

Year 1 Phonics Check: Analysing group reports using the word and code complexity continuum

The Year 1 Phonics Check word and code complexity continuum is a tool that can be used to support teachers when analysing group reports from the [Year 1 Phonics Check](#).

The continuum (see page 5) maps the words from the Year 1 Phonics Check to the developmental continuum of word and code complexity. The continuum is informed by the Australian Curriculum, including the general capabilities for literacy [Reading and viewing sub-element Phonic knowledge and word recognition](#). Learn more about [word and code complexity](#).

Analysing group reports can be useful for identifying a cohort's strengths and areas of need in order to inform your instruction. Group reports can be helpful for picking up patterns across a cohort, such as identifying words that many students in a class struggle to decode. To use the word and code complexity continuum when analysing group Year 1 Phonics Check reports, follow the steps below.

Preparing for analysis

1. Complete the Year 1 Phonics Check with your students.
2. Print a word and code complexity continuum template (page 5).
3. Calculate how many students represent 80 per cent of your group.

Accessing the report

1. Access the 'Reporting' section on the Year 1 Phonics Check platform.
2. Search for the relevant class name.
3. Select the 'View distribution of answers by words' box.

Analysing the report

1. For each word, count the number of students who read the word correctly to find out whether it is 80 per cent or more of the group.
2. On a copy of the word and code complexity continuum template, highlight in green the words that 80 per cent or more of your students answered correctly.
3. Then, highlight in orange the words that more than 20 per cent of students read incorrectly or skipped.
4. Next, note the categories where all or most words are highlighted green. These represent your group's decoding strengths and mastery.
5. After that, identify the earliest category where there are more than two words highlighted orange. This indicates your group's **earliest point of need**.
6. Finally, check your teacher notes for the words in the category identified as your group's earliest point of need to understand common errors or specific difficulties the group experienced.

Comparing real word and pseudo word reading

A student may read only real words correctly or read some more complex real words correctly while making mistakes on simple pseudo words. This can indicate that the student is using a whole-word reading approach instead of using letter-sound correspondences and blending to actively decode words. Another indicator of a whole-word reading approach is students who read pseudo words incorrectly as real words, for example, 'dat' as 'bat'. These students will be best supported using a systematic synthetic phonics approach and may need to be assessed for their letter-sound correspondence knowledge and blending skill. Example assessment tools are listed below.

Instructional advice

The following section provides advice for responding to your group's strengths and areas of need.

Supporting strengths

Word categories with green highlighting indicate your group's ability to decode words at this word and code level.

Support these students to apply these strengths to tasks such as:

- playing word-level decoding games
- spelling words in these word or code categories
- reading decodable sentences and continuous text with these word and code categories
- writing sentences and continuous text with these word and code categories.

Supporting growth in areas of need

The first category with two or more words highlighted in orange indicates the next point of instructional need for your group. To support the group at their earliest point of need:

- find where this word or code type is introduced in your phonics progression or the Literacy Hub phonics progression
- follow an [explicit direct instructional model](#) for systematic synthetic phonics, with routine-based, structured phonics lessons to introduce or reintroduce code or word types from this category
- provide regular opportunities for the review of newly taught and previously learnt content through a daily review
- monitor student growth closely and adjust the pace and delivery of your instruction as indicated.

Students requiring Tier 2 (small group) or Tier 3 (one-on-one) intervention will benefit from increased, targeted modelling and guided practice with the teacher, in addition to scaffolded whole-class instruction.

For students needing support at the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) word level or simple words with adjacent consonants (VCC, CVCC, CCVC) level it is valuable to identify more-specific areas of strength and need. For these students:

- assess single letter-sound correspondence knowledge
- assess phonological and phonemic awareness.

Use this data to further inform the basis of your instruction.

Example assessment tools

[Reading Rockets Letter Name and Letter Sound Assessment](#)

Complete both the letter-naming and letter-sounds sections of the assessment with students individually, then focus mostly on the letter-sound results for creating learning goals. Letter names can be taught alongside the letter-sound knowledge, for example, 't says /t/'.

[Quick Phonological Awareness Screening \(QPAS\)](#)

Teachers can assess students individually using this tool and then use the continuum of phonological awareness diagram on the Literacy Hub's Phonemic awareness overview to support analysis for areas of need.

Phonological awareness, phonemic awareness and phonics instruction resources

- [Daily review example](#)

This slide pack provides a sample daily review, a key component of teaching phonics following a systematic synthetic phonics model, using evidence-based research. It can be adapted to follow any phonics progression or lesson.

- [Implementing a systematic synthetic phonics approach](#)

The Literacy Hub provides free, online professional learning to support schools through each step of building a systematic synthetic phonics approach for reading and spelling.

- [Literacy Hub phonics progression](#)

The Literacy Hub phonics progression includes a sequence of letter-sound correspondences and phonics skills for development across Foundation to Year 2.

- [Phonemic awareness overview](#)

This document outlines the continuum of phonological and phonemic awareness skills and provides evidence and advice on effective phonemic awareness instruction.

- [Phonics pair-game templates](#)

This document contains pair games and activities to encourage students to develop their phonics skills with peers during independent practice.

- [Phonological and phonemic awareness lesson activities](#)

This slide pack is a practical resource for use in the classroom and includes teacher scripts and visual slides to support phonological and phonemic awareness instruction.

- [Literacy Hub phonics and morphology lesson packs](#)

These slide packs and accompanying worksheets give teachers a complete sequence of phonics instruction across 24 phases.

- [Word and code complexity continuum](#)

This diagram shows the gradual progression of skills that students need to develop so they can read and spell words with increasing complexity.

Word and code complexity continuum

Print and highlight to analyse group results

* This word appears in multiple categories.

Underline represents pseudo words.

