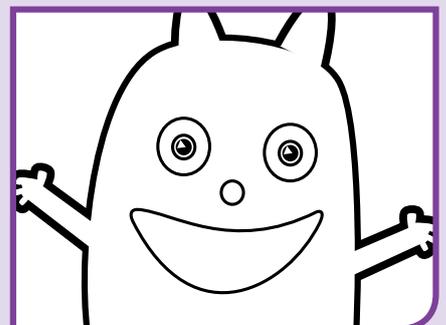
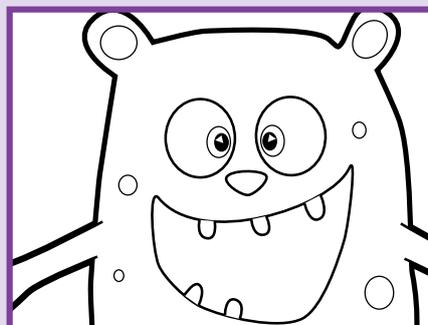
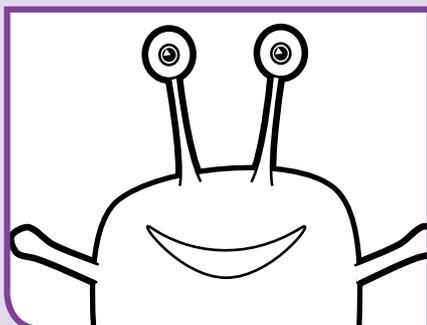
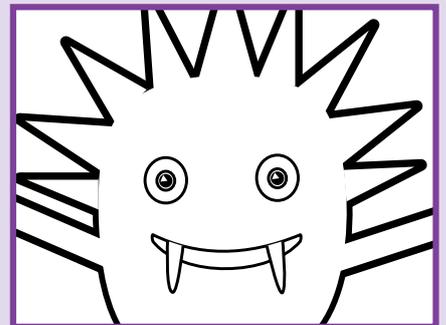
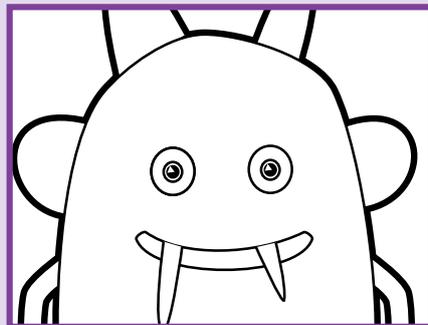
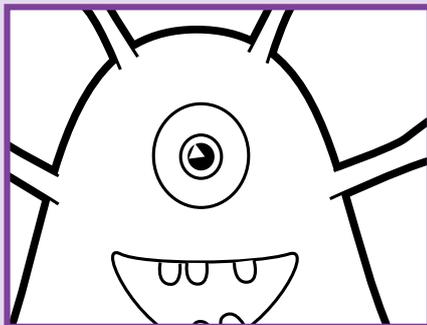
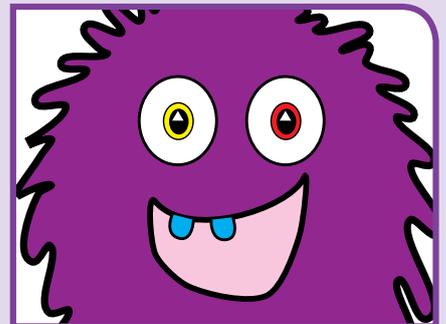
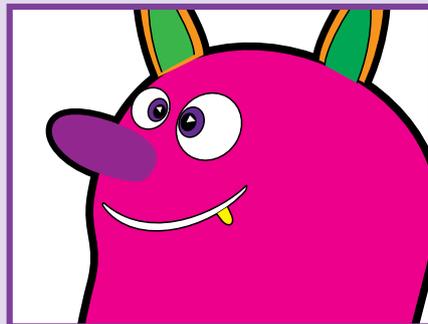
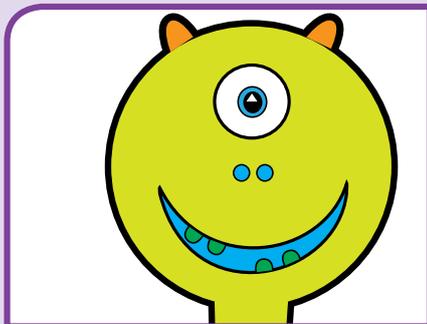


Year 1 Phonics Check

Administration guide



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1 | Introduction

This guidance is for schools administering the Year 1 Phonics Check. This guidance is for:

- school leaders
- teachers.

The Year 1 Phonics Check is recommended for administration in Term 1 or Term 3, but can be used at any time that suits your school. It can be used as a screening tool to assess the decoding skills and knowledge of Year 1 and Year 2 students, as well as older struggling readers.

The Year 1 Phonics Check provides a snapshot of a student's developing skills and knowledge required for them to be successful in their reading, spelling and writing programs. Teachers can respond to student performance in the Year 1 Phonics Check by reviewing their existing phonics program and designing appropriate differentiated learning and intervention processes for reading, spelling and writing.

An understanding of phonics is foundational to the development of writing, spelling and reading skills, and is one component of *The Big Six components of literacy*. In the Australian Curriculum English learning area, phonics and word knowledge begins in Foundation and continues through until the end of Year 6, with ongoing application in Years 7 to 10. Phonological and phonemic awareness continues to be applied to written words as students develop their spelling knowledge in Year 3 and beyond. The [literacy general capabilities](#) in the Australian Curriculum map the development of these skills. Phonics is an integral part of writing, spelling and reading.

2 | School leaders' responsibilities

School leaders should ensure:

- teachers cater for students with disabilities (for example, by modifying materials)
- the check is administered by a student's trained teacher rather than another support person
- all teachers review this guide and the Year 1 Phonics Check support materials prior to administering and scoring the check
- student responses are scored accurately and consistently
- teachers review results and reflect on the effectiveness of the present whole-school phonics program
- teachers plan differentiated learning for their students
- students who do not perform well in the check receive appropriate support in phonics.

3 | Participating students

The Year 1 Phonics Check should be administered to students by their teacher. The principal or a school leader, with advice from the teacher, should decide if it is not appropriate for a student to participate in the check. All students should be included in the check unless they have no understanding of grapheme–phoneme correspondences; for example, if a student has recently arrived in Australia from a non-English speaking background or if a student has a language or developmental delay.

Teachers could provide students who do not formally participate in the Year 1 Phonics Check with a similar experience by modifying the practice sheet to the student's level so the student can demonstrate their skills; for example, by including only single letters or consonant-vowel-consonant pattern words.

4 | Preparing for the check

4.1 | Year 1 Phonics Check platform

The online Year 1 Phonics Check platform allows Australian schools to set up classes, assign checks to students, conduct the check and report on student results.

In addition to this Administration Guide, the technical user manual supports school administrators and teachers when using the Phonics Check platform to register, log in, manage user accounts and run reports.

View the [Year 1 Phonics Check user manual](#).

4.2 | Year 1 Phonics Check materials

When setting up a check, you will be asked to choose one of the following delivery modes:

- 1. QR code mode (online): My students will use their own device**
Scan the QR code to allow your students to see the words using their own device.
- 2. Presentation mode (online): I will use a screen projector or a second screen for my students**
Show the words to your students in a new window on your projector screen or on any second screen available to you.
- 3. Offline mode: I will be doing the check offline**
Print the Year 1 Phonics Check student materials and answer sheet to conduct the check with your students offline and then record the results online at a later time.

Before you begin using the Year 1 Phonics Check with your students, familiarise yourself with the online platform and the materials for your delivery mode. The table below details the test materials, their purpose and which materials are needed for each delivery mode.

Year 1 Phonics Check test materials	Purpose	Delivery mode	
		Online	Offline
Practice sheet	Provides examples of real and pseudo words to familiarise students with the format of the check	✓	✓
Scoring guidance	Provides advice on acceptable pronunciations of the real and pseudo words students will encounter in the check	✓	✓
Example script	Provides a consistent script to use for delivering the check to students	✓	✓
Student materials	Provides the real and pseudo words for students to read aloud during the administration of the check		✓
Answer sheet	Provides a template to record student responses to each item of the check, including comments to support analysis		✓ One copy per student

4.3 | Adapting check materials

Most students will use standard versions of the Year 1 Phonics Check, but you may adapt check materials to meet students' specific needs. Email the Literacy Hub <helpdesk@literacyhub.edu.au> for a Word version of the student materials. Examples of modifications may include:

- changing the font
- changing the font size
- having fewer words per page
- removing the imaginary creatures for any students that might find them distracting.

4.4 | Teachers' responsibilities

Teachers should:

- be familiar with the sample materials
- ensure they understand and feel confident about:
 - administering the check
 - amending the check for students with additional needs; for example, font size, background colour
 - dealing with administration issues (such as rest breaks) during the check
 - scoring the check (see section 5.3, p. 6)
- administer the check on a one-to-one basis
- use the check results to plan differentiated learning for their students.

4.5 | Choosing a space

Administer the check in a quiet space, which is comfortable and well lit.

4.6 | Students with additional needs

Make adjustments for students with additional needs based on normal classroom practice. Modifications should not unfairly benefit individual students. Using the practice sheet with students may reveal if any individual students need modifications to be made – for example, fewer words per page, changing font or font size, allowing for a rest break. If you modify the sample script, make sure not to refer to any words that are in the actual check.

4.7 | Allocating time

There is no time limit for completing the Year 1 Phonics Check. Most students take 5–7 minutes to complete the check. Give students enough time to respond to each word (10 seconds is usually enough). If needed, give individual students short rest breaks but **finish the check on the same day**.

5 | Administering the check

5.1 | Practice and administration

Practice

- Introduce the Year 1 Phonics Check to each student as consistently as possible, providing enough information to those students who do not initially understand the task.
- As part of introducing the check, use the practice sheet to familiarise students with the task. The practice sheet has four pseudo words on one page and four real words on the other page.
- Provide further guidance, using the practice sheet, if needed, to ensure students understand the task. Remind students that the sounds must be blended together to say the whole word. Demonstrate what you mean by using one of the practice words. (However, this instruction must not be given during the actual check.)

Administration

- When administering the check, it is important to tell students when there are real words shown on the page and when there are made-up (pseudo) words on the page, which are accompanied by illustrations of monsters.
- You may prompt the student to move to the next word, but be careful not to do so while they are in the process of decoding a word.
- You can indicate which word comes next, but be careful not to provide decoding clues, such as by pointing left to right.
- Offer encouragement and support when administering the check but do not indicate whether the student has decoded the word correctly or not.
- You know your students best and will recognise when it is appropriate to take a rest break. If the student is struggling, you may choose to end the session. It is recommended that most students are given the opportunity to attempt the first section of pseudo words and the first five real words at a minimum.

5.2 | Recording student responses

- For offline delivery, use the answer sheet to record student responses. For online delivery modes, follow the on-screen prompts to record responses.
- Add your own comment boxes to help you plan future phonics teaching for example, *blending was difficult*, *grapheme was unknown*. It is important to record both the error and the nature of the error. See section 7 (p. 9) for an example of common annotations and the types of errors students may make.
- Use the teacher general comments box to record any overall observations about the student; for example, a learning difficulty or a long period of absence from school that may affect results.

5.3 | Scoring the Year 1 Phonics Check

- Refer to the scoring guidance sheet for acceptable pronunciations of the check's pseudo words; for example, *jash*, which uses the 'j' from 'just' and rhymes with 'dash'. This information is also available in the Year 1 Phonics Check platform for online delivery modes.
- Record on the answer sheet whether the student said the word correctly or not. Students score 1 point for the correct decoding of each word, for a total score out of 40. In the Year 1 Phonics Check platform, teachers record student responses using the 'Got it' or 'Not yet' buttons and the platform automatically scores student responses.

Year 1 Phonics Check

- Use the following table when scoring student responses:

Score as 'Got it'	Score as 'Not yet'
Sounds out the phonemes, or names the letters, and then says the word	Sounds out the phonemes but does not blend the word (no prompting allowed)
Elongates the phonemes but then blends them to form the word	Elongates the phonemes but leaves gaps and doesn't blend them
Uses alternative pronunciations of graphemes in pseudo words	Inappropriate pronunciations of real words for example, reading 'blow' to rhyme with 'cow'
Corrects initial attempts and finishes with the correct pronunciation	Correctly attempts a word but then recorrects and finishes with an incorrect pronunciation
Pronunciation difficulties; for example, student usually says 'fw' for 'th'	
Words pronounced with the student's accent	

You may skip words if the student is particularly challenged by the task and you wish to stop the Check. You must skip through to the end of the words in order to submit the results.

If possible, complete at least some of the first pseudo word section and some of the first real word section so that you can see if the student approaches both word types in the same way.

6 | Analysing and reporting results

Results from the Year 1 Phonics Check can be useful at an individual, class and cohort level. Teachers can access student results in the online platform. Results can be analysed to plan for allocation of learning support and to determine next steps in instruction. *The Year 1 Phonics Check: Analysing and responding to results* provides further detail.

The expected achievement score is 28 out of 40 items. This classifies a student as a 'fluent decoder' and is a guide for what is reasonable to expect for Year 1 students in the second half of the year. Please note that this is not a pass/fail mark. Rather it is an indication of the score a student might achieve if their phonics learning is progressing as expected.

The following three categories are provided to support teachers to identify students who are on track with their decoding skills or are in need of phonics learning support:

- Fluent decoders: score range of 28–40
- Developing decoders: score range of 20–27
- Struggling decoders: score range of 0–19

Year 1 students classified as 'struggling decoders' should receive additional support; 'developing decoders' may also need assistance. The Phonics Check can be used again with these students in Year 2 to track progress and decide if further intervention is necessary.

If many Year 1 students in a class or cohort score significantly less than 28 in the second half of the year, consider reviewing your current approach to teaching phonics.

Some questions to consider:

- Did your students do as well as you expected?
- Were there any surprises? For example, which students performed better/worse than expected? Is it clear why?
- How close to mastery of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences are your students? What do they need to learn next?

Please refer to *Year 1 Phonics Check: Analysing and responding to results* when designing learning after administering the Phonics Check. This document provides a more detailed analysis for students who are struggling with learning to decode words.

7 | Annotating student errors - example

Recording incorrect responses in a meaningful way will assist teachers to analyse the data collected from the Year 1 Phonics Check. The sample below provides teachers who are using the hard-copy answer sheet with example annotations for the 'Got it' and 'Not yet' columns.

Student response	Notation	Example annotation	
		Got it	Not yet
correctly sounded	Mark each correctly sounded letter with a tick	✓✓✓ l i g	
omission of sound	Strike through the omitted letter sound		floo s t
substitution	Write the substituted letter above the letter in the word		g ✓✓✓✓ c r i f f
insertion – with sounding out	Add the sound and place a caret where the sound was added		✓✓✓m✓ s h u p ^
insertion – without sounding out	Some students will just say the word with the additional sound included – simply record the insertion		m s h u p ^
self-corrected (SC)	Write SC above the corrected letter (or after the corrected word; for example, student says 'brast' then 'barst' SC)	SC d b a r s t	
repeated sound (R)	Write an R above the repeated sound or after the repeated word	✓✓R✓✓✓ s t r i b e s t r i b e R	
incorrectly blended	Write the incorrect word in the incorrect column of the answer sheet		✓✓✓✓✓ w o a t s w a t s
letter name said instead of sound	Mark the letter as a capital		M✓✓ m e p
digraph read as two separate sounds	Write the sounds with a \ between them		✓o\i✓ d o i l
reversal of adjacent letter sounds	Make a curved arrow between reversed letter sounds		✓↷✓✓ t r a m

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