

Course Topic: Teaching Reading**Course Instructor**

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Course Synopsis

Students often struggle to find the relationship between the sounds of English and how those sounds are represented through the English writing system. This is particularly true of students whose first language does not use a writing system based upon the Roman alphabet. Because of the complicated and convoluted path that English has taken throughout its development, our writing system does not directly correspond to our sound system. There are sounds that are represented several different ways, and letters that can represent several different sounds. Phonics is a system that helps make the relationship between the English writing system and sound system clearer for English language learners. It is useful for beginners who are learning to read and write in English and also for low intermediate students who need to improve their spelling.

Course Agenda

1. Sound-Symbol Correspondence
2. What is Phonics?
3. Letter and Sound Combinations
4. Phonics Sequencing
5. Guidelines for Teaching with Phonics
6. Activities for Teaching with Phonics

1. Sound-Symbol Correspondence

English has an alphabet to represent the language in written form. This alphabet is not the same as the International Phonetic Alphabet for English, which represents the sounds of English. We have given you a copy of the International Phonetic Alphabet for English at the end of this handout for reference.

English Alphabet <i>Letters for the English written language</i>	≠	International Phonetic Alphabet for English <i>Sounds for the English spoken language</i>
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The challenge with English is that the two systems—the writing system and the sound system—don’t directly match each other. One sound can be represented by different letters or letter combinations. And one letter can represent different sounds. We can see this with both vowels and consonants.

Vowel Sound	The Sounds Written with the Alphabet
/i:/	ea (clean), ee (seen)
/ei/	ai (plain), a (plane), ay (play)
/ai/	i (climb), ei (height), y (shy), ie (pie)

Consonant Sound	The Sounds Written with the Alphabet
/f/	f (fire), ph (phone), gh (tough)
/k/	ck (back), k (kite), c (cat)
/ʃ/	sh (shine), s (sugar), ss (discussion), ti (portion)

2. What is Phonics?

Phonics is a system for teaching reading that has been developed to help students bridge the gap between the English writing system and the English sound system. Phonics uses the letter/sound patterns in English to teach students to sound out English words. With a firm grasp of phonics, students can learn to read new words by sounding them out. They can also learn to spell accurately because they understand the letter/sound patterns.

3. Letter and Sound Combinations

Phonics focuses on making students familiar with different letter combinations and the corresponding sounds represented by those letters.

A. Vowel-Consonant Combinations are commonly co-occurring combinations of vowels and consonants.

For example:

AG as in "bag"	OG as in "bog"	IG as in "big"	UG as in "bug"
gag wag lag tag nag rag	fog log dog	dig wig pig	hug lug dug
OT as in "hot"	AT as in "hat"	IT as in "hit"	UT as in "hut"
lot got rot jot dot pot	mat bat cat	sit pit kit	nut cut gut

B. Digraphs are combinations of two or more letters that are used to create a single consonant sound. The following are examples of digraphs in English.

Digraph	Sound	Example Words
ch	/tʃ/	church, cheese, chuckle, chat, chug, chill, cheap
ch	/k/	chorus, choral
ck	/k/	back, slack, tack, hack, wick, lack, yuck, knock, sock, puck, rack
sh	/ʃ/	sheep, ship, shut, shot, shine, sheet, shop
th	/θ/	three, think, thing, thought, through, thin
th	/ð/	the, this, those, that, then
wh	/w/	why, when, what, where, whine, white
kn	/n/	knife, knight, know, knot
ti	/ʃ/	motion, lotion, option, action
ci	/ʃ/	facial, crucial, special
sc	/s/	science, scissors, scent, scene
wr	/r/	wrap, wrong, write, wren
ph	/f/	phone, phrase, photo, philosophy, pheasant
ght	/t/	night, right, might, light

Double letters such as 'll', 'tt', and 'dd' are also digraphs that make the single consonant sounds /l/, /t/, and /d/ respectively.

C. Blends are consonant letter combinations that occur together frequently. They are different from digraphs in that blends contain two or more distinct, but closely linked, consonant sounds, rather than making a single sound. There are three main blend categories in English: r-blends (for example 'tr'), s-blends (for example 'st'), and l-blends (for example 'pl'). Here are some examples:

r-blends		s-blends		l-blends	
tr	train	st	stop	bl	block, table
thr	three	sm	smart	cl	clock, uncle
gr	green	sn	snap	ddl	riddle
br	bright	sp	spot	fl	fly, trifle
pr	pray	sc	scan	gl	glad
cr	cry	sk	skit	ggl	gaggle
fr	fry	sw	swim	sl	slap
		squ	square	pl	play
				ppl	ripple
				ttl	little

D. Final ‘e’ combinations are combinations that have a silent ‘e’ at the end. In these combinations, the preceding vowel sound usually gets lengthened by the silent ‘e’. The following are sample words for some of the final ‘e’ combinations. *Note that not all of them lead to a lengthened vowel sound (for example, ‘come’).

a—consonant—e	e—consonant—e	i—consonant—e	o—consonant—e	u—consonant—e
game, cape, pane	theme, recede, mere	time, wise, mile	home, pole, come*	use, tube, mute

E. Multiple spellings of long vowels and diphthongs are often problematic for young learners. It is, therefore, important to have students be able to read the different letter representations of these vowels. The following are some of the multiple spellings of the different long vowels and diphthongs.

Long vowel or diphthong	Sample words
i:	ee—seen, ea—beam, ei—receive, ie—field
ɜ:	ir—bird, er—perk, or—work, ur—murky, ea—heard
u:	oo—moon, ue—clue
eɪ	a—plane, ai—plain, ay—bay, ei—eight
ʊə	ou—tourist
aɪ	i—climb, y—my, ie—pie, ei—height
aʊ	ow—cow, ou—out
əʊ	oa—boat, o—home
ɔɪ	oi—point, oy—toy

4. Phonics Sequencing

We can get even more detailed in our approach to teaching phonics when we consider the order in which we teach students to read the different sounds and sound combinations. Here are some considerations for sequencing your phonics lessons.

Phonics Sequencing for Vowels:

1. Teach short vowels before long vowels.
2. Teach short vowel-consonant combinations (such as 'ig' and 'at') so that students can read actual words as soon as possible.
3. Teach short and long vowels before diphthongs.

Phonics Sequencing for Consonants:

1. Teach the most frequently occurring consonant sounds first. For example, the letter "t" is used in a lot of words; however, the letter "x" is not.
2. Teach single consonant sounds before digraphs (sh, ch, th) and blends (br, cl, st).
3. Move from simple sound combinations to complex sound combinations. Most students love learning big words that have simple phonics, such as 'hippopotamus'.

5. Guidelines for Teaching with Phonics

Here are a few more things to consider when you are teaching phonics:

- ✓ Keep activities relatively short and fast-paced.
- ✓ Cover only a small segment of phonics at a time.
- ✓ Begin each lesson with phonics the students know and then introduce something new.
- ✓ Allow for a lot of repetition.
- ✓ Create a classroom environment in which students become active word-watchers or word detectives. Encourage curiosity about words.
- ✓ Create word walls and letter charts, and post student work on the walls.
- ✓ Use only simple words. Make sure you don't introduce difficult words students don't know just to teach the phonics.

6. Activities for Teaching with Phonics

There are many different kinds of activities to use with learners to teach them to read and spell with phonics. The following is just a small sample.

A. Sound Matching¹

The teacher says a word that begins with a particular sound. The students take turns saying other words that begin with the same sound. As an alternative, the students can say words that *end* with the same sound, *include* the same sound, or *rhyme* with the original word.

2. Sound Isolation

Students are given three words that start with the same sound. Students identify that sound. Alternatively, the words can have the same middle or ending sound.

¹ Yopp, 1992, p. 147, p. 700.

3. Which Object Doesn't Belong?

The teacher sets out a tray of objects and asks the students to choose the one object that doesn't belong because it doesn't begin with the same sound as the others. For example, from a tray with a toy pig, a pen, a pickle and a teddy bear, the teddy bear doesn't belong.

4. Rhymes, Alliteration and Assonance

These types of activities emphasize a particular sound, so that students get repeated exposure to that sound.

- **Rhyme** is when the end sound of subsequent words is the same. For example: *I once saw a cat wearing a hat. I once saw a frog riding a dog.*
- **Alliteration** is when a series of words share the same beginning sound. For example: *Six snakes sell sodas and snacks in the summer.*
- **Assonance** is when the same vowel sound is used in the middle of the words. For example: *The leaf, the bean, the peach, were all within reach.*

To practice these sounds, students repeat the rhyme, alliteration or assonance multiple times.

5. The Odd One Out

Give students groups of simple words to read. They have to pick out the word that does not belong in the group. Here are some ways that we can create 'odd one out' groups.

- Which word does not rhyme with the others?—cat, pig, hat
- Which word does not start the same way as the others?—man, sat, sick
- Which word does not end the same way as the others?—man, sat, ten
- Which word does not have the same middle sound as the others?—top, cat, pan

6. Oral blending

Students sound out words using oral blending exercises. There are three ways we can have students sound out words:

- Syllables—Read the word parts and say the word "ta...ble"
- Onset/Rhyme—Read the word parts and say the word "p...an"
- Phoneme by Phoneme—Read the word parts and say the word "s..a...t"

7. Phonemic Manipulation

We can do simple activities in which learners have to change the sounds and letters of given words to make new words. The results of some of the following phonemic manipulations are not words, however, they still provide students with useful sound isolation practice. Here are some different manipulation activities to try:

- Initial sound substitution — Replace the first sound in mat with s
- Final sound substitution—Replace the last sound in mat with p
- Vowel substitution—Replace the middle sound in map with o
- Syllable deletion—Say habit without the ha
- Initial sound deletion—Say sun without the s
- Final sound deletion—Say hit without the t
- Initial phoneme blend—Say step without the s
- Final phoneme blend—Say best without the t
- Second phoneme blend—Say frog without the r

8. Phonics or Word Wheels

A methodical way to get students to make words with one particular letter combination is with a word wheel. As students turn the wheel, different words with one letter combination are revealed. Students say the words that appear. We've included two simple word wheels at the end of your handout for you to use with your students – one using the 'cl' blend and the other using the 'fr' blend. To find word wheels, just search the internet using the term 'word wheel' or try making your own!

9. Nonsense words

A fun way to get students working with the sounds and letters of English is to have them read and create nonsense words. In nonsense words, legitimate combinations of letters are put together to make words that actually don't exist in the English language. Here are some examples of nonsense words using real English letter combinations:

- twop
- frest
- lang
- bast
- frun
- nonk

For fun, you can introduce the class to poems written with nonsense words, the most famous of which is Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll.

JABBERWOCKY

Lewis Carroll (from *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, 1872)

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought --
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And, has thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Thanks for participating!

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International Phonemic Alphabet for English

ɪ: speech	I P <u>i</u> g	U b <u>oo</u> ks	u: m <u>oo</u> n	ɪə ch <u>ee</u> rs (BR)	eɪ pl <u>a</u> ne		
e r <u>e</u> d	ə b <u>a</u> nan <u>a</u>	ɜ: b <u>i</u> rd	ɔ: c <u>o</u> rk (BR)	ʊə t <u>ou</u> rist	ɔɪ p <u>o</u> int	əʊ b <u>o</u> at	
æ c <u>a</u> t	ʌ C <u>u</u> p	ɑ: a <u>r</u> m (BR)	ɒ b <u>o</u> ttle	eə ch <u>ai</u> r (BR)	aɪ cl <u>i</u> mber	aʊ c <u>o</u> w	
p p <u>r</u> esent	b b <u>a</u> by	t t <u>a</u> lk	d d <u>r</u> aw	tʃ ch <u>ee</u> se	dʒ j <u>u</u> dge	k c <u>a</u> sh	g gr <u>a</u> pes
f f <u>i</u> sh	v v <u>i</u> per	θ th <u>r</u> ee	ð feath <u>er</u>	s S <u>a</u> turn	z z <u>e</u> ro	ʃ sh <u>o</u> e	ʒ meas <u>u</u> re
m m <u>a</u> il	n n <u>e</u> ws	ŋ w <u>i</u> ng	h h <u>e</u> art	l l <u>e</u> gs	r r <u>a</u> coon	w w <u>o</u> ld	j y <u>e</u> s