

Phonics Evening

Slide 1

When they start school, your children will be starting to learn one of the most useful and exciting skills – they will be learning to read and write, and that will open up a world of opportunities to them. They will use those skills to access new knowledge, to develop their creativity, and to enjoy books.

Your children will be learning using Sounds-Write, a phonics programme that is very structured and, as you will see today, very logical and good fun! In this session, we want to introduce you to some of the basic principles of Sounds-Write, and to do some of the activities that your children will be doing at school. The more you understand how we are teaching them to read and write, the better you'll be able to support them at home.

So, why Sounds-Write?

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Well, first of all because you all have a child who can already listen and speak.

All humans have been able to listen and speak for about 250,000 years. This comes naturally to us, just like crawling and walking does. You don't have to go to school to learn to do those things. These things come naturally to humans, we don't need to be taught. This is what is called primary learning.

However, we do have to be taught other things, such as how our writing system works. The knowledge that needs to be taught and learnt, is called secondary learning. It needs to be taught explicitly and systematically, and that is what we are going to do, using Sounds-Write.

But first, I want to take you back to over 5000 years ago, when modern-day writing was first invented.

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We are going back to the biblical lands of Mesopotamia and Sumeria (modern day Iraq), where the first cities sprang up.

Until about 3,000BC they used a pictographic system where words were represented by pictures.

Here's an example. I'll show you some pictures, see if you can understand.

(Show the next four slides)

I can see you (ewe)! – NOT I can see sheep!

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Although pictographic systems work, they can only take you so far.

So when simple village societies developed into larger, urban societies and, as a result, became more and more complex, there needed to be a system to keep business records, quantities of livestock, lists of workers, records of transactions in the marketplace, taxes, and so on, and as I said, a pictographic system was just too crude.

So, how was this problem solved? Through an absolutely brilliant invention: the phoneticisation of writing. This means representing every sound in the language with a squiggle on the page.

So writing as we know it was invented to represent what was said in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly by a reader without the intervention of the speaker.

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Let me bring you back to the 21st century but not here:

To Italy, Spain, or Finland.

These languages have relatively transparent codes, so that, in general, one sound is represented by one letter, and that makes it very easy to teach and learn.

For instance, in Spanish, the word for physics is Física (phee-cee-cah, with the stress on the phee).

Each sound in the word is represented by one letter. In Spanish, there is only one way to spell the sound /f/. What about in English? How many ways are there of spelling the sound /f/ (let the audience suggest which ways you can spell the sound /f/ and give an example of a word where it is spelled like that, and write them down as they say them>

F, ff, ph, gh

So, as you can see from just this one example, English is much more complicated. It is, in fact, the most complex alphabetic language, and therefore the most difficult to learn. So that is why it has to be taught explicitly and systematically.

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To become fluent readers and spellers children need to understand these concepts:

First, that our language is made up of sounds, and that **letters are used to represent the individual sounds in the language**. That is why the programme is called Sounds-Write. We start from the sounds, which is what the children already know, and we teach them how those sounds are spelled.

We then also teach the that **each sound may be spelled with more than one letter.** /k/ /a/ /t/ each sound is spelled with one letter

ship - three sounds: /sh/ /i/ /p/ - /sh/ is two letters, but it's one sound

night – three sounds, /n/ /igh/ /t/- /igh/ is three letters, but it's one sound

weight – three sounds, /w/ /eigh/ /t/, /eigh/ is four letters, but it's one sound

So, you have one-letter, two-letter, three-letter and four-letter spellings.

Complex stuff for young children to learn!

When your child first starts to learn to read and write, we start with one letter spellings and we only move on to more complex spellings once they are secure in the basics.

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The two other central concepts are these:

Sounds may be written in more than one way.

So there are four ways to spell the sound /ae/ : play, rain, great, gate.

The final concept is that **many spellings represent more than one sound**

So the spelling < ea > can represent the sounds: seat, head, break.

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We are going to have a look at what these are as we do some word building, just like your child will be doing in class.

Word building modelled

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Demonstrations of lessons given

Teach parents Lesson 1, building 'hat' and 'sit', then reading the whole word, and then writing it, saying the sounds as they do.

- Then do lesson 4, word building, on the board with a volunteer. Get them to read the word 'vet' 'cat' with misconception said as 'at'

Sounds Swap

Win-wig-zig-zag-wag

As children do these activities, they are learning the skills and the code knowledge that will enable them to go from 'cat' to 'categorisation' 😊

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When your children start to learn to read and write, we DO NOT use letter names. We just say the sounds very precisely.

Here's an example of what we mean <play video from link>

But don't worry if you are not very sure, soon your child will be telling you how it's done 😊

We strongly recommend that you do the free, online course 'Help your child to read and write', which has been specifically written by Sounds-Write to show parents how to help their children when using the Sounds-Write phonics programme.

Useful links and websites

Initial sounds

<https://youtu.be/a8ZMfYjdN-s>

Free online course

<https://www.udemy.com/help-your-child-to-read-and-write/>

Help your child to read and write video

https://youtu.be/U_e568INroM

Sounds-Write website

<http://www.sounds-write.co.uk/>