



Phonics Key Terminology

There are many technical terms used in phonics. Sometimes it can seem like teachers are using a different language so below is a grid of key terms and what they mean.

Term	What This Means
Adjacent consonants	Two or three letters making two or three sounds i.e. the first three letters of strap are adjacent consonants
Blending	This is where children identify and blend together the phonemes (sounds) that make a word i.e. c-l-a-p blended together makes clap.
Consonant Digraph	Two consonants that make one sound i.e. sh, ch, ph, th
CVC CVCC CCVC	These are abbreviations used for words that are made up of consonants and vowels i.e.CVC- dog CVCC- pant CCVC -trip
Digraph	A digraph is two letters that make one sound. There are different kinds of digraphs - vowel (i.e. ou) consonant (i.e. sh) and split (i.e. a-e)
Grapheme	A grapheme is a letter or group of letters that are written to represent a sound .
Phoneme	A phoneme is a sound in a word.
Segmenting	This is a process of using phonics for writing. The whole word is listened to and broken down into phonemes(sounds) and then appropriate graphemes (letters) are chosen to write the word. i.e. chat can be broken down into ch-a-t

Split digraph	Two letters that work as a pair to write one sound but are separated by a letter i.e. a-e blended together as in make or plate, o-e as in home or mole.
Synthesising	This is how phonics is used for reading. Children identify and synthesise/ blend phonemes in order to make a word. i.e. t-r-a-p blended together makes trap
Trigraph	Three letters blended together to make one sound i.e. igh , dge
Vowel Digraph	A digraph in which at least one of the letters is a vowel- they are typically found in the middle of words (but not always) i.e. ai ou , ee, ow, aw, ue, ay oi