



GEORGE  
WATSON'S  
— COLLEGE —

# Early Literacy

Primary 1

August 2009

In the Lower Primary we use a range of phonic schemes to give the children the building blocks for reading and writing. We use a multi-sensory approach to teach synthetic phonics.

Synthetic phonics is a programme where letter sounds are introduced quickly. This enables children to manipulate letters to form words and to realise that there is a purpose to learning the letter sounds.

There are seven main basic skills for reading and writing these are:

- Learning the letter sounds
- Learning the letter name
- Being able to identify where the letter can be found in the alphabet
- Learning the letter formation
- Blending letters together
- Identifying sounds in words
- Reading and spelling tricky words

Letters are not taught in alphabetical order. They are taught in such a way as to allow as many three letter words to be formed as possible. Initial sounds and digraphs are progressed through in the order below.

s a t i p n

c k e h r m

d g o u l f

b j z w v y x

sh ch th qu

ee or oo ng ou

ai oa ie oi ue er ar

## The Actions

- s Weave hand in an s shape, like a snake, and say *ssssss*
- a Wiggle fingers above elbow as if ants crawling on you and say *a, a, a*.
- t Turn head from side to side as if watching tennis and say *t, t, t*.
- i Pretend to be a mouse by wriggling fingers at end of nose and squeak *i, i, i*.
- p Pretend to puff out candles and say *p, p, p*.
- n Make a noise, as if you are a plane - hold arms out and say *nnnnnn*.
- c k Raise hands and snap fingers as if playing castanets and say *ck, ck, ck*.
- e Pretend to tap an egg on the side of a pan and crack it into the pan, saying *eh, eh, eh*.
- h Hold hand in front of mouth panting as if you are out of breath and say *h, h, h*.
- r Pretend to be a puppy holding a piece of rag, shaking head from side to side, and say *rrrrrr*.
- m Rub tummy as if seeing tasty food and say *mmmmm*.
- d Beat hands up and down as if playing a drum and say *d, d, d*.
- g Spiral hand down, as if water going down the drain, and say *g, g, g*.
- o Pretend to turn light switch on and off and say *o, o, o, o*.
- u Pretend to be putting up an umbrella and say *u, u, u*.
- l Pretend to lick a lollipop and say *llllll*.
- f Let hands gently come together as if a toy fish is deflating, and say *ffffff*.
- b Pretend to hit a ball with a bat and say *b, b, b*.
- j Shake your body like a wibbly wobbly jelly saying *j j j*.

- z** Put arms out at sides and pretend to be a bee, saying *zzzzzz*.
- v** Pretend to be holding the steering wheel of a van and say *vvvvvv*.
- y** Pretend to be eating a yogurt and say *y, y, y*.
- x** Pretend to take an x-ray of someone with an x-ray gun and say *ks, ks, ks*.
- w/wh** Blow on to open hand, as if you are the wind, and say *wh, wh, wh*.
- ai** Cup hand over ear and say *ai, ai, ai*.
- ie** Stand to attention and salute, saying *ie ie*.
- ee or** Put hands on head as if ears on a donkey and say *eeyore, eeyore*.
- ng** Imagine you are a weightlifter, and pretend to lift a heavy weight above your head, saying *ng*.
- oo** Move head back and forth as if it is the cuckoo in a cuckoo clock, saying *u, oo; u, oo*.
- ch** Move arms at sides as if you are a train and say *ch, ch, ch*.
- sh** Place index finger over lips and say *shshsh*.
- th** Pretend to be naughty clowns and stick out tongue a little for the *th*.
- qu** Make a duck's beak with your hands and say *qu, qu, qu*.
- ou** Pretend your finger is a needle and prick thumb saying *ou, ou, ou*.
- oi** Cup hands around mouth and shout to another boat saying *oi! ship ahoy!*
- ue** Point to people around you and say *you, you, you*.
- er** Roll hands over each other like a mixer and say *ererer*.
- ar** Open mouth wide and say *ah*.

## Tricky Words

Irregular words are known by the children as 'Tricky Words'. These are words that contain some regular parts and some irregular parts e.g. come - /c/ and /m/ are regular.

Children are more able to read and write irregular words when they have knowledge of letter sounds and can relate sounds to symbols. The children are taught to look carefully at the words and to try and identify the irregular part. This is the beginning of analysing words, a very important skill when it comes to spelling.

'Tricky words' are taught alongside the acquisition of the sounds. The first 'tricky words' are the irregular words that will appear in our reading material. By learning these words it makes it easier for the children to enjoy reading their books. 'Tricky words' are displayed in many different and creative ways to capture the children's interest. It also helpful if these 'tricky words' can be practised and reinforced at home.

e.g. First Set of Tricky Words:

Character names

little

a

oh

no

and

the

who

## Suggested Activities

*(Games can be adapted for use to reinforce sounds and words)*

### The Pairs Game (Pelmanism)

- Place letter cards face down on the table
- Turn over two cards and say the sound of each letter
- If the sounds are the same, that player keeps the cards and has another go
- If not, the cards are turned over and it's another player's go

### Hunt the Letter/Sound

- Hold up a letter card, child to find the correct letter in a book/around the room
- Or, play as above but say a letter sound instead of holding a card

### Letter Fun

- Air writing - hold your writing hand in the air and use two fingers to correctly form letters
- Sand writing - put sand on a tray and use a finger to form the correct letter shapes (this can be done with salt, icing sugar, corn flour, glitter, rice etc)

### Letter/Word Snap

Use the cards to play a game of snap. Suitable cards include Initial Sound cards, Tricky Word cards, First Word cards and Robinson Family cards.

### Building Words

- Perform the actions for 3 or 4 letter words such as 'pot'
- Child should say the matching sounds out loud
- Blend sounds together to form the word

### Peelable notes (Pritt Pads)

- Write sounds onto peelable notes e.g. s/a/t
- Stick the notes onto fingers and spread fingers out
- Ask the child to say each sound separately
- Start to bring fingers together encouraging the child to start blending the letters together to form words

### Clap the sounds

- Choose regular, simple words such as 'hat', 'cat', 'pin'.
- Clap the number of sounds you can hear, for example h/a/t and sh/i/p.

## Useful Equipment

You do not need to buy any equipment in order to carry out the games and activities discussed. Most of these items you will be able to find at home, or you will have an alternative that will do.

- foam letters
- magnetic letters
- pairs of letter cards
- tray
- sand
- glitter /rice/ salt/ lentils/ icing sugar! etc
- alphabet jigsaws
- general jigsaws
- rhyming books and story books
- cursive script style are better

Please remember that phonics, letter formation and reading skills are taught every day at school. Any reinforcement work undertaken at home should be done little and often.



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**Phonics in the Lower Primary**