

Phonics Assessment

If your student needs phonics help, follow the steps below. Explain that although these start with very basic tasks, you need to ascertain where any gaps are in their phonics understanding.

Step 1

To ascertain whether your student can sound out words and knows all of the single sounds, print out the alphabet in lower case letters, eg

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Now go through a letter at a time (preferably out of order) asking the student to tell you the letter name and sound each one represents. Note any sounds that your student does not know.

Step 2

Then go through the most common digraph sounds (digraph meaning 'two letters'), asking for the sounds of each one: -

ar or er sh ch th ee oo ai au

Each of these pairs of letters should be known by the one sound that each digraph has and not each letter sounded out separately. They should make the sounds as in the following words:

ar - car

or - for

er - her

sh - shop

ch - chip

th - thin

ee - meet

oo - moon

ai - pail

au - taught

If your student has a lot of problems with this you should assume that he or she does not know the letter sounds well enough to break down and build up words. In this case do not humiliate them further by giving them the next step.

Step 3 (only if student is confident in Step 1 & 2)

If they appear to be fairly confident at knowing individual letter sounds and digraph sounds, then continue with this next step. This step will show you whether they are familiar enough with any letter sound to be able to break down and build up words with it. We have used made up words because then you are sure that your student is not merely remembering how to spell the word.

For words that contain the sound 'er' it is sufficient if your student uses any of the 'er' sounds. There are three ways of spelling 'er': 'er' 'ur' 'ir'.

Likewise any of the three spellings of the 'k' sound can be used, 'c' 'k' 'ck'. 'Qu' could also be written as 'kw.'

This phonetic spelling assessment contains the following sounds:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

or er ar sh ch th ee oo oi a-e i-e o-e u-e

Read out the words listed on the next page and ask the student to write them down. Please ensure that you pronounce the words correctly and phonetically because the test is to ascertain how many of the sounds that make up words are known by the student.

You can photocopy the page and mark off the sounds your student doesn't know.

First photocopy this page.

Read out each nonsense word and ask your student to write it down in their book.

Mark on the chart which words they got correct or wrong. If you wish, you can use the comments column to write what they wrote, so you can see for future lessons where they are going wrong. For recording purposes, you may like to transfer the sounds they know to a copy of the “Letter Tree” handout.

You will notice that most sounds appear twice in this list. If your student gets any one sound wrong either time then assume that further practice is needed with that sound.

WORD	X √	COMMENTS	WORD	X √	COMMENTS
fod			ved		
boop			sone		
carj			corf		
goot			thax		
hin			zute		
lup			hoig		
zeet			jush		
mosh			warp		
quib			gath		
zerch			sorm		
wape			herf		
yite			woim		
ruch			veed		

*Note that some words can be spelt in a variety of ways (eg quib/kwib, zerch/zurch etc)

Letter Tree

The following 'tree' may be helpful to photocopy. You and your student can mark off each sound as it is mastered by highlighting or colouring. These are not intended to be taught in this sequence, but is an easy form of record keeping.

