EYFS Phonics Information for Parents

2026

Key vocabulary

- **Phonics** – a method of teaching reading by correlating sounds with symbols (letters)
- **Phonemes** – sounds
- **Graphemes** – letter or group of letters that makes a sound (written)
- **Segmenting** – chopping up
- **Blending** – putting together (in the right order)
- **Letter name** – the 'alphabet' name of a capital letter
- Lower case
- Upper case (capital letters)

Introduction

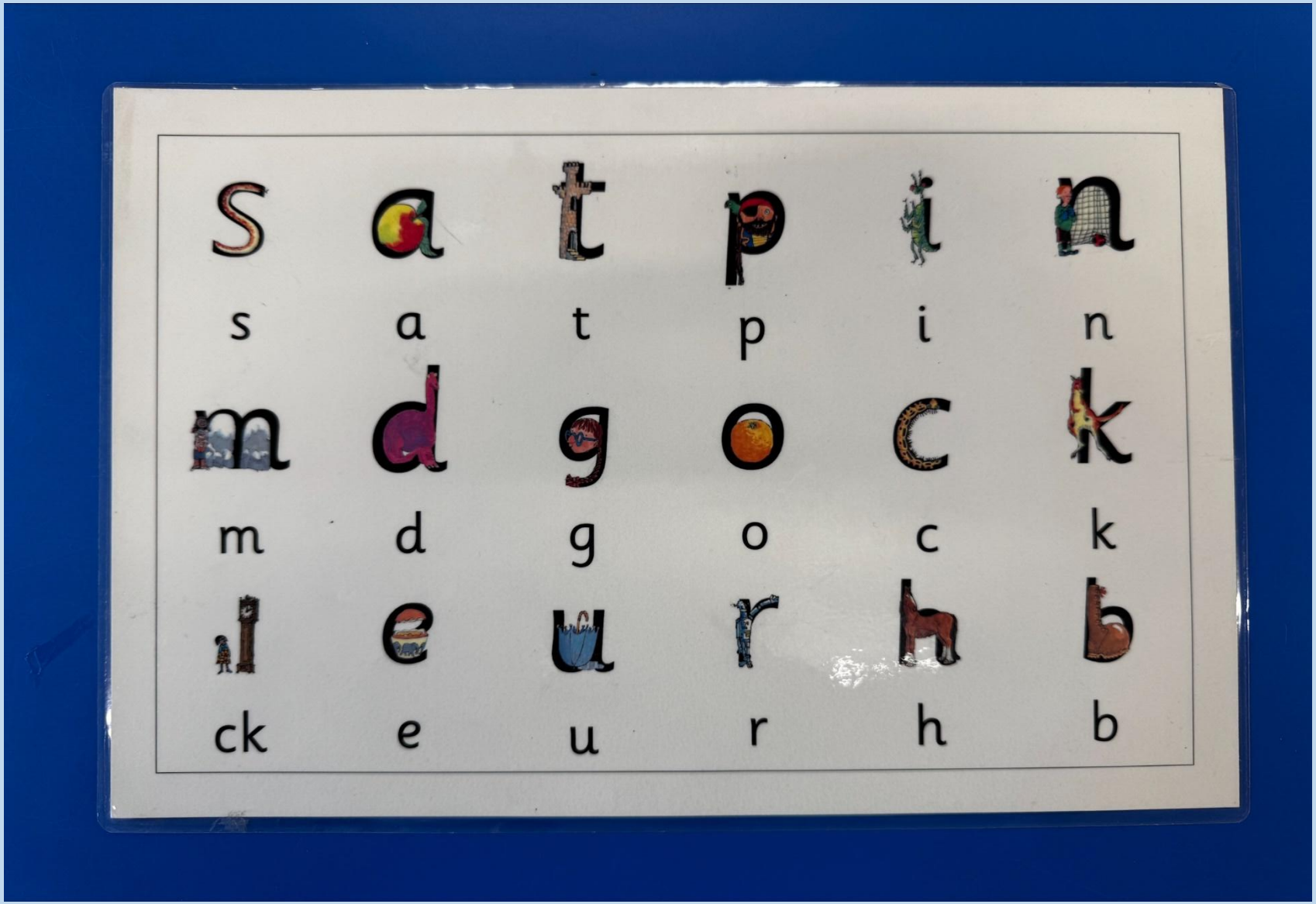
In the EYFS Reception year children will:

- Learn sounds and the corresponding letters/letter groups using simple picture prompts.
- Learn to read words using sound blending.
- Learn to write the letters/letter groups w represent the sounds they learn.
- Learn to write words by segmenting sounds and writing the sounds they hear.
- Learn to spot 'special friends', i.e. digraphs and trigraphs.

Learning sounds

At Milverton we learn sounds in a specific order beginning this term.	We aim to cover 4 sounds a week:	s a t p
i n m d	g o c k	ck e u r
h b f ff	l ll ss j	v w x y

These are the Read, Write, Inc. speed sound characters.



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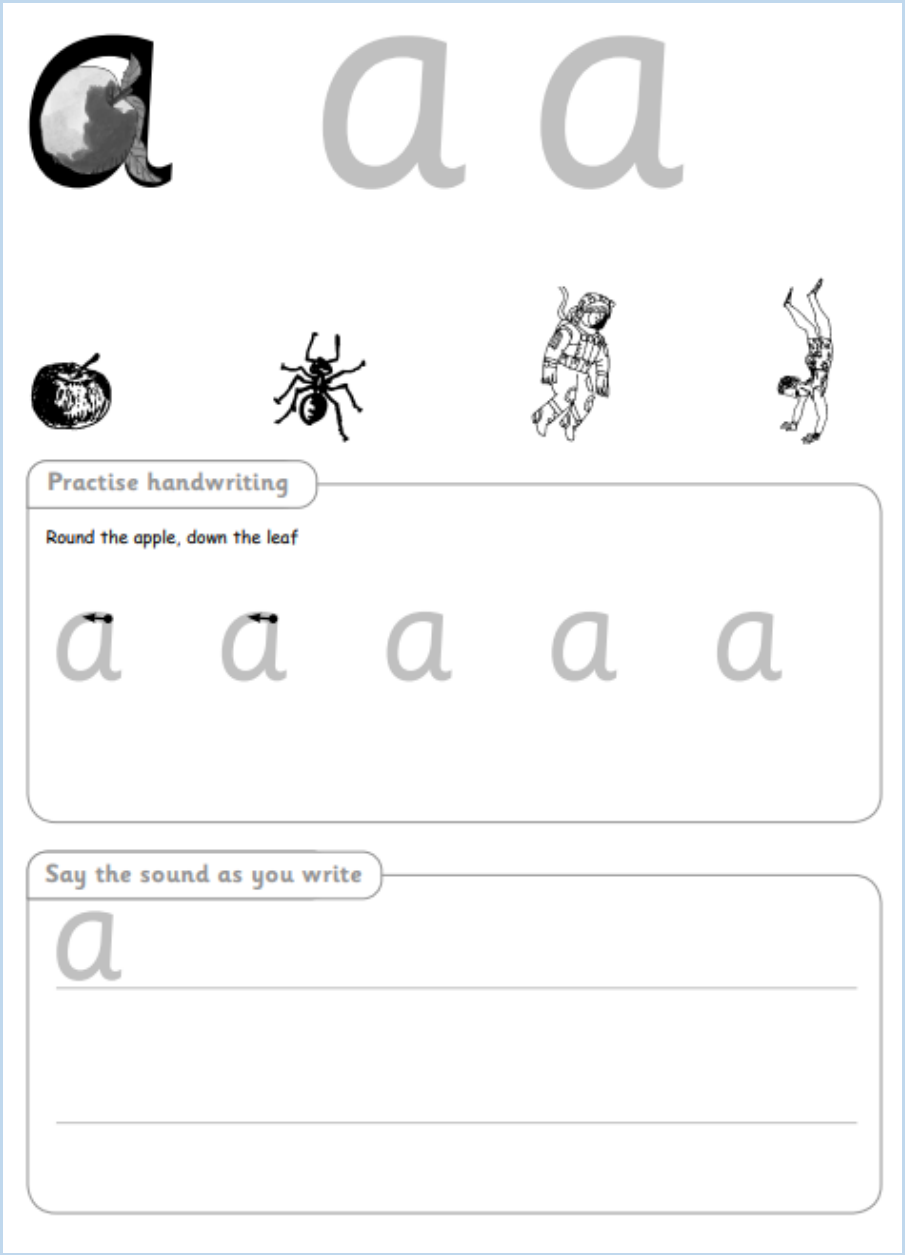
Learning the letter sounds

Our plan for teaching sounds is a structured programme that builds up from day to day, week to week and links with our school reading scheme, Bug Club books.

Each day a new sound is introduced in a class carpet session – and we teach sounds in the order in which they appear in our Bug Club reading books.

Each sound is said clearly first.
We hold up the picture card and say the picture, eg sssssnake. (Bouncy or stretchy!)
Then 'snake' and the handwriting phrase.
Write 's' next to the card, repeating the phrase as writing it.
Next, we show the letter side of the card and say 's'.
Children repeat the sound.
Flipping the card form one side to the other children are encouraged to say either 'snake' or 's' depending upon which side is showing.

We teach children the letters as lower case letters. We do NOT introduce capital letters at this stage.



We send home initial sounds and letter formation sheets at the end of each week for you to use at home with your child.

Helpful information

Your child's Home Learning booklet contains:

- Phonics practice ideas
- Bouncy and stretchy sounds
- A list of the tricky words – Red Words
- A written guide as to how to enunciate sounds correctly.

Click here to see and hear the sounds…

You can purchase the Read, Write, Inc sound cards to use at home. Entirely optional, but the children do like to be the 'teacher' with these and will teach you!

Blending sounds

Blending is a key element of reading and has already started before children begin to recognise sound/symbol correspondences.

Children listen as 'Ted' sounds out

- *E.g. s – a – t*
- *3 sounds*
- *s-a-t*
  Children then blend this and say 'sat'.

Segmenting words

Segmenting: identifying individual sounds in words

- Say the word - sat
- 3 sounds. Get 3 fingers ready.
- “Pinch out the sounds” s-a-t
- Write the sounds.

Sounds = Phonemes

- A sound/phoneme can be a single letter or a group of letters = "special friends".

- Eg - b = 1 phoneme
- oa = 1 phoneme
- b – a – t = 3 phonemes
- b – oa – t = 3 phonemes
- f – air = 2 phonemes

two letters = a digraph, three letters = trigraph

Tricky 'red' words

These are words which do not follow the code and need to be taught alongside phonics.

We introduce them one at a time in our phonics session and repeat them in a variety of contexts. Once introduced we have them displayed on our walls to assist with recall.

You can practise recall of these at home and play games to help your child learn them e.g. write them on post-it notes, match correct words together, chalk them on stones, find the correct word in a book…

Reading

- Many children will be at a stage where they are focussing heavily upon pictures and gathering clues from these.
- This is completely normal! Pictures help children to decode what is happening in the story and this will help with comprehension skills.
- During this year using visual clues (pictures) and written words (decoding using phonics and recognising tricky words), skills come together to discover the wonder of print and books.

Children choose a library book every Friday – a book of their own choice from our EYFS collection. Please return library books on a Friday (in your child's book bag) so that they can exchange their book.

Children will also have a Milverton 'reading passport' – books available to borrow from school and the local libraries.

Reading books

- *Reading books reflect the sounds and 'tricky words' which we have been learning in class. Once your child is confident with these, a book will come home that we have read together in a small group or individually.*
- *Help will be needed to consolidate sounds, blending and segmenting and recognising and reading tricky words as they read with you.*
- *Please ensure that your child's book is in their bag each day so we can change it on their group reading day (which may vary from week to week).*

When your child brings home their Bug Club Reading Book try to share/read it at on at least three different occasions.

Things you can do to help

Reading to/with your child is **very important** to help your child's comprehension skills – ideally sharing a book every day, noticing road signs, looking at signs in the supermarket, writing a list together, looking at labels on jars – any opportunity to share print in a real way.

<u>With books and stories:</u>

Talk about what children can see, like, dislike.

Predict – what do they think will happen next?

Opinions- Why do they think a character behaved a certain way?

Check your child's understanding of certain words –

"What does …… mean?"

- Read books which <u>your child</u> has chosen rather than just school reading books – fiction and non-fiction.
- Fill in the reading section in the Home Learning Booklet for all reading together – it is all important!

Independent writing

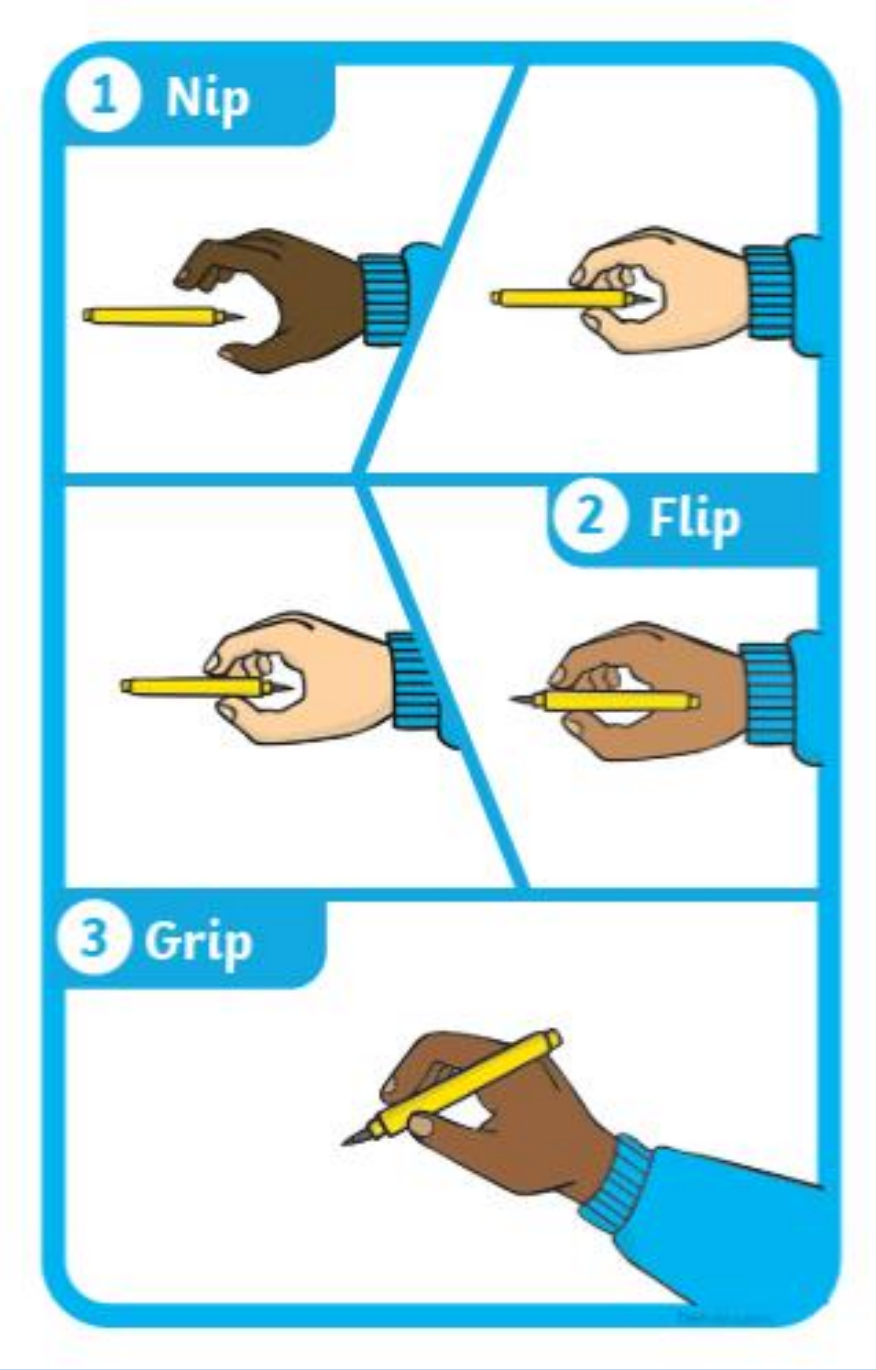
If your child is starting to use their phonic knowledge in their emerging writing don't worry about misspelt words!

- Encourage every attempt to sound out words, pinch out Ted fingers and having a go on their own. This will create a sense of pride and ownership.
- Sound mats can help.
- Phonetically plausible words are completely normal

e.g Elephant –may start off as *eft* or *left* and become *elifant!*

For names, we would encourage them to copy the correct spelling from a card or from us writing it down.

Encouraging a tripod pencil grip



Physical strength for writing

Children need to have core strength and stability to be able to write.

It is important to focus on...

- Developing gross motor skills – big movements.
- Developing fine motor skills – smaller movements.

When we learn to write we use new muscles, and it can be tiring and painful.

- Work on on trying to develop finger and hand muscles away from a writing focus.
- E.g.: mastering scissor control, playing with pegs (time how long your child can clip/unclip 10 pegs from a strip of cardboard or line), squeezing and manipulating dough (Dough Disco!), sewing, fixing and making things, planting seeds, threading etc.

Don't forget - we are all individuals.
We all learn and develop at our own pace.

That is what makes us unique.

Keep the excitement and enjoyment in wanting to read and write, with praise every step of the way!

If you have any questions along your child's reading and writing journey, please speak to their teacher – we are always happy to help!

Useful websites:

https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/phonics/

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zcdqm39

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puQb605lzdw
(phonics terminology)

https://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/literacy/phonics-games/

Phonics at Home

Nature Letters

Pasta Letters

Word Hunt

Look for our tricky words

Chalk Letters

Write sounds in chalk on a fence or pavement. Wash each sound when your hear the sounds

Sound Hunt

pick a sound & find objects that begin with the sound

Sound Sort

Get a collection of objects, sort them by the starting sounds

Body Sounds

Use your body to make the letters, you might need some objects

Silly Sentences

Make up a sentence with words beginning with a certain sound

A red rhino ran round the rainbow.

Picture Sounds

Draw a picture & hide sounds in it.