

Literacy Hub phonics progression

This sequential phonics progression provides teachers with an order for teaching the sounds and letters of English, moving from simple to complex code, and from common to less common sounds and spellings.

The phases of the progression are mapped to the Australian Curriculum V9 in English as follows:

- Phase 1–5: Foundation
- Phases 6–12: Year 1
- Phases 13–17: Year 2
- Phases 18–24: Year 3

Each phase also links to the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum Reading and Viewing sub-element Phonic knowledge and word recognition (levels 3–8). The relevant level is noted in each phase.

The progression is complemented by classroom-ready [phonics and morphology lesson packs for teachers](#) available on the Literacy Hub.

Notes for use

- Each phase in the progression is a set of letter-sound correspondences that should be taught over several literacy lessons (usually one letter-sound correspondence per lesson). This is not intended to represent one week of instruction per phase; the pace of instruction should be dictated by student progress.
- Each box in the progression represents a distinct sound and its corresponding letter or letters.
- Letter-sound correspondences followed by an asterisk (*) can represent two or three sounds that are being taught in the same phase. Refer to the [spelling generalisations](#) on the Literacy Hub for teaching points and background knowledge.
- Sample decodable words are included in each phase. When you are introducing other new words, ensure you only use words with the letter-sound correspondences that you have taught. Visit the Literacy Hub for sample [decodable words and sentences](#).
- The progression uses the abbreviations C (consonant sound) and V (vowel sound) to show word patterns. For example, VC is a vowel-consonant word such as 'at'; CVC is a consonant-vowel-consonant word such as 'pan'.

Research supporting this progression

Knowledge in this area is constantly evolving. While there is not one universally agreed sequence for teaching sounds and letters, the order presented here is in line with current research surrounding the science of reading. It takes an approach that can be readily understood and used in a broad range of Australian schools.

This progression has been developed in line with research-based principles of systematic synthetic phonics instruction, and in particular the work of Louisa Cook Moats (2020), Lyn Stone (2018) and others.

Some of the principles supporting this progression include the following.

- Teaching simple letter-sound correspondences before moving to complex ones, for example teaching single letters and consonant digraphs before moving to vowel digraphs, diphthongs and r-controlled vowels.
- Teaching a few consonants with a vowel in a phase, so that students can blend and make words almost immediately, for example, s, a, t, p, i, n.
- Teaching more useful, higher-frequency letter-sound correspondences first, for example, teaching s, t, p before x, j, q.
- Teaching the most common representations of a sound before teaching less common representations.
- Not teaching sounds that are similar or letters that are visually similar in the same set, for example, not teaching m and n, i and e, or j and g in same set.

In the 'Irregular words' column, this progression also introduces words that are considered high frequency (occurring often and early for reading and writing) and irregular (have irregular spelling patterns or letter-sound correspondences students have not yet learned). For example, 'the' is a word novice readers will encounter in reading and need to spell for writing before the digraph 'th' and e as a schwa are taught.

In addition, this progression includes morphology concepts, which are integral to the writing and reading process. This is supported by the research of Marcia Henry (2019); Bowers, Kirby and Deacon (2010); and others.

References

Bowers, P. N., Kirby, J. R., & Deacon, S. H. (2010). The Effects of Morphological Instruction on Literacy Skills: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 80(2).

Five from Five. [Scope and sequence](#), accessed 3 October 2022.

Henry, M. K. (2019). Morphemes Matter: A Framework for Instruction. *Perspectives on language and literacy*, Spring, pp. 23-26.

Moats, L. C. (2020). *Speech to print: language essentials for teachers* (3rd ed.). Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Stone, L. (2018). *Reading for life*. London: Routledge.

Curriculum links

Foundation Year: [AC9EFLY11](#), [AC9EFLY12](#), [AC9EFLY13](#), [AC9EFLY14](#), [AC9EFLY15](#)

Year 1: [AC9E1LY09](#), [AC9E1LY11](#), [AC9E1LY12](#), [AC9E1LY13](#), [AC9E1LY14](#), [AC9E1LY15](#)

Year 2: [AC9E2LY09](#), [AC9E2LY10](#), [AC9E2LY11](#), [AC9E2LY12](#)

Useful links and further reading

[Decodable words and sentences](#)

[Literacy Hub professional learning: Implementing a systematic synthetic phonics approach](#)

[Morphology instructional model](#)

[Phonics and morphology lesson packs for teachers](#)

[Phonics instructional model for reading and spelling](#)

[Spelling generalisations, syllable division and morphology](#)



Visit the **Literacy Hub website** at www.literacyhub.edu.au to access more free, evidence-based literacy resources for teachers.

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|
| <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 50%; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">1</div> <p>Foundation</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p> | s | <p>Start reading and spelling VC/CVC words using continuous blending</p> <p>Phase 1 example words at, an, in, it, nip, sat, sap, tap, pin, pat</p> | <p>is</p> <p>a</p> <p>l</p> <p>the</p> |
| | a (as in apple) | | |
| | t | | |
| | p | | |
| | i (as in igloo) | | |
| | n | | |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Irregular words |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|
| <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold; border: 2px solid purple; border-radius: 50%; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">2</div> <p>Foundation</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p> | m | <p>Read and spell with VC/CVC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 2 example words am, on, mat, Pam, hit, dot, red, mop, rip, met</p> | <p>my</p> <p>has</p> <p>to</p> <p>do</p> |
| | e (as in egg) | | |
| | h | | |
| | r | | |
| | d | | |
| | o (as in octopus) | | |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|
| <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; border: 2px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">3</div> <p>Foundation</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p> | f | <p>Read and spell with VC/CVC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 3 example words if, up, us, fit, cat, bed, got, peg, log, mud, hum</p> | <p>he</p> <p>me</p> <p>was</p> <p>said</p> |
| | c | | |
| | b | | |
| | g | | |
| | l | | |
| | u (as in up) | | |

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Irregular words |
|--|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; border: 2px solid red; border-radius: 50%; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">4</div> <p>Foundation</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p> | k | <p>Read and spell with VC/CVC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 4 example words kid, kit, Ken, pack, deck, vet, van, yes, yum, zap, zip</p> | <p>of</p> <p>love</p> <p>like</p> |
| | ck | | |
| | v | | |
| | y | | |
| | z | | |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Irregular words |
|--|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <p>5</p> <p>Foundation</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p> | w | <p>Read and spell with VC/CVC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 5 example words web, wag, wet, jam, jog, jug, quit, quiz, box, six</p> | <p>they</p> <p>are</p> <p>you</p> |
| | j | | |
| | qu | | |
| | x | | |

| Phase | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>6</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 4/5</p> | <p>Open/closed syllables - one-syllable words</p> <p>Phase 6 example words met/me, beg/be, hen/he, not/no, got/go, hit/hi</p> | <p>Introduce term 'suffix'</p> <p>Suffix -s (noun) meaning plural, 'more than one'</p> <p>Can sound like s or z</p> | <p>she</p> <p>what</p> <p>your</p> <p>one</p> |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>7</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 4</p> </div> | Floss rule | | |
| | ff | <p>Start reading and spelling CVCC and CCVC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 7 example words fluff, gruff, smell, chill, cross, press, buzz, frizz, jazz</p> | <p>where</p> <p>there</p> <p>here</p> <p>saw</p> |
| | ll | | |
| | ss | | |
| | zz | | |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>8</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5</p> </div> | sh | <p>Read and spell CVCC and CCVC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 8 example words shop, smash, that, tenth, chimp, rich, when, whisk, sting, thing</p> | <p>Suffix -es (noun)</p> <p>meaning 'more than one' added to words ending in sh, ch, x, ss, zz</p> | <p>put</p> <p>because</p> <p>once</p> <p>want</p> |
| | th* voiced and unvoiced | | | |
| | ch | | | |
| | wh | | | |
| | ng | | | |


*Denotes more than one sound.

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Year 1</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5</p> </div> | split digraphs | | | |
| | a_e | Read and spell CVCC and CCVC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences Phase 9 example words brave, shape, theme, glide, chime, spoke, froze, cute, rude | Suffix -s/ -es (present simple verb) meaning 'something that someone or something does' | were who school write |
| | i_e | | | |
| | o_e | | | |
| | u_e* | | | |
| | e_e | | | |

*Denotes more than one sound.

| Phase | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|--|---|--|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Year 1</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5/6</p> </div> | Open and closed syllables in two-syllable words, for example, emu (open), wombat (closed) Phase 10 example words cobweb, insect, napkin, admit, robot, even, silent, open | Suffix -ing (present continuous verb) meaning 'happening now' Add -ing to simple base words | walk talk come some |

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|--|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>11</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5/6</p> </div> | ai ay | <p>Read and spell one- and two-syllable words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 11 example words snail, play, speech, tree, float, snow, night</p> | <p>Suffix -ed (past tense verb)</p> <p>meaning 'already happened'</p> <p>Add -ed to simple base words</p> | <p>their</p> <p>all</p> <p>does</p> <p>goes</p> |
| | ee | | | |
| | oa ow | | | |
| | igh | | | |

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>12</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5/6</p> </div> | <p>Final y*</p> <p>(long 'i' sound at the end of one-syllable words as in try, by;</p> <p>long 'e' sound at the end of words with multiple syllables as in greedy, body)</p> | <p>Read and spell one- and two-syllable words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 12 example words by, my, cry, fly, spy, belly, happy, cherry, pony</p> | <p>Compound words</p> <p>Add two base words to create a new meaning</p> <p>Suffix -y</p> <p>Add -y to simple base words to describe what something is like</p> | <p>could</p> <p>should</p> <p>would</p> <p>two</p> |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <div style="text-align: center;"> <h1>13</h1> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5/6</p> </div> | ea* | <p>Introduce homophones, for example, meat and meet, blue and blew</p> <p>Phase 13 example words speak, head, few, threw, cue, glue, tooth, chook</p> | <p>Final e + vowel suffixes -ed/-ing/-y</p> | <p>work</p> <p>word</p> <p>any</p> <p>many</p> |
| | ew* | | | |
| | ue* | | | |
| | oo* | | | |


*Denotes more than one sound.

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <div style="text-align: center;"> <h1>14</h1> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 6/7</p> </div> | oi oy | <p>Start reading and spelling CCVCC, CCCVC, CCCVCC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 14 example words spoilt, moist, boy, destroy, annoy, ground, without, brow, rowdy, frown, crowd</p> | <p>1-1-1 base words + vowel suffixes -ed/-ing/-y (double the final consonant)</p> | <p>father</p> <p>mother</p> <p>brother</p> <p>other</p> |
| | ou ow | | | |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <p>15</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 6/7</p> | silent final e | <p>Read and spell CCVCC, CCCVC, CCCVCC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 15 example words solve, house, thorn, forbid, scarf, arch, stern, permit, squirm, birthday, burst, burden</p> | <p>Introduce term 'prefix'</p> <p>Prefix un-meaning 'not' or 'opposite of'</p> | <p>last</p> <p>after</p> <p>says</p> <p>laugh</p> |
| | or | | | |
| | ar | | | |
| | er ir ur | | | |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <p>16</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 7</p> | schwa | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 16 example words seven, doctor, crocodile, about, dollar, family, holiday, animal</p> | <p>Suffix -er (noun)</p> <p>meaning 'a person who (or a thing that) does something'</p> | <p>friend</p> <p>water</p> <p>eyes</p> <p>always</p> |

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>17</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 7/8</p> </div> | soft g/c | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 17 example words germ, large, city, force, pledge, stitch, phone, graph, knee</p> | <p>Suffix -er (adjective)</p> <p>Comparative, for example, bigger, smaller</p> | <p>half</p> <p>move</p> <p>gone</p> <p>both</p> |
| | dge | | | |
| | tch | | | |
| | ph | | | |
| | kn | | | |

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|--|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>18</p> <p>Year 3</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8</p> </div> | ie* | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 18 example words shield, pie, they, survey, key, chimney, toe, weigh, eight</p> | <p>Suffix -est</p> <p>Superlative, for example, biggest, smallest</p> | <p>straight</p> <p>height</p> <p>only</p> <p>people</p> |
| | ey* | | | |
| | oe | | | |
| | eigh | | | |

*Denotes more than one sound.


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>19</p> </div> <p>Year 3 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8</p> | au aw | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 19 example words haunt, August, straw, seesaw, hallway, talk, roar, boardwalk, little, sprinkle, turtle</p> | Prefix re- meaning 'back' or 'again' | <p>caught taught beautiful favourite</p> |
| | al/all | | | |
| | oar | | | |
| | -le | | | |

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>20</p> </div> <p>Year 3 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8</p> | are | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 20 example words share, compare, sphere, severe, wire, desire, shore, explore, cure, secure</p> | Prefix pre- meaning 'before' | <p>blood flood country awesome</p> |
| | ere | | | |
| | ire | | | |
| | ore | | | |
| | ure | | | |


| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <div style="text-align: center;"> <h1>21</h1> <p>Year 3</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8</p> </div> | air | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 21 example words chair, dairy, haircut, bear, earn, clear</p> | <p>Suffix -ful</p> <p>meaning 'full of'</p> | <p>thought</p> <p>sugar</p> <p>sure</p> <p>listen</p> |
| | ear* | | | |

*Denotes more than one sound.

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <div style="text-align: center;"> <h1>22</h1> <p>Year 3</p> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8</p> </div> | o (as in mother) | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 22 example words front, Monday, watch, warm, world, worst</p> | <p>Prefix mis-</p> <p>meaning 'wrong' or 'bad'</p> | <p>busy</p> <p>colour</p> <p>young</p> <p>journey</p> |
| | wa/war | | | |
| | wor | | | |

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>23</p> </div> <p>Year 3 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8</p> | ch* (as in chef; or as in chemist) | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 23 example words chef, machine, school, chemist, chord, wrist, wrench, wrangle, gnome, gnash, sign, pleasure, decision</p> | <p>Suffix -ly meaning 'how something is done'</p> | <p>field build during answer ocean</p> |
| | wr | | | |
| | gn | | | |
| | s/si (as in treasure; or as in vision) | | | |

*Denotes more than one sound.

| Phase | Letter-sound correspondences | Letter-sound skills | Morphology | Irregular words |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>24</p> </div> <p>Year 3 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8</p> | ough* | <p>Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words</p> <p>Phase 24 example words dough, bought, drought, through, tough, cough, thorough</p> | <p>Suffix -ment meaning 'result of an action', for example, the result of shipping is a shipment</p> | <p>double honest guess island ancient</p> |

*Denotes more than one sound.