

Phonics Expectations 2023-2024

Introduction

Through a carefully crafted sequence, Sounds-Write starts by introducing students to one-to-one sound-letter correspondences through the Initial Code. It then moves on to teach the complexities of the English alphabetic code through the Extended Code and, at the same time, students are taught how to read polysyllabic words. New learning is introduced within each unit but the programme is cumulative, so all of the previously taught content continues to be practised as the student progresses. Throughout this, students are trained to be proficient in the skills needed to read and spell effectively, namely, segmenting, blending and phoneme manipulation, and are also taught explicitly the conceptual knowledge that is essential to make sense of the English alphabetic code:

- Letters are symbols (spellings) that represent sounds.
- A sound may be spelled by 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters.
- The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.
- Many spellings can represent more than one sound.

Reception overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Review	Content from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Initial Code Units 1-7	Initial Code Units 8-11	Bridging Unit
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from at least one unit behind the current unit Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

The following sections include overviews offering a basic example of the progression in each year group through the Initial and Extended Code units in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3.

The Sounds-Write programme starts by building on what children can already do: they can speak! They are taught to read and spell using a reversible code that is anchored in the spoken sounds of the English language. The Initial Code begins as a transparent introduction to the English alphabetic code (Units 1 to 6), where sounds are represented by one-letter spellings. It is designed to build students' trust in the decoding and encoding system within CVC and VC words before moving on to words with more complex structures that include adjacent consonant sounds (CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, etc) in later units (Units 8-10). The Initial Code then moves on to the more complex concepts that sounds may be spelled by more than one letter (1, 2 or 3 letter spellings introduced in the Initial Code Units 7 and 11) and that the same sound can be spelled in more than one way (Initial Code Unit 11). The Bridging Unit serves as a gentle introduction to what students will encounter in the Extended Code. It introduces formally the concept that the same sound can be spelled in more than one way, using simple examples like the spellings of the sound /k/ with the spellings < c >, < k > or < ck >, or the sound /ch/ with the letters < ch > and < tch >, which they have already encountered informally in Unit 11.

Whilst working on the Initial Code, students will develop these key skills:

- Segmenting -- the ability to pull apart the individual sounds in words.
 - Blending – the ability to push sounds together to build words.
 - Phoneme manipulation – the ability to insert sounds into and delete sounds out of words.
- They will be able to perform these skills proficiently in simple 3-, 4- and 5-sound words with the structures CVC, VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCCVC and CCVCC.

They will learn that:

- We spell sounds one at a time from left to right across the page.
- Letters are symbols (spellings) that represent sounds.
- A sound may be spelled by 1, 2 or 3 letters. And they will begin to have an understanding that:
- The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.
- Many spellings can represent more than one sound.

Extended Code and Polysyllabic Words

Year 1 overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Review	Content (inc. polysyllabic words) from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Review of Initial Code Extended Code Units 1-9 Introduction of polysyllabic words*	Extended Code Units 10-18	Extended Code Units 19-26
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from at least one unit behind the current unit and begin introducing other carefully selected texts Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

*Polysyllabic Words are introduced from the second week of Unit 4 /oe/.

Year 2 overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Review	Content (inc. polysyllabic words) from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Extended Code Units 27-34	Extended Code Units 35-42	Extended Code Units 43-49
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from previously taught units and other carefully selected texts Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

Year 3 overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Review	Content from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current Unit	Extended Code Units 1-17 (plus 'More spellings' 27, 29, 32, 34, 36 with their 'First spellings' unit*) using more challenging Polysyllabic Words	Extended Code Units 18-37 (plus 'More spellings' 43 with its 'First spellings' unit*) using Polysyllabic Words	Extended Code Units 38-49 using Polysyllabic Words
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from previously taught units for children who still need this, otherwise, from a wider selection of texts Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit for children who still need this, otherwise, from a wider selection of texts		

*Note that Unit 27 'More spellings' for /ae/ would be taught along with Unit 1 'First spellings' /ae/ as a combined /ae/ unit. This is the same for all 'First spellings' and 'More spellings' units. This gives 33 'sound' units to be taught in Year 3.

Year 4

Using three-, four- and five-syllable words, Year 4 students should systematically review the Extended Code (combining 'First spellings' and 'More spellings' as in Year 3). This is important as it allows students to review previously taught content and further develop their knowledge of sound-spelling correspondences, whilst extending their skills in reading and spelling polysyllabic words and meeting the National Curriculum statutory spelling objectives.

This will ensure that they have mastered the knowledge and skills needed to have efficient and effective strategies for reading and spelling unfamiliar words in the wider curriculum and in their everyday lives.

Years 5, 6 and beyond

At this stage, planning for discrete teaching of reading and spelling will depend on the needs of the cohort. Sounds-Write lessons should be used to teach the reading and spelling of domain-specific vocabulary as it is encountered in the wider curriculum and to meet the National Curriculum statutory spelling objectives. For example, Lesson 15 can be used to analyse words in subjects such as science, history and so on.

The Extended Code follows on from the Initial Code. Whilst working on the Extended Code, students are explicitly taught that:

- A sound may be spelled by 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters.
- The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.
- Many spellings can represent more than one sound.

The majority of the units focus on the phonemic nature of the code (sounds) with some units that focus on the graphemic nature (spellings) (see 'Learning objectives: The Extended Code' in the manual). The sounds and spellings are presented in the order which allows students to read the greatest number of words as early as possible.

Some of the sounds are visited as 'First spellings' (the most common ways to spell the sound) and then 'More spellings'. Conceptual understanding should be reinforced throughout, for example, by pointing out that it's two letters but it is one sound at every opportunity. This is part of the schema we're trying to build.

Polysyllabic Words Once they have started the Extended Code, students are also taught to read and spell polysyllabic words. 80% of the words in the English language are polysyllabic, hence the need to introduce working with polysyllabic words as soon as possible.

The introduction of Polysyllabic Words will follow this sequence:

- CVC | CVC (e.g., sunset) and VC | CVC (e.g., upset) words with sound-spelling correspondences from the Initial Code. These are words in which syllables are comprised of single-letter or two-letter spellings, many of them are compound words
- Increase levels of complexity by teaching words with a more complex structure containing sound spelling correspondences from the Initial Code: VC | CVCC (e.g., insect), CVC | CVCC (e.g., dentist), CVCC | CVC (e.g., desktop), CCV | CVCC (e.g., project), VC | CCVCC (e.g., inspect), etc.
- During this process the students can be primed to recognise schwas and develop strategies for spelling them correctly.
- When students are secure in their knowledge, skills and understanding, move on to three-syllable words with sound-spelling correspondences from the Initial Code (e.g., equipment, contradict).
- Eventually, students will go through the Extended Code again using polysyllabic words with more complex structures, including those with suffixes and those with more than three syllables. We advise increasing structural complexity (the number of syllables and adjacent consonants) before adding less frequently encountered spellings of sounds and complexity of meaning.

Planning a Sounds-Write session

Each Sounds-Write session should have three parts:

Review	Classroom practitioners should plan to review content from the previous units based on their ongoing formative assessment. This could include using lessons from the manual, speed reads and/or quizzing with a range of activities across the week.
Teaching in the current unit	Classroom practitioners should plan to teach the content from the current unit using the lessons and follow-up lessons from the manual.
Reading or writing in connected text	Classroom practitioners should plan for opportunities to read and write in connected text with a balance of these activities over the week/two weeks. They will use stories from the manual and decodable readers for reading in connected text. They will use sentences from decodable readers, the manual or the Sounds-Write Portal with the Lesson 4a (Dictation) script for writing in connected text.

- **Review:** previously taught content based on ongoing formative assessment
- **Current unit:** new learning, which can be declarative knowledge, procedural skills, or both.
- **Reading or writing in connected text:** reading a phonically controlled text from a previously taught unit or dictation containing code from at least two units behind the current unit.

A range of Sounds-Write lessons should be combined across the teaching of each session.

This means using Lessons 1 to 5 to teach and review the Initial Code. For the Extended code and Polysyllabic Words, Lessons 6 to 15 should be used, along with some of the Lessons from the Initial Code (Lesson 3, Lesson 4 and Lesson 4a). Further guidance on planning can be found in the Sounds-Write Practitioners' Portal.

Initial Code

- Each current unit should last for approximately two weeks.
- Each phonics session should consist of 3 or 4 Sounds-Write lessons (usually Lessons 2, 3 or 4 for review, Lesson 1 or 5 for teaching the current unit, and reviewing previously taught material through Lesson 4a for writing in connected text, or reading in connected text).
- At the start of Reception, phonics sessions will be shorter and build up to the full 30-minute session (more information can be found on 'Teaching Sounds-Write from the start')
- Aim to have taught up to Unit 6 or Unit 7 by the end of the Autumn Term in Reception and Unit 11 by the end of the Spring Term or the start of the Summer Term.
- The Bridging Unit (using Lessons 6, 7 and 8) can be used following the completion of Unit 11 (usually in the Summer Term of Reception).

Extended Code and Polysyllabic Words in Key Stage 1

- Generally, each current 'sound' unit should last for two weeks with the 'spelling' units running parallel to these. For example, Unit 3 < ea > would be taught at the beginning of the second week of Unit 2 /ee/.

- Polysyllabic words should be introduced at around the second week of Unit 4 /oe/. Polysyllabic words should always be taught using Lessons 11-15 (i.e., they should not be taught using Lesson 6).
- The Extended Code is taught with Lessons 6-10, but also Lesson 4a (dictation) and Lessons 11, 12 (moving on to 13 & 14) and 15.
- Lessons 3 (with Initial Code words only) and 4 may also be used in the review part of sessions.
- Each phonics session should consist of 3 or 4 Sounds-Write lessons.
- Aim to have taught Unit 26 by the end of Year 1.
- Aim to have taught Unit 49 by the end of Year 2.