

The Letter Sounds

Some parents find helping their children with phonics quite difficult! I am hoping that the following will give you some assistance.

If you are helping your Kindergarten or Grade One child to learn the letter sounds and to blend letters to form words, it is important that you teach the sound correctly.

It is especially important that all consonant sounds are kept short and spoken quickly. Often children struggle to blend consonant sounds with a vowel sound "uh" on the end of each one. For example, /b/ /a/ /t/ cannot be blended easily if the sounds are made by saying 'buh /a/ tuh'.

To help keep the consonants 'short', the child can hold the first two fingers of his hand in front of the mouth like scissor blades, and 'cut' the sound off short as it is spoken. Vowels (a, e, i, o, u) can be stretched.

Some consonant sounds come from the throat and the voice box and are 'voiced'. Some sounds are made in the mouth with air and are 'unvoiced'.

Be careful that any words you use have the correct sound. /g/ makes the sound in 'goat', not 'giraffe', /c/ makes the sound in 'cat', not 'city', and /e/ makes the sound in 'elephant', not 'early' or 'easy', and so on.



a as in 'apple'.

b as in ball. Very short and quick. (Not buh!) Voiced.

c as in cat. A short, quick sound. Not 'cuh', it is formed in the mouth with air. Unvoiced. This sound of 'c' goes before a, o and u (cat, cot, cut).

d as in dog. Keep the sound short and quick - not 'duh'! Voiced.

e as in elephant. This is the hardest sound for the children to say and to remember, and it is easily confused with /i/. Make sure it is said correctly.

f as in fish. Place your top teeth on the lower lip and blow. Unvoiced.

g as in goat. Keep the sound short! Voiced.

h as in honey. The 'h' sound is a puff of air from the lungs with the mouth open, not 'huh'. Unvoiced.

i as in it, is, igloo.

j as in jump. The 'j' sound is voiced. Keep the sound short.

k as in kite. This is the same sound as 'c'. We use 'k' before e and i (kit, kept).

l as in lunch. Voiced. Double 'l' is treated as one sound and one tap.

m as in Mom. Make the sound with the lips together. Voiced.

n as in no. The tip of the tongue is on the roof of the mouth.

o as in ox, odd, ostrich.

P as in pet. /p/ is a small explosion of air. If the children hold their hands in front of the mouth they can feel the air. Unvoiced.

qu as in quit. Always teach the 'q' with the 'u', as 'q' is never seen alone. The sound is 'kw'. Voiced.

r as in rat. Keep the sound short. It's not 'ruh'! Voiced.

S as in snake. 's' is unvoiced.

t as in 'ten'. Keep the sound of t very short and quick. The sound is NOT 'tuh'!
't' is unvoiced. The sound is made in the mouth with the tongue and air.

U as in up.

V as in van. /v/ makes the lip vibrate. Voiced.

W as in win. Voiced.

X is the sound of 'ks', as in ax. Unvoiced.

Y as in yes. 'y' is first taught as a consonant. Voiced.

Z as in zip. Voiced.

Other Simple Sounds

'**ck**' makes the 'k' sound. Explain that 'c', 'k' and 'ck' make the same sound, but that 'ck' is used at the end of a short word. When blending, 'ck' is treated as one letter.

For your information: 'ck' always goes at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel.

Double letters at the end of a short word are considered one sound, as in well, pass, off, or buzz.

th as in thin. /th/, /sh/, /ch/ and /wh/ are called '**digraphs**'. A digraph occurs when 2 consonants together make an entirely different sound. Depending on the word, /th/ can be voiced or unvoiced. Teach it unvoiced by slightly sticking out the tongue and blowing.

sh as in ship. Finger to the mouth - be quiet! Unvoiced.

ch as in church. Unvoiced.

wh as in wheel. Unvoiced. A soundless whistle.

An Alphabet Song

(/-/ stands for the letter sound.)

/a/ for apple,
/b/ for bug,
/c/ for cat, and
/d/ for dug

/e/ for elephant,
/f/ for frog,
/g/ for go, and
/h/ for hog...

/i/ for itch,
/j/ for jog,
/k/ for keep, and
/l/ for log

/m/ for mom,
/n/ for not,
/o/ for on, and
/p/ for pot

/qu/ for queen,
/r/ for rug,
/s/ for sing, and
/t/ for tug.

/u/ for up,
/v/ for vest
/w/ for we and wiggle and west

/x/ makes the double sound of k s *(I say the letters here, not the sounds)*

found at the end of
tax and fix *(draw out the /k/ /s/ sounds)*

/y/ is for saying
yes, yellow, you
/z/ is the end, sing
zip, zing, zoo



B says /b/ like baseball.
B says /b/ /b/ /b/.

C says /c/ like cookie.
C say /c/ /c/ /c/.

D says /d/ like dinosaur.
D says /d/ /d/ /d/.

E says /e/ like elephant.
E says /e/ /e/ /e/.

F says /f/ like fireman.
F says /f/ /f/ /f/.

G says /g/ like goldfish.
G says /g/ /g/ /g/.

H says /h/ like hospital.
H says /h/ /h/ /h/.

I says /i/ like igloo.
I says /i/ /i/ /i/.

J says /j/ like jumping.
J says /j/ /j/ /j/.

K says /k/ like kitten.
K says /k/ /k/ /k/.

L says /l/ like listen.
L says /l/ /l/ /l/.

M says /m/ like mother.
M says /m/ /m/ /m/.

N says /n/ like nurse.
N says /n/ /n/ /n/.

O says /o/ like octopus.
O says /o/ /o/ /o/.

P says /p/ like pencil.
P says /p/ /p/ /p/.

Q says /q/ like queen.
Q says /q/ /q/ /q/.

R says /r/ like rabbit.
R says /r/ /r/ /r/.

S says /s/ like snowman.
S says /s/ /s/ /s/.

T says /t/ like turtle.
T says /t/ /t/ /t/.

U says /u/ like umbrella.
U says /u/ /u/ /u/.

V says /v/ like van.
V says /v/ /v/ /v/.

X says /x/ like X-ray.
X says /x/ /x/ /x/.

Y says /y/ like yellow.
Y says /y/ /y/ /y/.

Z says /z/ like zebra.
Z says /z/ /z/ /z/.

Aa

A is for alligator.
A is for ants.
A is for apples
on my pants.

Bb

B is for bear.
B is for boat.
B is for buttons
on my coat.

Cc

C is for cow.
C is for cat.
C is for caterpillar
on my hat.

Dd

D is for dinosaur.
D is for dog.
D is for doll
on my log.

Ee

E is for envelope.
E is for eggs.
E is for elephant
on my legs.

Ff

F is for fire engine.
F is for fish.
F is for fox
in my dish.

Gg

G is for girl.
G is for goat.
G is for gorilla
in my boat.

Hh

H is for horse.
H is for hair.
H is for hippopotamus
on my chair.

Ii

I is for igloo.
I is for ink.
I is for iguana
in my sink.

Jj

J is for jelly.
J is for jeep.
J is for jacket
on my sheep.

Kk

K is for kite.
K is for king.
K is for key
on my string.

Ll

L is for lion.
L is for log.
L is for leaves
on my frog.

Mm

M is for mittens.
M is for mouse.
M is for monkeys
on my house.

Nn

N is for newspaper.
N is for nest.
N is for numbers
on my vest.

Oo

O is for octopus.
O is for ox.
O is for ostrich
in my box.

Pp

P is for pizza.
P is for pan.
P is for pencils
in my can.

Qq

Q is for queen.
Q is for quail.
Q is for quarters
in my pail.

Rr

R is for rose.
R is for ring.
R is for rabbit
on my swing.

Ss

S is for sun.
S is for socks.
S is for snails
on my blocks.

Tt

T is for tooth.
T is for truck.
T is for tie
on my duck.

Uu

U is for underwear.
U is for up.
U is for umbrella
in my cup.

Vv

V is for violin.
V is for van
V is for violets
in my pan.

Ww

W is for worm.
W is for wagon.
W is for wings
on my dragon.

Xx

X is for x-ray.
X marks the spot.
X is for kisses.
I have a lot!

Yy

Y is for yo-yo.
Y is for yak.
Y is for yarn
in my sack.

Zz

Z is for zebra.
Z is for zoo.
Z is for zipper
on my shoe.