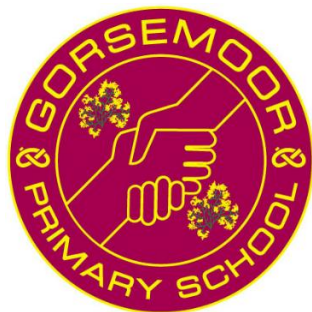


Parent Guide to the Phonics Screening Check



Growing Together, Hand in Hand

What is the phonics screening check?

The phonics screening check is a short, light-touch assessment to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. The check consists of 40 words and non-words (which you may hear called alien or pseudo words) that your child will be asked to read one-on-one with their teacher.

It will identify the children who need extra help so they are given support to improve their reading skills. They will then be able to retake the check in the summer term of Year 2 so that we can track children until they are able to decode efficiently.

Who is it for?

The screening check is for all Year 1 pupils and children in Year 2 who previously did not meet the standard of the check in Year 1.

Is it compulsory?

Yes. It is a statutory requirement for all schools to carry out the screening check.

Do children with special educational needs have to take the screening check?

It should be taken by as many children as possible, and the government have worked closely with SEN specialists to make this happen. Where necessary, adjustments will be made and appropriate guidance provided.

For children who are working well below the level of the screening check (for example, if they show no understanding of letter-sound correspondences), there will be a disapplication process so they do not have to take part. Where teachers have concerns about a child's ability to complete the screening, these concerns would be discussed with parents. Parents will be informed if a child is disapplied.

When does it happen?

Due to the partial school closures last academic year, Year 2 children are required to 'catch up' on their postponed screening. Year 2 children will complete the screening check during the week commencing 30th November 2020.

Current Year 1 children will complete the phonics screening check, as normal, in the summer term. This academic year, the screening will be administered during the week commencing Monday 7th June 2021. If a child is absent during that week, the school can administer the check up until the 18th June 2021. Any Year 2 children needing to retake the screening check will be able to do so during this week.

The start of every phonics screening check week will begin, on the Monday, with a celebration of our phonics journey including phonics games and activities. One to one screenings will then commence on the Tuesday. By Thursday afternoon, all children are likely to have completed the phonics screening check.

Who carries out the screening?

Your child's class teacher will carry out the check. Administering the phonics check requires a teacher's personal judgement and it is important that the children are with a familiar adult.

How long does the check take?

Every child is different but most take between four and nine minutes to complete the assessment.

How is the check structured?

The check comprises a list of 40 words (20 real and 20 nonsense), which a child will read one-to-one with their teacher. Half of the words cover phonic skills which tend to be covered in Reception and the other half are based on Year 1 phonic skills. The children have their own booklet in front of them containing all of the words they need to read. They read these at their own pace.

What are nonsense words?

There are 20 nonsense words on the screening, increasing in difficulty as the children progress through the check. Nonsense words are also sometimes referred to as alien words, non-words or pseudo words. We use nonsense words when we teach phonics, so your child will already be familiar with the concept.

Your child will be told before the check that there will be nonsense words that he or she has not seen before. The nonsense words are presented alongside a picture of an imaginary creature and children are told the nonsense word is the name of that type of creature. This helps children to understand the nonsense words should not be matched to their existing vocabulary.

Why are nonsense words used in the test?

Nonsense words are important because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to all children. Children cannot read the nonsense words by using their memory or vocabulary, they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess their ability to decode.

Children who can read nonsense words should have the skills to decode almost any unfamiliar word.

What is the pass mark?

The pass mark for last screening check in 2019 was 32 words out of 40. The pass mark for 2020 will be set at 32 for Year 2 children. We do not yet know the pass mark for Year 1's screening in June. This information will be shared with school once children have completed the check.

What skills do children need to meet the standard of the phonics screening check?

All children need to be able to identify the sounds associated with different letters and letter combinations and then blend these sounds together to correctly say the word on the page. The same skill is needed whether the word is a real word or a nonsense word. The words gradually get harder through the check as the combinations of letters become more complicated. Children will also need to recognise alternative sounds in real words such as 'y' in the word 'happy' having the pronunciation 'ee'.

Does it put the children under unnecessary stress?

The assessment is age-appropriate and completed with the child's teacher, who they will have developed a good relationship with. Reading one-to-one with a teacher is a familiar activity for our children. The children will also have seen previous examples of screening tests so that they understand what to expect. It should be an enjoyable activity for children and takes no more than a few minutes. We make the build up to the screening an exciting time with a phonics party beforehand and children are rewarded with stickers once they have completed the screening, regardless of their score.

What happens if a child does not meet the standard?

The screening check will identify children who have phonic decoding skills below the level expected for the end of Year 1 and who therefore need extra help. These children will receive additional phonics support and intervention and will be able to retake the assessment in the summer term of Year 2.

What if children are upset they have failed?

Children should not realise that they are being formally assessed and will not be aware if they have passed or failed the screening. The recording materials used by teachers are separate to those that the children use and this keeps the recording of scores discreet. If children were to see the teacher's record, both correct and incorrect responses are recorded with a tick.

How will the results from the phonics screening check be used?

Our results will not be published but parents will be informed of their individual child's score. You will receive a letter explaining your child's score and this year's pass mark.

The results will inform us of the children who require further support with decoding words in Year 2.

What does the test look like?

Sample materials are available on the education.gov.uk website.

Below is an example from the 2018 Phonics Screening Check.

Section 1

skap



blorn



meft



veems



Section 2

twice

gloom

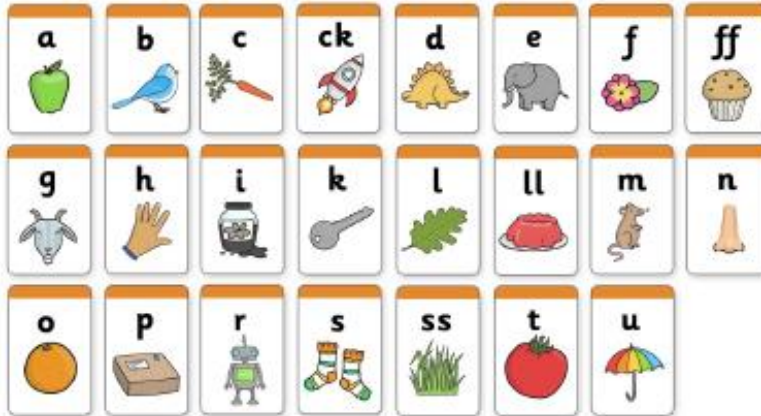
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mode

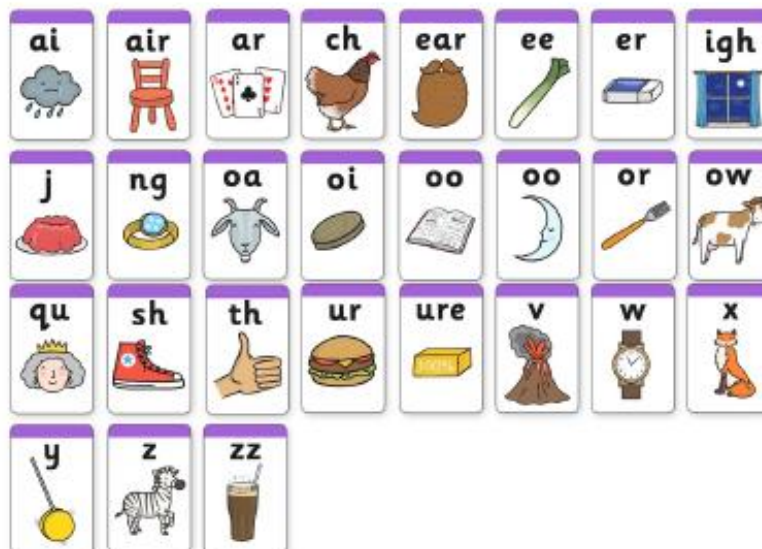
How can I help my child?

Practice the sounds with your child.

Phase 2 Sound Mat




Phase 3 Sound Mat



Phase 5 Sound Mat



Practise a mix of real and nonsense words. Ask your child to draw sound buttons underneath each sound to show they can correctly identify each one. Say all the sounds individually then put the word together.

kigh 

k-igh = kigh

g-ir-s-t = girst







b-ai-m = baim






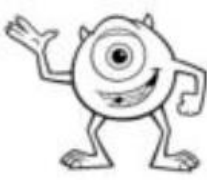

girst 

baim 

REAL WORDS

argue	invite	pursue	sort
bead	jaunty	queue	sphinx
chew	ladder	quiet	statue
drawer	lawn	quit	theft
escape	main	renew	threw
evening	moan	repeat	thundering
fairground	pew	rocker	tie
flute	pie	rule	trash
fork	pole	scratch	turning
golf	prophet	seventh	use
gran	proud	shelving	value
handstand	prune	sighting	woe

aib		dea		gainty		hurp
arfue		deesh		gam		
		dephew		gaunty		jea
bew		deplied		gawn		jea
bleme		descroy		geck		jole
blied		dess		gick		joudest
bountain		dest		glese		
bup		dis		gloy		koe
				goot		
chawn		enroy		gowl		lort
cheme		escake		grize		
chound		exglode		grune		maunch
cleam						melp
clied		foast		hess		mept
curt		frelt		hinner		mip
dack		fup		hoost		mirst

nass		reshied		sweast		vuse
numper		rube		swoat		
nurn		scaub		teb		wab
penue		scloe		thid		wheck
phantob		scray		thimney		whem
phopics		shar		thirt		yass
phot		shag		thair		
phream		snill		thrist		zie
phrew		spratch		thrunk		zoil
poil		spraw		thru		zort
puge		sprew		toam		
		stame		tockney		
quair		stod				
quig		stolphin		vaw		
quiss		stro		vurf		

Useful websites:

www.ictgames.com/literacy

www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games

www.letters-and-sounds.com

www.phonicsplay.co.uk

www.oxfordowl.co.uk

www.teachyourmonstertoread.com

www.phonicsbloom.com

www.youtube.co.uk – Mr Thorne Does Phonics