

Terminology

We use colour-coding and memorable characters and events to help explain the alphabetic code. However, don't be shy about using technical language with children. If a four-year old can recall dinosaur names with ease, they can certainly handle a few linguistic terms as well!



Phoneme

The smallest identifiable unit in speech sounds.

These are usually shown between two slash symbols e.g. /g/, /b/ and /ai/.

a

Grapheme

The written symbol that represents a phoneme.

These can be a single letter (e.g. a, t) or group of letters (e.g. ay, igh, ough).



Grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC)

The link between the written grapheme and the spoken phoneme.

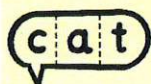
This is the bedrock of synthetic phonics.

cat

Blending (Synthesis)

The process of merging the phonemes together to form a word.

Children are first taught to do this orally, then using their knowledge of GPCs to blend words for reading.



Segmenting (Sounding Out)

The process of splitting a word into its constituent phonemes.

To write a word, children need to first 'sound out' its phonemes. They can then use their GPC knowledge to write down the matching graphemes.

S

Single Letter Grapheme

A grapheme consisting of just one letter.

Most single letters represent at least one phoneme.

ai

Digraph

A grapheme consisting of two letters, e.g. ai, oa, sh.

You may also hear the term 'trigraph' used to describe a three-letter grapheme.

ay

Naughty Digraph (Alternative Spellings)

We call alternative spellings of known phonemes 'naughty digraphs'.

In *Letters and Sounds Updated*, we have 'nice' and 'naughty' digraphs. This provides children with the vocabulary to discuss different spellings.

a_e

Split Digraph

A two-letter grapheme that is split between a consonant.

For example, in the words *cake*, *bike* and *poke*.

ss

Twin Letters

When two identical consonant letters represent the same phoneme.

These are taught in Unit 2 of *Anima Phonics: Letters and Sounds Updated*.

said

Silly Sound (Alternative Pronunciation)

A known grapheme with an alternative pronunciation.

They might also represent a rare grapheme that only occurs in common exception words.