

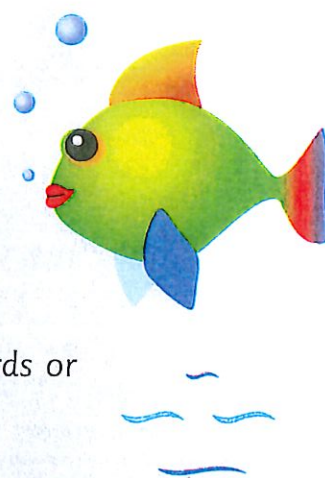
## Top Tips for the Reading Helper

- 1 Try to make reading time fun, and encourage the reader to read out loud. Aim to do little and often, but not when the reader is tired.
- 2 Make sure that you are using reading material with the right level of difficulty for the reader. Also, check that the content is suitable.
- 3 **Blending** - encourage the reader to break words down into a series of sounds, e.g. **c-r-a-sh**. Run your finger under each sound in turn to encourage the reader to blend the sounds together.
- 4 Identify some key letter groups in the reading material and ask the reader to look out for them. Use the child's reading log to record the new letters / letter groups you are focussing on in each session.
- 5 Encourage the reader to look at any pictures in the book to get an idea of what it is about. Discuss the pictures with the reader.
- 6 Make a note in the reading log of any tricky or hard words - particularly common exception words (listed in this book).
- 7 Help the reader to 'work out' words which can't be blended by looking at the other words in the sentence or at the pictures in the book.
- 8 Try reading some pages to the reader before asking him/her to read. This will show what fluent reading sounds like and help with the reader's understanding.
- 9 Read a wide range of poems and stories to the reader, including ones that are too complex for her/him to read at this stage.
- 10 Draw attention to punctuation marks and help the reader to read with feeling, e.g. **"HOORAY!"** they shouted.



## Checking Understanding

- Talk to the reader about each book as much as possible.
- Before starting a new book, ask the reader to look at the cover and any pictures on the inside pages. Invite him/her to guess what might happen in the story.
- Ask questions as the reader progresses through the book:
  - What do you think is going to happen now?
  - What/who is the story about?
  - Where did the story take place?
  - What do you think – – – looks like?
  - Why did – – – do that?
  - How do you think – – – feels now?
  - What would you do if you were – – –?
  - Which part of the book did you like best?
- Choose some key words and ask the reader to tell you what the words mean. Encourage the reader to use a dictionary to check the meanings of words.
- At the end of the book, ask the reader to retell parts of the story in their own words, or tell you which was their favourite part.
- Encourage the reader to try to remember some short rhymes and poems by heart.
- Play games with the reader. For example, you could:
  - Ask her/him to find a word on the page that rhymes with **fish**.
  - Try making up nonsense words for the reader to blend, e.g. **twoch**.
- Use flash cards to practise tricky words, common exception words or letters/ letter groups and their sounds.
- Invite the reader to draw a picture of a character/scene from the book.



# Phonics - A Guide for the Reading Helper

d-o-g



b-oo-k



sh-ee-p



## Phonics - a simple overview

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. They are taught how to:

- recognise the sounds that each individual letter represents
- identify the sounds that different combinations of letters represent (e.g. 'ch' or 'ai')
- blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word

Children can use this skill to decode new words.

On the following pages, you will find a list of the common letters and letter groups. There are pictures and example words to show the common sound linked to each one.

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## The language of phonics

The overview above contains all you need to know to help a reader learn through phonics. If you want to know more, the following information may be useful.

- The smallest units of spoken sound in a language are called **phonemes**.
- These sounds (phonemes) are represented in writing by letters / groups of letters called **graphemes**.
- Phonemes can be represented by more than one grapheme (e.g. the **ow** sound in **cow** is the same as the **ou** sound in **out**).
- Some graphemes represent more than one phoneme (e.g. **th** can be the **th** sound in **thin**, or the **th** sound in **that**).
- Developing readers should become increasingly aware of these grapheme-phoneme correspondences.