of the alphabetic code progression first, that is, mainly one spelling for each sound at a rate of two to five letter/s-sound correspondences per week.

The simple code is part of the complex code – a **first step** towards the teaching of the alphabetic code.

Keep the simple code revised and begin to introduce **spelling and pronunciation alternatives** of the **complex code** at a rate appropriate to the age, stage and ability of the learners.

KS2

The Alphabetic Code will be introduced to the children. The idea of it being a code and we have to “crack the code” well into adulthood will be a key message. The history of the English language will be shared along with an understanding of its complexity.