

Literacy Hub phonics progression

This sequential phonics progression aims to provide 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.

This progression can be used at any stage of Foundation, Year 1 or Year 2, depending on students' point of need. Each phase 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.

For a suggested teaching approach, refer to the [Phonics instructional model for reading and spelling](#) and [Morphology instructional model](#) 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 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>1</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p>	<div>s</div> <div>a (as in apple)</div> <div>t</div> <div>p</div> <div>i (as in igloo)</div> <div>n</div>	<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>I</p> <p>the</p>

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Irregular words
<div>2</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p>	<div>m</div> <div>e (as in egg)</div> <div>h</div> <div>r</div> <div>d</div> <div>o (as in octopus)</div>	<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>

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Irregular words
<div>3</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p>	<div>f</div> <div>c</div> <div>b</div> <div>g</div> <div>l</div> <div>u (as in up)</div>	<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>	<div>he</div> <div>me</div> <div>was</div> <div>said</div>

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Irregular words
<div>4</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p>	<div>k</div> <div>ck</div> <div>v</div> <div>y</div> <div>z</div>	<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>	<div>of</div> <div>love</div> <div>like</div>

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Irregular words
<div>5</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 3</p>	<div>w</div> <div>j</div> <div>q</div> <div>x</div>	<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 are you</p>

Phase	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
<div>6</div> <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 what your one</p>

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Irregular words
<div>7</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 4</p>	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 there here saw</p>
	ll		
	ss		
	zz		

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
<div>8</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5</p>	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 because once 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>9</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5</p>	split digraphs			
	a_e	<p>Read and spell CVCC and CCVC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences</p> <p>Phase 9 example words brave, shape, these, glide, chime, spoke, froze, cute, rude</p>	<p>Suffix -s/-es (present simple verb)</p> <p>meaning 'something that can be done'</p>	<p>were</p> <p>who</p> <p>school</p> <p>write</p>
	e_e			
	i_e			
	o_e			
	u_e*			

*Denotes more than one sound.

Phase	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
<div>10</div> <p>Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5/6</p>	<p>Open and closed syllables in two-syllable words, for example, mummy (open), wombat (closed)</p> <p>Phase 10 example words baby, even, silent, open, comet, taken, cabin, rabbit</p>	<p>Suffix -ing (present continuous verb)</p> <p>meaning 'happening now'</p> <p>Add -ing to simple base words</p>	<p>walk</p> <p>talk</p> <p>come</p> <p>some</p>

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
11 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5/6	ai ay ee oa ow igh	Read and spell one- and two-syllable words using new and known letter-sound correspondences Phase 11 example words snail, play, speech, gumtree, float, snow, midnight	Suffix -ed (past tense verb) meaning 'already happened' Add -ed to simple base words	their all does goes

*Denotes more than one sound.

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Irregular words
12 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5/6	Final -y* (long 'i' sounds in short words as in 'try', 'by'; long 'e' sounds in long words as in 'family', 'body')	Read and spell one- and two-syllable words using new and known letter-sound correspondences Phase 12 example words by, my, cry, fly, spy, belly, happy, cherry, hungry	could should would two

*Denotes more than one sound.

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
13 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 5/6	ea* ew* ue* oo*	Introduce homophones, for example, meat and meet, blue and blew Phase 13 example words speak, head, few, threw, cue, glue, tooth, chook	Suffix -ed/-ing added to silent e	work word any many

*Denotes more than one sound.

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
14 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 6/7	oi oy ou ow	Start reading and spelling CCVCC, CCCVC, CCCVCC words using new and known letter-sound correspondences Phase 14 example words spoilt, moist, poison, boy, destroy, ground, without, brow, allow, frown, crowd	Suffix -ed/-ing double the final consonant	father mother brother other

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

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

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
17 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 7/8	soft g/c	Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words Phase 17 example words germ, large, cent, city, force, pledge, stitch, graph, knee, knock	Suffix -er Comparative, for example, bigger, smaller	half move gone both
	dge			
	tch			
	ph			
	kn			

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
18 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8	ie*	Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words Phase 18 example words shield, pie, they, survey, key, chimney, toe, weigh, eight	Suffix -est Superlative, for example, biggest, smallest	straight height only people
	ey*			
	oe			
	eigh			

*Denotes more than one sound.

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

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
20 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8	are	Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words Phase 20 example words share, compare, sphere, severe, wire, desire, shore, explore, cure, secure	Prefix pre- meaning 'before'	blood flood country awesome
	ere			
	ire			
	ore			
	ure			

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
21 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8	air ear*	Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words Phase 21 example words chair, dairy, haircut, bear, earn, clear	Suffix -ful meaning 'full of'	thought sugar sure listen

*Denotes more than one sound.

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
22 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8	o (as in mother) wa* wor	Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words Phase 22 example words front, Monday, wash, watch, wall, warm, world, worst	Prefix mis- meaning 'wrong' or 'bad'	busy colour young journey

*Denotes more than one sound.

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
23 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8	ch* (as in chef; or as in chemist) wr gn s* (as in dogs; or as in treasure)	Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words Phase 23 example words chef, machine, school, chemist, chord, wrist, wrench, wrangle, gnome, gnash, sign, logs, pleasure, vision	Suffix -ly meaning 'like' May answer the question 'how', for example: 'How did I run?' 'Quickly'	field build during answer ocean

*Denotes more than one sound.

Phase	Letter-sound correspondences	Letter-sound skills	Morphology	Irregular words
24 Phonic knowledge and word recognition level 8	ough*	Apply new and existing code knowledge to read and spell a variety of word types, including multisyllabic words Phase 24 example words dough, bought, drought, through, tough, cough, thorough	Suffix -ment meaning 'result of an action', for example, the result of shipping is a shipment	double honest guess island ancient

*Denotes more than one sound.