

# How Can I Help With Early Years Spelling

When children first start to learn to read at school in KS1, the preferred practice to help them is through the use of [phonics](#).

Phonics is about the sound a word makes. Each word has a number of phonemes (and sometimes graphemes) that, when listened to, can aid a young child to understand how the word is spoken.

## What's The Difference Between A Phoneme And A Grapheme?

A phoneme is the sound a grapheme makes. Graphemes can be one, two or three letters. It gets further complicated as two-letter graphemes are known as digraphs and three-letter graphemes are called trigraphs. Regardless of the number of letters in a grapheme, a phoneme is the one sound those letters make when put together. The best way to explain is with an example.

The word dog has three one-letter graphemes, D, O and G. This is a simple word for youngsters to learn to read. However, the word dough is rather more complex. Children have to learn that ou is a two-letter grapheme (or digraph) and how it sounds in certain words. As well as ou, there is also gh (another digraph) which has a completely separate sound from G and H. To complicate matters further, gh makes a number of different sounds depending on what the word it. For example, dough (doe), cough (coff), bough (bow) and thought (thort).

## Does Phonics Help With Spelling Words?

Phonics is an ideal method for improving childrens' reading skills. If taught well, phonics can also give infants a firm grasp when starting to learn how to spell words.

Given the above example, let's look at the word cough. If the child is taught that the word is pronounced coff, they are just as (or possibly more) likely to recall 'coff' rather than the correct spelling of 'cough' next time they are writing the word down.

## Can Phonics Hinder The Progress Of Spelling?

On its own, phonics can be an obstacle to spelling. However, when teamed with other spelling techniques, it's a very useful tool. Relying solely on phonics may help children read, but it's probable their spelling will be lacking.

## Spelling Quizzes and Games

Education Quizzes takes spelling very seriously indeed! We have 120 quizzes dedicated to spelling in our KS1 section separated into Year 1 and Year 2.

Alternatively, for a change from quizzes, we also have a Spelling Game which is split into ages. There is a weekly leaderboard, an added extra bit of fun for the children. See if your child can get their name on the board, as well as watching their spelling get better and better!