

Phonics, Reading and Spelling



Writing was invented as a way of recording what people wanted to say when they weren't able to speak directly to each other.



The inventors of writing started by thinking about how we speak and the spoken word.



They noticed that spoken words are made up of sounds that we push together. We hardly notice the separate sounds when we speak so we have to listen and think carefully about them.



We use 44 different sounds in different combinations to make up all the words in English.



In a written word each sound is represented by a letter or a number of letters working together. At school we call these sound spellings.



3 sounds, 3 sound spellings, 3 letters

m a n



3 sounds, 3 sound spellings, 4 letters

b o a t



3 sounds, 3 sound spellings, 5 letters

l igh t



3 sounds, 3 sound spellings, 6 letters

w eigh t



Phonics teaches children about all the sounds and how they are represented by all the sound spellings. It is a bit like a code that children need to crack to be able to read and spell.



To read children 'decode' the word. They need to look at each sound spelling in the word, one by one, and think what sound each represents. As they work through the word from left to right they blend the sounds or push them together and listen for the word forming. They can then say what the word is.



To spell children need to think about the word they want to write and think about the sounds in the word, one by one. For each sound they match a sound spelling by writing it down.

Helping your child to think about phonics (the sounds and the sound spellings) when they are reading and spelling is really helpful. It supports the way reading and writing is taught at school.