

## Glossary of Reading Term

### General Terms

**Alphabet**-A writing system based on phonemes (individual consonants and vowels)

**Code**-Any system in which arbitrary symbols are assigned to units within a category. The numbers 1-10 represent units of quantity. Letters represent units of speech sounds ( phonemes).

**Alphabet code** – A writing system based on phonemes (sounds); symbols have been assigned to each sound – a letter or combination of letters; these represent the code.

**Transparent alphabet code** – An alphabetic writing system in which there is rarely more than one spelling for the same sound.

**Opaque alphabet code** – An alphabetic writing system in which there are multiple spellings for the same sound

**Consonant** – A sound that involves contact and movement between one or more speech articulators

**Vowel** – A sound in which the articulators do not stop or curtail the flow of breath. Vowels add volume to speech.

**Consonant blend or consonant cluster** – Two or more consonants in sequence in a word e.g str in street

**Decoding** – Translating symbols back into sounds; from letters/symbols to sounds: reading

**Encoding** – Transcribing sounds into symbols; from sounds to their spellings: spelling

**Phoneme** – The smallest unit of speech that people can hear: corresponds to consonants and vowels (sounds).

**Phoneme awareness** – The ability to hear and remember the order of phonemes in words.

**Phonological awareness** – The ability to hear and remember a variety of units of sound within words, syllable, syllable fragment (onsets/rimes), phonemes.

**Digraph** – Two letters standing for one sound, e.g. ch and ur in ch ur ch

**Schwa vowel** – Term for a ‘squashed’ vowel sound, e.g. basket /basket. May sound like a swallowed ‘uh’ sound. Also known as the most common vowel sound in English, represented as . in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Only words with two or more syllables may have a schwa. It ‘happens’ in the second or third syllable woman/womun, contentment/contentment, hesitate/hesitate.

**Syllable** – A speech unit contained within a word, or constituting a whole word, which consists of one vowel plus any consonants, e.g. com/pu/ter

**Phonics** – A generic term for any reading method that teaches the relationship between letters and sounds. A method of teaching reading based on the sounds of letters, groups of letters, and syllables.

**Phonetic** – speech sounds in words.

**Phonetics** – The branch of linguistics that deals with the sounds of speech and their production, combination, description, and representation by written symbols. During the 19th century, phonics was commonly used as a synonym for phonetics. In the 20th century, phonics acquired its present meaning as a method of teaching reading.

**Synthetic Phonics** – teaches from the sounds (phonemes) to the graphemes (letters); the sounds are taught in isolation then blended together (i.e. synthesised), all-through-the-word. The emphasis is on all-through-the-word segmenting and blending from the start of teaching. Some programmes teach the 40+ sounds and their main spellings; a complete teaching of the 40+ sounds and all their spellings might be

known as ‘linguistic phonics’.

### **The Phonic Screening Test** introduced by the Government in 2012

The phonics screening check is a short and simple assessment of phonic decoding. It consists of a list of 40 words, half real words and half non-words, which Year 1 children read to a teacher. Administering the assessment usually takes between four and nine minutes per child. The check is designed to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard and have grasped the essential skills that underpin good reading.

The check includes non- words such as tox, bim, ulf, blan, geck, tord, thazz, quemp, jound, terg, fape, stroft and blurst illustrated by small monsters to indicate they are 'nonsense' words. Teachers should be aware of this and play with 'legal' syllables to build non-words. e.g 'blur' or '-ulf' or '-ound' are legal, they exist in English

words. Don't over do it! The reason for learning to read is to read real words and real books.

### **Reading and Spelling Skills**

These skills are 'intimately connected' in the act of reading and spelling:

**Segmenting** – identifying each sound in a word by 'sounding out'; separating each sound spelling by sounding out: splitting words into their individual sounds either by saying each sound or by saying each sound and writing it, e.g. the word 'cat' can be segmented c-a-t; the word 'train' can be segmented as t-r-ai-n. In order to spell a word the learner must segment it into its component sounds and choose the

right grapheme (spelling) to represent the sound. Writing appears to go from sound to symbol, however the two processes (segmenting and blending) interact.

**Blending** – pushing/merging the individual sounds back again to make/pronounce the word. After a learner recognises (sounds out) each sound – not each letter (e.g. sh -i-p not s-h-i-p) – they merge(synthesize) each sound together to make the word. A learner is reading if they sound out the individual sounds, hear the whole word and say the whole word. Reading appears to go from symbol (the cue on the page) to sound. In reality the processes are interacting. See quote by Diane McGuinness below.

**Sound Processing** – the ability to hear and remember the individual sounds in a word. Learners need to be trained to hear/be aware of the individual sounds in words and the 'transitivity' of sounds (e.g. the sound /p/ can be at the beginning of a word, in the middle or at the

end: 'pot', 'pop', 'tap', 'spot'). This skill can be exercised by building words and incorporating a change, e.g. from 'and' to 'sand' to 'hand' to 'had'.

This skill supports accurate spelling. Sound Processing is sometimes called 'sound analysis', 'phoneme awareness', 'phoneme discrimination' or 'phoneme identification'.

NOTE: All SRS lessons are built around these key reading and spelling skills. The learner exercises these skills throughout each activity and the skills are re-emphasised in the supporting interactive worksheets.

The reversibility of the code is thus made clear at all times.

### Segmenting and Blending

"There is considerable confusion about the terms segmenting and blending and how these relate to reading and spelling. Many people believe that reading involves blending, and spelling involves segmenting. According to this view, when we read, we rapidly translate letters into phonemes and blend them into a word.

When we spell, we say the word, segment the sounds, translate each sound into a letter or letters, and write it down. This is not what happens.

Children see an unfamiliar word 'sting'.

To read the word, they sound out each phoneme (segmenting): /s/ /t/ /i/ /ng/.

Then they blend the sounds into the word and check the outcome. It is quite common for beginning readers and poor readers to segment correctly and blend incorrectly:

/s/ /t/ /i/ /ng/- sing. To spell the word 'sting' the children say the word, hear each segment in sequence, and blend the segments into the word as they write. Segmenting and blending are intimately connected in both reading and spelling.

Even when reading and spelling are efficient, and it seems like processing is instantaneous, it is not. The same sound by sound analysis continues, only at a phenomenal speed. This is what is meant by automaticity.

Our brains operate in the realm of milliseconds, while conscious reflection operates

in the realm of seconds. We become aware of the interplay of these two processes when we see a word we cannot read or start to write

a word we cannot spell.”

**Diane McGuinness, *Early Reading Instruction, MIT 2004, p162.***

Try some tricky words yourself- specialist botanical, medical or scientific words that you do not read or spell easily!

### **Memory:**

**Recall memory** – memory retrieved from a long term memory store without benefit of prompts or clues. For example an essay test involves recall memory.

**Recognition memory** – memory retrieved from a long term memory store that is assisted by prompts and clues. For example a multiple-choice test involves recognition memory.

### **Types of Learners:**

**Visual Learners-** Learn through seeing; they process information best when they see it.

**Auditory Learners-** Learn through hearing and speaking; the auditory learner is very focused on speaking and listening. They often need to “say it to learn it.”

**Kinaesthetic Learners-** Learn through doing; the kinesthetic learner must “do” something to learn it. They are ‘hands on’ learners.

**Multi-Sensory Teaching and Learning-**This means that all three modalities are used: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. In this way the needs of ALL learners will be met. SRS is based on a wholly ‘multi-sensory’ approach where the learner sees what they hear and writes what they hear and see simultaneously. In particular children and older learners who are struggling with reading and spelling will gain if the

teaching is ‘multi-sensory’.

## Further Reading Terminology

(these terms do not represent the 'synthetic phonic' approach to reading).

**Basal Reader** (US) or **Reading Scheme** (UK) – a reading programme that includes all elements of a curriculum; designed by education publishing houses for use in the classroom, for example The Oxford Reading Tree.

**Onset** – a technical term that refers to the initial consonant or consonants that precede a 'rime' (see below); 'b' in bag, 'sw' in swim, 'str' in 'street' represent an onset

**Rime** – a technical term for the final portion of a word that 'sounds like' other words (rhymes), for example: '-and' in 'band', 'bland', 'brand' or '-ag' in: bag, rag, sag or '-im' in: swim, brim, grim

**Sight words** – printed words that children are asked to memorise visually as a string of letters or as a shape. For example the Dolch sight word lists 220. These are the first 24: a, can, I, go, get, see, me,

have, not, did, run, and, my, the, is, to, you, in, like, said, it, for, was, we...

A true sight word contains rare spelling patterns (e.g. yot = yacht). There are very few. SRS suggests that: one, once, two, who, are, eye, are, the, of, are usefully treated as sight words, although they can all be decoded.

**High Frequency Words** – These were introduced by the NLS National Literacy Strategy for teaching as whole words in Reception (45 words), KS1 (150 words) and KS2 (220 words). High frequency words are those words which occur most frequently in written material, for example, "and", "the", "as" and "it".

They are often words that have little meaning on their own, but they do contribute a great deal to the meaning of a sentence. The first 24 at Reception are: I, go, come, want, up, you, day, was, look, are, the, of, we, this, dog, me, like, going, big, she, and, they, my, see...

**‘Analytic phonics’** – A form of phonics instruction in which students analyse the letter-sound relationships in previously learned words in order to decode new words. Words that are memorised by their global shape (from initial sight vocabulary) may then be broken down into their component parts; the first sound is emphasised; blending is the last reading strategy used, rather than the first.

This might also be known as ‘whole-to-part-phonics’: the practice of easing children into phonemes by starting with whole words, then word parts ( ‘word families’ and ‘blends’), then individual phonemes. Many approaches to learning to read include whole to part or analytic phonics, as well as sight words, memorising, the use of word families, all underpinned by the ‘whole language’ philosophy.

**Whole language** – a philosophy which holds that learning to read is similar to the acquisition of learning to speak/natural language. Children learn to read by exposure, reading along with the teacher, and by guessing words using the context, pictures, and other cues (often first sound cues). The Sound Reading System is the answer for learners who have been unable to learn to read this way.

See [www.dyslexics.org.uk](http://www.dyslexics.org.uk)

**Word family** – a group of words that share the same ending sounds, that are spelled the same, and that rhyme (For example: -ight: bright, night, fight, sight, slight, -ake: bake brake cake drake fake flake -ore: bore chore core more pore)

**Look-Say** – An early twentieth century reading method in which children memorized isolated printed words as random letter sequences by visual memory alone. This often leads to guessing the words: ‘global guessing’ means guessing by using the whole shape of the word and perhaps the first sound cue.