

Word recognition

Early reading should be taught using systematic phonics. Systematic phonics is part of the National Curriculum as it is underpinned by extensive research that shows it is the most effective way to teach pupils to read words (EEF, 2016).

Systematic phonics

Systematic phonics should form part of a balanced approach to developing reading during Early Years and primary-aged children. If you are in a secondary setting, you should be aware of how early reading is taught, so that you can support pupils to continue strategies they learnt in the primary setting where necessary.

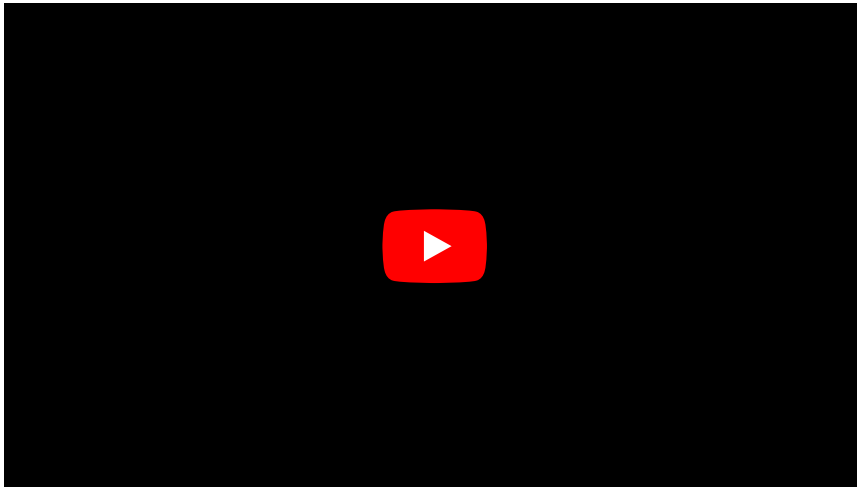
Teaching phonics develops pupils' phonemic awareness (the ability to hear individual speech sounds) and teaches pupils about the relationships between speech sounds and letter combinations. When applying phonics during reading, pupils will break up unfamiliar words into individual sounds (segmenting) and then put those sounds together (blending) to say the word.

This is a very effective way for pupils to decode unfamiliar words. However, not all words are phonetically plausible. That means there are some words which can't be broken down into individual sounds. Therefore, a part of teaching phonics involves explicitly teaching pupils these 'tricky' words, so that pupils recognise them from sight.

Teaching phonics also supports pupils with their spelling, as it enables them to sound out a word as they write it.

Teaching phonics in action

If you wish, you can watch Sophie teaching phonics to Year two pupils to see what it looks like in practice. In the video below, Sophie is using an approach called 'Read Write Inc' to teach phonics. Another approach that you may have heard of is 'Letters and Sounds'. Whilst these are slightly different approaches, they are both recognised as effective ways of teaching phonics and work on same principles of blending and segmenting.



Direct link to: [Teaching phonics - Primary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Teaching phonics - Primary\(this link opens in a new window/tab\)](#)

Word recognition alone isn't enough

Phonics helps pupils to read unfamiliar words, but word recognition is only a part of the skill of reading. Pupils need to be able to understand what they read, which is why it is important to develop their *comprehension* in all phases and subjects.