

## The core principles of teaching phonics

- Teach the relationship between sounds and letters in a clear and incremental way.
- In the beginning stages, emphasise phonemes not their letter names.
- When children read independently, ensure reading materials are decodable and match the level of alphabetic code knowledge taught to date.
- Do not teach or encourage guessing or prediction, either from context, pictures or first letter cues. This can cause bad reading habits to form, which need to be unpicked later on.
- Do not teach sight words, where children are expected to memorise words as whole units.
- Introduce common exception words slowly, drawing attention to the 'tricky' part of the word, then emphasising that all words can be blended from left-to-right.



## Common Exception Words

There are some common words that contain grapheme-phoneme correspondences that are an exception to those children have been taught, such as 'said' or 'you'.

As children's knowledge of the alphabetic code increases, many of these common words will become fully decodable. However, in the early stages of the programme, children must be taught to decode and spell these common exception words.

In *Anima Phonics: Letters and Sounds Updated*, these common exception words are known as Rainbow Words.

Rainbow Words are introduced systematically throughout the programme, beginning in the second part of Unit 1.

Children's attention is drawn to the 'tricky' part of the word that does not fit in with what has been taught so far. This enables children to easily identify the grapheme(s) that make the word an exception word.



Once the 'tricky' part of the word has been identified, it is important to emphasise that a child can apply their blending skills to Rainbow Words, as with any other word.

Practitioners should avoid the temptation to ask children to memorise common exception words by sight. Whilst this might appear to work well at first, teaching children mixed strategies is shown to have a negative impact on their overall reading development.

## Accents

Considerable variations in accents exist not just in the United Kingdom, but around the world. Individual teachers will need to take this into consideration, adapting their practice where necessary to match regional accents. This may be particularly evident when teaching common exception words, as some grapheme-phoneme correspondences may differ depending on the local accent.