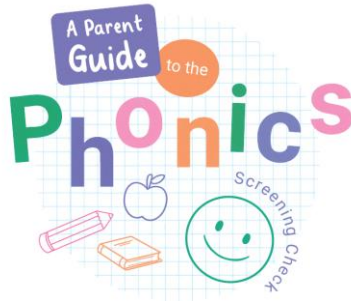




Year One Phonics Screening Check- A Guide for Parents

A love of reading is the biggest indicator of future academic success! To develop a love of reading, children must have the skills to read, which is why we teach them using phonics.

What is the Phonics Screening Check?

The phonics screening check is a statutory reading check that all year 1 children take during a particular week in June. The check is designed to assess if each child has reached the age-appropriate standard of decoding by the end of year 1.

Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required result when in Year 1 or they have not taken the test before.

What Happens During the Test?

The check is completed by the child on a 1:1 basis with a teacher. They will be asked to use their decoding and blending skills to read some words. It usually takes 5-10 minutes for the child to complete. However, there is no time limit, and the child can take as long as they need. The children will have worked on similar activities in their phonics lessons and will be familiar with the format of the words presented to them.

What Does the Check Consist Of?

The check contains 40 words - 20 real and 20 pseudo words (nonsense words). The words are presented to the child in the form of a booklet with 4 large words per page.

The words gradually get more difficult from 2 and 3 'sound' words such as 'it' and 'vap', to longer words with more complex 'sounds'.

Below, are examples of how the words are presented to the children:



example of pseudo words



example of real words

The pseudo words are presented with a picture of an alien. This tells the child that this word will not make sense to them. It will instead be the name of the kind of alien. This has been added so that the child does not attempt to turn the words into real words.

Why are Pseudo Words (Nonsense words) Used In The Check?

The ultimate aim of teaching phonics is that the child progresses from decoding each sound, to automatic recognition of words. However, even as adults, we still need to be able to decode unfamiliar words. The ability to decode unfamiliar words will help your child to read increasingly more difficult texts and will help develop their vocabulary. The pseudo words allow the teacher to be sure that the child is able to decode unfamiliar words and is not just reading words from memory. They will have to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to work out how to read them. This means every child is in the same position; pseudo-words do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words.

What is the expected standard?

Your child will be scored out of 40 (as there will be 40 words to correctly decode). The Department for Education does not release the 'pass' mark until a few weeks after your child has completed the check.

How are Results Reported to Parents?

Your child's score in the Phonics Screening Check will be included in their end of year written report. This will also confirm if your child has met the expected standard set by the Department of Education.

What happens if my child doesn't reach the expected standard?

If your child doesn't meet the expected standard, school will provide them with extra support in phonics. Children who do not meet the expected standard in year 1 will complete the check again in year 2. Don't worry if your child doesn't meet the expected standard; every child learns at different rates and schools will continue to support them in their reading development.

How Are The Results Used?

Results from the check are used by schools to provide assessment on each child's decoding skills, as a tool to analyse their own performance and for Ofsted to use in inspections. The data is submitted to the Department of Education, where it is used to collate information about the standards in phonics across the whole country.

How Can I Help My Child at Home?

- The most important thing you can do, to help support your child with their reading, is to read with them. Listening to your child read is important but reading to them is just as important. If they hear you read, they are hearing how to pronounce unfamiliar words and are developing new vocabulary.
- When listening to your child read, allow them time to attempt to decode unfamiliar words themselves, before stepping in to help. If you find your child is struggling to decode a word, you can help by pointing out the sounds (not the letters) in a word. For example, 'keep' would be 'k-ee-p' and 'light' would be 'l-igh-t'. Blend the sounds while pointing at them, moving your finger under the whole word as you say it.
- Practise speed reading (reading as quickly as possible) the graphemes your child is learning in school. Your child's teacher can help by giving you a list.
- Look around your home and other environments (such as on trips out) for reading opportunities. Can your child read traffic or shop signs? Can they read a menu in a coffee shop? Can they read an advertisement, poster or leaflet?
- If your child is watching a film or the television, turn on the subtitles. They'll hear words pronounced and see them written down at the same time, which is hugely beneficial for their reading and writing skills.

For further information about the phonics check and additional information about Little Wandle (the programme we use to teach phonics in school) please use the following links:

[Phonics screening check: information for parents - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/phonics-screening-check-information-for-parents)

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>