

PHONICS

Phonics is an instructional method that emphasizes the understanding of the symbol-sound relationship in written language. Phonics attempts to teach children predictable connections and patterns between the sounds that are spoken and the letters that are written.

WHAT IT MEANS

Phonics helps children understand the relationships between letters and individual sounds. Children need to understand that the letter *m* stands for the /*m*/ sound, for example. When children understand that *bake* is spelled with an *e* rather than *bak*, they are better able to read, spell, and write words like *cake*, *lake*, *make*, *take*, *wake*, and *snake*.

Knowing these relationships helps children more accurately read familiar words, analyze new words, and write words.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

You will begin to notice behaviors that indicate children's growing mastery of phonics skills when they:

- Know consonant sounds.
- Know that *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* are vowels.
- Know sounds of digraphs. Example: /*sh*/ in *shell*.
- Know sounds of consonant blends. Example: /*bl*/ in *block* and /*str*/ in *string*.
- Know short vowel word families. Example: at, an, op, on, it, in.
- Break words into syllables.
- Find familiar words within unknown words. Example: *mat* in *matter*.
- Substitute or add letters to make new words. Example: When asked to take away the letter *t* in the word *tan*, can the child say the word is *an*? Can the child put the letter *t* on *an* to make the word *ant*?

WHY ARE PHONICS SKILLS IMPORTANT FOR MY STUDENT TO KNOW?

By teaching and reinforcing phonics skills, you enable your student to decode (break down) unfamiliar words while reading. For instance, when your student attempts to read the word "thick", she may not know that the sound /*th*/ makes one distinct sound. Teaching phonics skills can also help your student learn to spell words correctly.

WHAT IS MY STUDENT EXPECTED TO KNOW ABOUT PHONICS AT HIS/HER CURRENT GRADE LEVEL?

According to the Arizona State Standards in Reading, students should be able to do the following in regard to phonics by the start of **second** grade:

Phonics

- Decode words, using knowledge of phonics, syllabication, and word parts.
- Decode regularly spelled two syllable words fluently by applying the most common letter-sound correspondences, including the sounds represented by:
 - Single letters (consonants and vowels),
 - Consonant blends (e.g., bl, st, tr),
 - Consonant digraphs (e.g., th, sh, ck), and
 - Vowel digraphs and diphthongs (e.g., ea, ie, ee).
- Use knowledge of inflectional endings (e.g., -s, -ed, -ing) to identify base words.
- Use knowledge of base words to identify compound words.
- Read words with common spelling patterns (e.g., -ite, -ill, -ate).
- Recognize high frequency words and irregular sight words (I, am, this, were, come).
- Read common contractions fluently (e.g., I'm, I'll, can't).
- Use knowledge of word order (syntax) and context to confirm decoding.

According to the Arizona State Standards in Reading, students should be able to do the following in regard to phonics by the start of **third** grade:

- Decode words, using knowledge of phonics, syllabication, and word parts.
- Read multi-syllabic words fluently, using letter-sound knowledge.
- Apply knowledge of basic syllabication rules when decoding two- or three-syllable written words (e.g., su/per, sup/per, fam/i/ly).
- Recognize regular plurals (e.g., hat/hats, watch/watches) and irregular plurals (e.g., fly/flies, wife/wives) in context.
- Use knowledge of spelling patterns such as diphthongs, and special vowel spellings when reading (/ou/, /oi/).
- Read common abbreviations (e.g., Oct., Mr., Ave.) fluently.
- Recognize high frequency words and irregular sight words (I, am, this, were, come)
- Read common contractions fluently (e.g., haven't, it's, aren't).
- Use knowledge of vowel digraphs and r-controlled letter-sound associations to read words.
- Use knowledge of word order (syntax) and context to confirm decoding ("Does this word make sense in this sentence?")

HOW DO I KNOW WHICH PHONICS SKILLS MY STUDENT NEEDS TO PRACTICE?

- Your student's assessment form completed by his/her teacher.
- By listening to your student read aloud and making note of the letter sounds and words with which he/she struggles. (For instance, you may notice that your student consistently struggles with three-letter blend sounds such as /str/ and /spr/).
- By assessment through use of Alphabet Cards, Picture Cards, Phonics Cards, Word Family Cards, etc. available at your site.

HOW CAN I TEACH THESE PHONICS SKILLS TO MY STUDENT?

In the classroom, your student's teacher may be using a systematic method of teaching phonics and a specific curriculum that is used throughout the school and/or school district.

THE ROLE OF PHONICS IN READING INSTRUCTION

- Phonics instruction is not synonymous with reading instruction.
- Phonics is an important tool that is **part** of the reading process. Three different kinds of cues are used when reading: (also see pages 44-45 in your training manual)

Visual: Includes phonics and sight words. *Does this word look right? Do the sounds match the letter combinations I see?*

Structure: Relies on the structure of the English language. *Does the word fit within the context of the sentence, based on what sounds correct in English?*

Meaning (Comprehension): The most important cueing system. *Does the word make sense in the context of the sentence?*

- Students can learn to read without phonics instruction. Some students absorb needed phonics generalizations through their experiences with print. Others rely on other cueing systems to read in the early stages, but need phonics instruction for more advanced, independent reading and for spelling.
- Students should be taught to use phonics interactively with meaning and syntax.
- Students should be given opportunities to make links
 - ... to see patterns in words
 - ... to see relationships between words
 - ... to use the known words to discover unknown word
- Students should spend much more time actively involved with books (reading) than in phonics instruction.
- Phonics instruction should be on-going and relevant to the needs of the students. Different students have different needs and understandings, and should be taught according to those needs. Reading, writing, and speaking are interactive and reciprocal. Phonics should be practiced through all three modalities (visually, orally and kinesthetically).

In ASKT, you have the opportunity to re-teach and reinforce these same phonics skills using various strategies and materials.

The following is a suggested format:

Teach phonics skills in **context** of a read-aloud

Allow student to **practice** skills using with hands-on materials

Reinforce and review skills in future tutoring sessions

Here are suggested steps to follow in planning a phonics lesson...

1. Choose a story/poem to read aloud to your student.
2. In advance, select a skill to work on based on the text in the story/poem.
3. Discuss the skill before, during and after reading with your student.
4. Use a worksheet, game or other activity to extend the skill after finishing the story/poem.
Use a combination of visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning whenever possible.
5. Continue to review the skill in future tutoring sessions.

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

by Doreen Cronin

Pre-Reading:

- Determine the phonics skill that you want to reinforce.

Suggestions: Word Families: -ick , -ack, -ow (click, clack, back, cow, Brown, now)

Contractions: couldn't, they'd, we're, we'd

Suffixes: -ed (knocked, wanted, waited, decided)

- Introduce story:

“Alexis, I have a story I want to read to you. It’s really funny! Can you help me read the title before we begin? Great. What do you think this story is going to be about? Okay, I have a special job for you as I read this story...”

During-Reading:

- Ask student to read “Click, clack, moo” along with you when these words appear throughout the story. Point out the –ack and –ick sounds in these words.
- Point out the similarity in the words “clack” and “quack” on the final page.

After-Reading:

- Explain the concept of word families:

“Alexis, did you know that there are a bunch of words that also use –ack and –ick ? These are called word families. Let me show you what I mean...”

- Use Word Family Mini-Book to practice generating –ack and –ick words and reading them in context.
- Use Word Family Cards to practice generating more –ack and –ick words.
- Reference this word family whenever it is read in future sessions

REMEMBER...

- Prior to a tutoring session, determine the phonics skill you want to teach.
- In planning the lesson, make sure you include opportunities for practicing this skill in a variety of ways. This includes reading, writing, and manipulating the skill visually, orally and kinesthetically.
- Keep track of the phonics skills you have worked on with your student.
- Review these skills in future sessions.

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR TEACHING PHONICS!

<http://www.nwrel.org/learns/trainingopps/games/index.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/>

<http://tampareads.com/phonics/phondesk/index-pd.htm>

http://worksheets.teach-nology.com/language_arts/phonics/

<http://www.firstschoolyears.com/literacy/litsheets.html>