

# Phonics – technical terms

**Use the correct pronunciation for sounds!** See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhxUW\\_v-1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhxUW_v-1s)

Use the following technical vocab as much as possible when teaching – using technical terms means we can describe language to children accurately.

**Grapheme** – the way a sound is written down. The grapheme might also be referred to as the name of the sound eg “the name/grapheme of this letter is A” (where A rhymes with “hay”).

**Phoneme** – strictly, a unit of sound – but explained to the children as the sound a letter or combination of words spells. (Here, the letter A makes an “a” sound, as in “cat”)

**Digraph** – two letters spelling one sound – eg “ee”, “ai”

**Trigraph** – 3 letters spelling one sound – eg “air” “ear

**Split digraph** – when putting an e on the end of a CVC word changes the middle vowel from a long sound to a short sound, or from its letter sound to its letter name: cap to cape.

**Blend** –building (synthesising) phonemes together in the correct order to form a word.

**Segment** – the opposite of blending – being able to identify the component phonemes in a word.

**Long vowel** - eg “ee”, “ai”

**Short vowel** – eg “e” “i” (Kids need to be able to identify long or short vowels for spelling patterns later on)

**Phoneme frame** – boxes drawn on the screen or paper, one box for each phoneme in a word eg

c	a	t
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sh	ar	k
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**Sound buttons** – annotating underneath words to make the sounds in them clear. A dot is used for a single letter phoneme, a short line for a digraph or trigraph.

eg **Bun**      **soil**      **shook**      **cave**



**CVC** word is a word made from a Consonant, Vowel, Consonant..Eg: cat, pig, hat, sail, cheep (all these words have 3 sounds in them). Documents might also refer to **CCVC** words (as in snip, sleep), or **CVCC** words (as in jump, bang)

**Schwa** a weak, unstressed vowel sound. It's the most common sound in English. For example **about**, **butter**, **library**. It's where the vowel is said as a sort of “uh” sound when pronounced.

**Other thing to teach and refer to:**

Vowel, consonant, syllable, root word, suffix, prefix

Really useful extra information is in the “**notes of guidance for practitioners**” publication from the Letters and sounds pack (as PDF – not in print any more)