

Phonics Made Simple

Why it is important you understand these concepts

You need to learn the metalanguage of reading. This is the language that we use to talk and write about language.

If you do not know or understand the metalanguage then your explanations and writing will be unclear.

Implicit to explicit

- you know how to read
- you need to know how to teach children to read
- what is natural and intuitive needs to become visible and systematic to the children

Some useful definitions and explanation

Phonics

- is an approach to reading in which individual letters or groups of letters are linked with the sounds they represent and translated into meaningful wholes

Phoneme: the smallest unit of sound.

- a phoneme is the smallest unit of speech sound in a word that changes meaning

Thus,

//bed// has 3 phonemes (speech sounds)

If we change the 'b' to 'r' we have:

//red// which has a different meaning

- **CONSONANT PHONEMES** are those sounds where there is a degree of constriction of the air as it flows out of the mouth or nose.

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- VOWEL PHONEMES are those sounds where the air flows out of the mouth without any constriction.

Morpheme

- is the smallest unit of meaning - a meaningful morphological unit of language that cannot be further divided (e.g. *in*, *come* , *-ing*, forming *incoming*).

Grapheme

- a letter or a group of letters representing one sound. 's' can be represented by the graphemes *s*, (*sun*) *se* (*house*), *c* (*city*), *SC* and *cue* (*science*)

A grapheme is the letter or combination of letters that represents a phoneme in a word.

Each word always has the same number of graphemes as phonemes but there may be more letters than phonemes.

Grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC): the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondences'

Blend

- to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. *s-n-a-p*, blended together, reads *snap*.

Cluster

- two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds, e.g. the first three letters of '*straight*' are a consonant cluster.

Segment

- to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word '*cat*' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/

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Mnemonic

- a device for memorising and recalling something e.g. there is 'a rat' in separate

VC, CVC, CCVC

- the abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, and are used to describe the order of letters in words, e.g. am, Sam, slam.

Onset and Rime (not referred to so much these days)

- onset: the initial sound in a word
- rime: the final vowel and consonant sound pattern

e.g., cat c / at

o c = onset

o at = rime

Digraphs

- are 2 letter graphemes (2 letters = one phoneme)

Split digraph

- Vowel, consonant, 'E' (VCE)
 - o Made
 - o Time
 - o Home

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Left/right orientation

- the ability to read a line of print from left to right

Auditory perception

- the ability to be aware of sounds

Auditory discrimination

- the ability to appreciate the differences and similarities in sounds

Auditory memory

- the ability to remember a sound which has previously been perceived.

Phonology

- the way that the speech sounds are identified and combined to produce and understand spoken language

The phonological system of language - the speech sounds

Orthography

- the conventional writing system of language and how this relates to the spoken language. This includes spelling, punctuation and other text conventions

The orthographic system of language - the written language

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The English language is difficult

- Beginner readers must learn how the orthographic system relates to the spoken system.
- The English orthographical system is difficult
- English orthography is difficult because of the presence of digraphs and three/four letter graphemes
- Children have to learn which grapheme represents the same phoneme in different words
- And that takes good, systematic teaching

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About the English language

Although approximately 85% of the words in the English language are regular, in that they can be governed by rules which can be taught using the phonic method, (*cat, bite, pail, bought*), the remaining 15% are irregular and are not governed by rules (*fuchsia, autumn, pneumonia*). These must therefore be taught by other methods.

44



44 speech sounds
24 consonant
20 vowels

26 letters of the alphabet
21 consonants
5 vowels

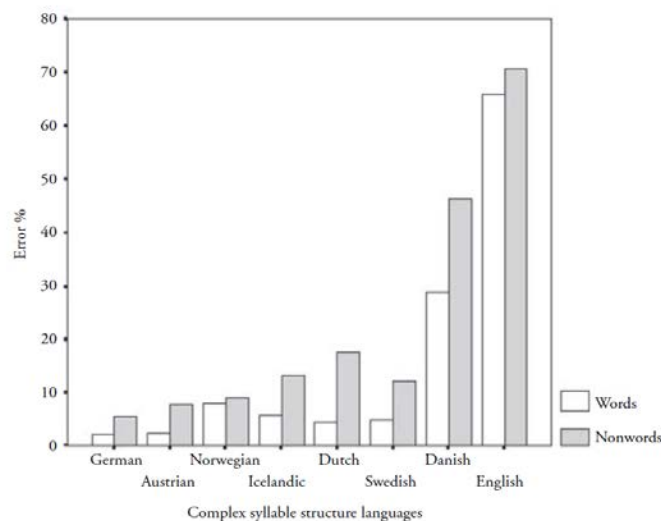


Figure 16.1 Error rates (%) for familiar word and simple nonword reading by simple syllable language groups and complex syllable language groups.

Additional material

Single Consonants

b c d f g h j k
l m n p r s t v w
x y z

Doubled Consonants

bb dd ff gg etc

Consonant Blends

st sp sc sk sl sm sn sw
br cr dr pr tr gr fr
bl pl cl fl gl

Short Vowels: initial sounds	
'a' as in apple	
'e' as in elephant	
'i' as in ink	
'o' as in orange	
'u' as in umbrella	

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Short Vowels: medial sounds

'a' as in bat	
'e' as in bed	
'i' as in tin	
'o' as in dog	
'u' as in jug	

Long vowels

A long vowel is when the vowel says its name:

A E I O U

Digraphs: two letters making one sound

- **Consonant digraphs:**
ch th (three/that) sh wh qu ph
- **Vowel digraphs:**
ai, ay, au,
ee, ei, ea (bean/head),
ie, oi, oy,
oa, oo (wood/food) ow (cow/snow)
ou (about/rough/through)
ue (rue)
- **Split digraphs**
a-e as in make or i-e in site

Other Sounds for c, g, s

- C followed by e, i or y has a soft s sound
- G followed by e, i or y has a soft j sound
- S makes the z sound as in has

Final and Silent e

- Functionless role as in kettle^e, jungle^e, house^e.
- Modifying role as in cake^e, cable^e, bite^e, bone^e, tube^e.
- Special pronunciation of 'are' as in fare, 'ire' as in fire, 'ure' as in pure.

Silent Letters

- b, g, m, gh, k, l, t, w

Modification of Vowels by r

- A vowel followed by 'r' often makes a new sound: as in far, for, sister, girl, burn.
- Modification by 'w' as in warm and worm.