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# What is Phonics Anyway?

*“Phonics is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end.”*

(Savage, 20)

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ELE3280-Developmental Reading in the  
Elementary Classroom

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# Phonemic Awareness & Phonics

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# Definition of Phonics

*“In a nutshell, phonics can be defined as the conscious, concentrated study of the relationship between sounds and symbols of the purpose of learning to read and spell.” (Savage, 7)*

**Orthography:**

***ortho—meaning correct***

***graph—meaning writing***

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# Phonics & Reading

All readers can and do use phonics within the complex process of *making sense of print* as they read and saying what they want to say.

Phonics refers to the set of complex relationships between phonology (the sound system of an oral language) and orthography (the system of spellings and punctuation of written language).

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# Important Differences

**Phonological Awareness:** Refers to all of the sound features in spoken language. (words, syllables, onsets-rimes, phonemes)

**Phonemic Awareness:** The basic units of meaningful speech sounds.

**Phonics:** Involves written symbols. Phonics involves print.

*“Without phonemic awareness, phonics instruction doesn’t make much sense, since children who lack phonemic awareness have difficulty linking speech sounds to letters.” (Savage, 25)*

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# Phonemic Awareness Tasks

Phonemic Awareness Task	Example
Isolating phonemes	T: What is the first sound in the word dog? S: /d/
Blending onsets/rimes	T: What word can you make by blending these two sounds together: /s/ ...and
Blending phonemes	T: What word is made from blending these sounds? /b/ /a/ /t/
Deleting phonemes	T: What word is left when we drop the /s/ from spot? S: pot
Segmenting words into phonemes	T: Show me how many phonemes are in the word bake? S: three -- /b/ /a/ /k/
Adding phonemes	T: What word do you make when you add a /b/ to the beginning of ring?
Substituting phonemes	T: Say the word bag. Now change the /b/ to an /r/. What is the new word? S: rag

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# Our Language

There are twenty-six letters in our alphabet.

There are forty-four sounds in our language.

What does this tell us about the connection between our sound system and our graphic system?

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# Sounds of a word

Phonemes represent sounds.

Each phoneme represents one sound.

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound.

Example: bat has three phonemes

/b/ /a/ /t/

Example: ship has three phonemes

/sh/ /i/ /p/

Example: though has two phonemes

/th/ /o/

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# How many phonemes

ran

rain

reign

ate

eight

straight

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# Morphemes

A morpheme is the smallest **meaning** unit of sound.

Example: Boat has three phonemes,  
but one morpheme.

/b/ /o/ /t/

/boat/

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# Free Morphemes / Bound Morphemes

A free morpheme has a meaning of its own.

A bound morpheme has meaning, but it has to be attached to another morpheme

Example: preheat

“pre” is bound and “heat” is *free*

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## What is the difference between a *vowel* and a *consonant*?

A vowel sound is one in which air flows through the mouth unobstructed.

Say /o/

A consonant is one in which the flow of air is cut off partially or completely.

Say /s/

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# Vowels / Consonants

We often think of the letters that represent these sounds as vowels or consonants. The letters are just a short hand that stands for the vowel sound or consonant sound. A grapheme is the written symbol(s).

Examples that use consonant letters and/or vowel letters to represent the sounds.

bought: “ough” represents the vowel sound. It contains consonant letters as well as vowel letters to represent the vowel sound.

quit: the vowel letter “u” represents the consonant sound /kuit/

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# Consonants

Consonants obstruct the stream of breath to greater/lesser degrees, so they are divided into five groups:

Consonants are distinguished by place of articulation.

Consonants are also distinguished by voiced (vocal cords vibrate) and unvoiced (without vocal cord vibration).

Examples:	big (voiced)	pig (unvoiced)
	zzzzz	sssss



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# Vowels

How do you define “vowel”?

There are approximately 16 vowel sounds in the English Language.

The most important quality that defines the nature of a vowel is where it occurs in the mouth.

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# Vowel Terminology

Breve: symbol used to show short vowel sounds.

căt bĕt hĭt pŏp tŭb

Macron: symbol used to show long vowel sounds.

bāke Pēte bīke pōke ūse /yōōz/

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# Diphthongs / Digraphs / Blends

	2 letters = 1 sound	2-3 letters 2-3 sounds
Consonants	Digraph sh, ch, th, wh <u>s</u> heep, <u>ch</u> eep, <u>th</u> ink, <u>w</u> hy, pe <u>ch</u>	Blends r, l, s <u>b</u> read, <u>cl</u> ip, <u>st</u> reet, <u>ju</u> mp, <u>st</u> and
Vowels	Digraph cvvc <u>bo</u> at <u>rai</u> n <u>tie</u> <u>B</u> read <u>be</u> ad	Diphthong vowel blend /ou/ <u>cou</u> ch <u>cow</u> /oi/ soil boy

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# Phonics Rules to Teach

cv = he, she, by, my, thy, so

cvc = stop, lump, leg, box

cvvc = teal, wheel, beach, bait, boat, thread

cvc + e = bike, cake, smoke, cute

cv + r = smart, bar, tart, /är/

fur, her, herd, bird /ur/

born, corn, torn /ôr/

(any vowel or pair of vowels followed by an “r”)

c=consonant

v=vowel

These patterns are consistent in many words.

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# The letters “c” and “g”

Pronounce these words: city, cell, cycle

What sound does the “c” make?

Pronounce these words: car, cot, cut

What sound does the “c” make?

Pronounce these words: gem, gist, gym

What sound does the “g” make?

Pronounce these words: game, gone, gum

What sound does the “g” make?

When “c” or “g” is followed by an “e”, “i”, or “y” we hear the soft sound /s/ or /j/.  
When “c” or “g” is followed by an “a”, “o”, or “u” we hear the hard sound /k/ or /g/.

(Usually!!!)

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# What about oo? (vowel digraph)

Short oo sound

book

crook

look

took

Long oo sound

shoot

boot

moot

loot

Use the breve above the two o's

Use the macron above the two o's

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# What is a schwa sound anyway?

The schwa is a weak vowel sound in English that occurs in unaccented syllables. The schwa sound is found in multisyllabic words. (Mouth is in neutral position.)

It is represented by the symbol “ə”

about

upon

medicine

pyramid

tower

police

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# Word Identification

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# Pronouncing unfamiliar words

What strategies do we use when we meet an unfamiliar word?

Memory (sight words)

Decoding of individual sounds (phonics)

Predicting from context

Decoding by analogy to known words  
(analogues—known words) (Schudt-Caldwell, 132)

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# Don't say, "Sound it out!"

What strategies should we encourage children to use when they come across an unfamiliar word?

- Use Context Clues + Initial Letter (read ahead)
  - Structural Analysis (chunking words—root word, base word, affixes)
  - Sound/Spelling (Phonics)
  - Ask someone or Use Dictionary
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# Word Identification

*“Word identification is the key that opens the door to the exciting world of comprehension.”*

(Schudt-Caldwell, 132)

Sight words—familiar words that are pronounced without any analysis. Instant recognition of a large store of sight words helps us read quickly and fluently.

Listening vocabulary—consists of all of the words you have heard. When you use analogues to arrive at an approximated pronunciation, you match that pronunciation with a word in your listening vocabulary.

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# Word Identification

*“Like most politicians he has the gift for tergiversation.”*

Have you ever seen the underlined word before?

Were you able to pronounce the word?

What clues did you use to help pronounce this word?

Do you have any idea about its meaning?

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tergiversation>

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# Sight Words

- Words children recognize instantaneously in print.
    - Used frequently in print
    - A large sight vocabulary leads to rapid and accurate recognition of words encountered in print.
    - Phonetically irregular (do not have a predictable sound-symbol relationship)
      - Examples: said, is, was, has
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# Structural Analysis

- Attacking words by using the basic word parts.
    - Structural analysis focuses on morphemes in words.
    - The basic word parts include prefixes, roots, and suffixes.
      - Compound words
      - Syllabication
      - Word study (etymological connections)
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# Assessing Word Recognition

- Orally read grade level passages
  - Read leveled word lists
    - Dolch sight word list
    - Fry
    - Thorndike-Lorge Magazine Count
    - 107 High Frequency Word List (Zeno, Ivens, Millard, & Duvvuri)
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# Context Clues

- Context clues consist of information in the surrounding passages that helps readers determine the meaning and pronunciation of words.
    - Emergent readers use picture cues.
    - Phonics helps readers make an educated guess, context clues and language background help readers get it right.
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