

Spelling generalisations and morphology for the Literacy Hub phonics progression

This document is designed to be used alongside the [Literacy Hub phonics progression](#). It gives detailed explanations of spelling generalisations and morphology that support phonics instruction.

Teachers can use this document to support their own understanding of the content they are about to teach. It provides a summary of key teaching points related to each spelling generalisation and morphology concept.

Each spelling generalisation and morphology concept can be explicitly taught using the Literacy Hub [Phonics and morphology lesson packs](#). The phase and lesson number/s relating to each concept is listed in the document.

Related links and further reading

[Literacy Hub phonics progression](#)

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

[Mnemonics to support spelling](#)

[Literacy Hub professional learning: Morphology instruction and SSP](#)

[Literacy Hub professional learning: Spelling generalisations and SSP](#)

[Five from Five spelling rules](#)

[Reading Rockets spelling in practice](#)

Spelling generalisations

Content	Generalisations for use	Student background knowledge and skills required	Example words	Phase and lesson number/s
Floss spelling generalisation ff, ll, ss, zz	When a one-syllable word ends in f, l, s or z , after a short vowel, the final consonant is doubled.	Syllable counting Short vowel sound identification	fluff, doll, boss, jazz	Phase 7, lessons 1-4
Sail away ai, ay	ai is used to make the long a sound in the middle and sometimes at the start of a word. ay is used to make the long a sound at the end of a word.	Ability to isolate sounds and choose correct letter pattern to make the sound based on the spelling generalisation	ai: rain, hail, grain, train, paid ay: play, stay, say, pay, day, tray	Phase 11, lesson 1
Boat is slow oa, ow	oa is used to make the long o sound in the middle and sometimes at the start of a word. ow is used to make the long o sound at the end of a word.	Ability to isolate sounds and choose correct letter pattern to make the sound based on the spelling generalisation	oa: oats, coat, throat, roast ow: blow, mow, throw, show	Phase 11, lesson 3
Shy puppy y says long i and long e	y is used to make a long i sound at the end of a one-syllable word (with 2 or 3 letters). y is used to make a long e sound at the end of a word with two or more syllables (and usually more than three letters).	Syllable counting	Long i: by, my, try, shy, why, cry, spy Long e: navy, cherry, silly, lolly, study	Phase 12, lessons 2 and 3
Eat bread. It's great! ea	Three sounds of ea : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> most common: long e as in eat less common: short e as in bread only in a few words: long a as in great 	Ability to discriminate two different vowel sounds	Long e: meat, eat, dream, seal, mean Short e: head, thread, meant, bread Long a: great, steak, break	Phase 13, lesson 1
Homophones	Homophones are words that sound the same but have different meanings. They may or may not have the same spelling.	Knowledge of spelling patterns and irregular words taught so far as listed in the progression.	meet/meat, week/weak, their/there, two/to, brake/break, plain/plane	Phase 13, lesson 5

Content	Generalisations for use	Student background knowledge and skills required	Example words	Phase and lesson number/s
I grew a few ew	Two sounds of ew : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most common: /oo/ as in grew • less common: long u as in few 	Ability to isolate individual sounds in words	/oo/: blew, drew, crew Long u: few, new, dew	Phase 13, lesson 2
The statue is blue ue	ue says the long u sound usually at the end of words with two or more syllables (as in statue) and in words with a single consonant before ue (as in due). ue says the long oo sound usually at the end of one-syllable words after two or more consonants (as in blue).	Ability to isolate individual sounds in words	Long u: due, argue, value /oo/: true, blue, sue	Phase 13, lesson 3
Food is good oo	Two sounds of oo : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most common: oo as in mood • less common: öö as in book 	Ability to discriminate between two different vowel sounds	/oo/: mood, spoon, soon, moon /öö/: book, look, hook, hood	Phase 13, lesson 4
Boil the toy oi, oy	oi is used in the middle and sometimes at the beginning of a word. oy is used at the end of a word.	Ability to isolate sounds and choose correct letter pattern to make the sound based on the spelling generalisation	oi: boil, toil, oil, coin, point oy: toy, boy, ploy, coy, enjoy	Phase 14, lesson 1
Loud brown cow ou, ow	ou is used in the middle and sometimes at the beginning of a word. ow is used at the end of a word or in words where the /ow/ sound is followed by l, n, or d.	Ability to isolate sounds and choose correct letter pattern to make the sound based on the spelling generalisation	ou: out, spout, sound, loud ow: cow, now, gown, crowd, crown	Phase 14, lesson 2
Her bird is hurt er, ir, ur	r-controlled vowels: when a vowel is followed by the letter r, the r changes the sound the vowel makes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most common: er as in her • less common: ir as in bird • least common: ur as in hurt 	Ability to isolate individual sounds in words Knowledge of r-controlled vowels	er: term, stern, fern ir: bird, dirt, shirt ur: hurt, burst, burn	Phase 15, lesson 5

Content	Generalisations for use	Student background knowledge and skills required	Example words	Phase and lesson number/s
Gentle Cindy at the fence soft g /j/ and soft c /s/ sound	g and c usually make a soft sound (/j/ and /s/) when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> followed by e, i or y as in the first e of gentle and the i in Cindy words end in c and a final e as in fence. 	Knowledge of regular sounds for g and c Ability to identify vowel sounds	Soft g: gem, giant, gym Soft c: cent, city, cycle, mince	Phase 17, lessons 1 and 2
Pie thief ie	Two sounds of ie : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ie says the long i sound at the end of short words, as in pie ie says the long e sound in the middle of a word, as in thief 	Ability to identify long vowel sounds	Long i: lie, pie, tie, die Long e: field, piece, chief, niece	Phase 18, lesson 1
That monkey is grey! ey	Two sounds of ey : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> most common (especially in two-syllable words): long e as in monkey. less common (and mostly in one-syllable words): long a as in grey 	Ability to identify long vowel sounds	Long e: key, hockey, trolley Long a: they, hey, prey	Phase 18, lesson 2
Prawns with sauce aw, au	aw and au say /or/ most common: aw says /or/ less common*: au says /or/ * au is more common than aw at the start of a word as in automatic	Ability to isolate sounds and choose correct letter pattern to make the sound based on the spelling generalisation	aw: yawn, hawk, paw, straw au: daunt, laundry, launch, autograph	Phase 19, lesson 1
Hear the early bear ear	Three sounds of ear : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> most common: ear says /ear/ as in hear less common: ear says /er/ as in early least common: ear says /air/ as in bear 	Ability to isolate individual sounds in words Knowledge of r-controlled vowels	/ear/: dear, near, fear, rear /er/: earth, learn, heard /air/: tear, wear, pear	Phase 21, lesson 2
The swan is warm a for /o/ and /or/ sound	a usually says the /o/ sound after w. a can say the /or/ sound after w, usually when the a is followed by l or r.	Understanding that vowels can represent many sounds	/o/: swan, want, wash /or/: walk, warm, wall	Phase 22, lesson 2

Content	Generalisations for use	Student background knowledge and skills required	Example words	Phase and lesson number/s
The worm is working wor	w-or says /w/, /er/, /wer/ as in worm and working.	Ability to isolate individual sounds in words Knowledge of r-controlled vowels	word, worst, workout, artwork	Phase 22, lesson 3
Champ the Christmas chef ch	The three sounds of ch : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most common: ch says /ch/ as in champ • less common: ch says /k/ as in Christmas • least common: /sh/ as in chef 	Ability to isolate individual sounds in words Knowledge of digraphs making multiple sounds	/ch/: chip, chomp, pouch, lunch /k/: anchor, ache, architect, chemist /sh/: chic, quiche, parachute, brochure	Phase 23, lesson 1
That's a rough cough! Eat doughnuts throughout the day. Plough the paddock thoughtfully and thoroughly. ough	The seven common sounds of ough : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • /uff/ as in rough • /off/ as in cough • long o as in dough • /oo/ as in through • /ow/ as in plough • /or/ as in thought • schwa as in thorough 	Ability to isolate individual sounds in words Knowledge of vowel teams making multiple sounds	/uff/: rough, tough, enough /off/: cough, trough long o: dough, though /oo/: through, throughout /ow/: plough, bough /or/: thought, bought, sought schwa: thorough	Phase 24, lessons 1-3

Morphology

Suffix or prefix	Meaning	Example words	Phase and lesson number/s
Suffix -s (noun)	Plural; meaning 'more than one'.	dogs, cats, logs, bins	Phase 6, lesson 4
Suffix -es (noun)	Plural; meaning 'more than one' for words ending in sh, ch, ss, zz, x.	wishes, lunches, kisses, quizzes, boxes	Phase 8, lesson 7
Suffix -s/-es (present simple verb)	Meaning 'something that someone or something does'.	stays, jumps, skips, draws scrunches, fixes, finishes, buzzes	Phase 9, lesson 7
Suffix -ing (present continuous verb)	Meaning 'happening now'.	jumping, trusting, sprinting	Phase 10, lesson 4
Suffix -ed (past tense verb)	Meaning 'already happened'. -ed can have three different sounds: 'ed', /d/ or /t/. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the verb ends in the letters t or d, the -ed sounds like 'ed' and creates a new syllable. If the verb ends in a vowel sound or a voiced consonant (l, n, r, b, g, m, z, s, v) then the -ed ending sounds like /d/ and does not create a new syllable. If the verb ends in an unvoiced consonant (p, k, f, gh, sh, ch, ss, c, x) then the -ed ending sounds like a /t/and does not create a new syllable. 	rested, sailed, fished	Phase 11, lesson 5
Suffix -y	Meaning 'what something is like'.	dusty, messy, lucky, sleepy	Phase 12, lesson 4
Final e + vowel suffixes -ed/-ing/-y	Take away the final e before adding the -ed, -ing or -y suffix.	traded, smiling, shaky	Phase 13, lesson 6
1-1-1 base words + vowel suffixes -ed/-ing/-y (double the final consonant)	Double the final consonant after a short vowel. This general suffix rule applies to words with a single final consonant after a short vowel when any suffix beginning with a vowel is added.	tapped, skipping, running, foggy	Phase 14, lesson 4
Prefix un-	Meaning 'not' or 'opposite of'.	unhappy, unwell, unspoilt, unmade	Phase 15, lesson 6

Suffix or prefix	Meaning	Example words	Phase and lesson number/s
Suffix -er (noun)	Meaning 'a person who (or a thing that) does something'. -er makes the schwa sound /ə/ (the 'uh' sound a vowel makes in an unaccented syllable)	baker, teacher, ruler, rubber	Phase 16, lesson 6
Suffix -er (adjective)	Comparative; compared to something else.	bigger, shorter, safer, older	Phase 17, lesson 7
Suffix -est	Superlative; the most or the least of a group.	biggest, shortest, longest, weakest	Phase 18, lesson 5
Prefix re-	Meaning 'back' or 'again'.	retry, remake, redo, return	Phase 19, lesson 6
Prefix pre-	Meaning 'before'.	premix, preheat, precooked	Phase 20, lesson 6
Suffix -ful	Meaning 'full of'.	beautiful, hopeful, colourful, restful	Phase 21, lesson 3
Prefix mis-	Meaning 'something has been done badly or wrongly'.	mislead, mishear, mismatch	Phase 22, lesson 4
Suffix -ly (adverb)	Adverb: meaning 'how something is done'. When final y follows a consonant, change the y to i before adding -ly. For example, happy - happily.	quickly, slowly, badly, expertly	Phase 23, lesson 4
Suffix -ment	Meaning 'result of an action'.	shipment, excitement, disappointment, payment	Phase 24, lesson 4



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