

Key Vocabulary for Phonics Teaching

Phoneme: The smallest unit of sound in a word. Phonemes may be written with more than one letter eg **day**. The word **start** has 4 phonemes - **s - t - ar - t**. The word **church** has 3 phonemes - **ch - ur - ch**. The word **strap** has 5 phonemes - **s - t - r - a - p**.

Grapheme: The letter or letters that are used to write a phoneme.

Digraph: A two letter grapheme where two letters represent one phoneme or sound eg **ar, ea, er, oi, ch, th**

Vowel Digraph: A two letter grapheme that represents a vowel phoneme or sound eg **ay, ee, oi**

Split Vowel Digraph: A two letter grapheme that represent a vowel phoneme or sound where the sounds are pushed apart by another letter. This digraph often used to be referred to as a magic e eg **cake, bite, phone, these, cube**. It is used for the long vowel sounds.

Trigraph: A three letter grapheme where three letters represent one phoneme or sound eg **air, igh, ear**

Blending: Building words for reading by pushing together all the phonemes or sounds in the word.

Segmenting: Splitting up words for spelling by breaking up words into all their sounds and then working out what letter or letters are needed to represent each sound.

Short vowel sound: The sound that the letters a, e, i, o, u make in a word eg **cat, peg, hit, not, sun**.

Long vowel sound: The sound that is like the names of the vowel letters. The long vowel sounds are often represented in more than one way by digraphs and trigraphs eg **main, stay, cake, see, seat, mice, light, coat, bone, glue, spoon**.