

What is
Read, Write, Inc.
and how do we use it at
Highbury School?



What is Read Write Inc. (RWI)?

RWI is a literacy programme designed by Ruth Miskin that teaches children to read with the use of synthetic phonics.

How do phonics work?

Phonics works by breaking words down into individual sounds. There are 44 different sounds in the English language. Learning to read with phonics is therefore a bit like learning a code, after learning just a few sounds, you will be able to use this code to read 100's of words. The more sounds you know, the more words you will be able to work out how to read.

Not all words are phonetically decode-able however, a select few words you need to learn through the 'sight words' method of learning to read. The sight word method is when you learn to read by memorising words individually.



The first lesson in phonics is teaching children to recognise and differentiate between different sounds. This typically starts by asking children to listen to sounds that you can hear, such as the sounds that animals make, or sounds you hear when you go outside.

Children are then taught simple, single sounds from letters of the alphabet, before moving on to more complex sounds (e.g. two letters making one sound or long vowel sounds).



Speed sounds

Speed sounds are the sounds that letters, or groups of letters make and are displayed on flashcards or sound charts. To enable children to gain confidence in reading, they should only be asked to read words containing letter sounds that they know securely. It isn't common practice to attempt to teach all the sounds first and then begin reading, as it is important that children practise blending and are successful in reading words early on. When showing children sounds or words we use the font Sassoon Primary, as the letters are formed correctly. For example:

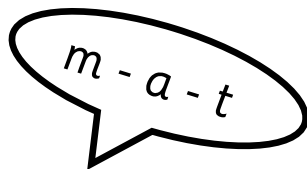
a  and not this: a 

Bouncy and stretchy sounds

Some sounds make a stretchy sound and some make a bouncy sound. When teaching we exaggerate this and show our mouth movements, to help children copy. Stretchy sounds are said in one continuous sound e.g. mmmmmmm as in mountain. Bouncy sounds are said with a short sharp gap in between e.g d-d-d-d dinosaur.

Sounds with more than one letter

Some sounds have more than one letter in them, an example is 'sh', When we teach the children we call them 'special friends' or say 'two letters, one sound.'



Fred Talk

Fred is a puppet who can only say words in pure sounds, he cannot say whole words. Fred is important as he supports children in sounding out orally, one of the first steps in learning to read. Fred models pure sounds, therefore doesn't add an 'uh' on the end of consonant sounds (e.g. fuh, luh, muh), although a slight 'uh' cannot be helped when saying some sounds such as b, d, j, w and y). This was taught differently in the past, so saying 'uh' at the end of sounds may be a habit that needs breaking!



Green Words

Once children have learnt a set of sounds, they will practise blending them together to read words. 'Green words' are ones that can be sounded out phonetically. They are usually presented on green card. It is important that children feel successful with reading words, so a lot of modelling and praise is required. The little dots are called sound buttons and represent one sound. Children count the amount of sounds in a word to help them blend.

said

Red Words

'Red words' or 'tricky words' are those that can't be sounded out using phonics knowledge, as they don't follow the normal rules. They must just be learnt visually as whole words and in RWI are presented on red card. These words can be challenging for children, so must be taught in a fun way, for example highlighting 'the' in magazines. It is important that these are learnt alongside green words, so that children can begin reading sentences and story books.



Ditty Books

Once children have learnt the first few sets of sounds in SET 1 and are able to blend them to read words they are able to read simple sentences and stories in Ditty books. There are questions to support comprehension and visual aids throughout the Ditty books. There are also Ditty writing books for children who are able to write.

Writing

We don't let the fact that some children struggle with writing get in their way! Some children will learn to physically write the sounds during the programme and other won't. For those that do, we use mnemonics with each sound that support the correct letter formation, e.g. m: Maisie mountain mountain, and this is displayed on the back of the flashcard. This is practised in many ways before expecting children to write with a pencil (e.g. air-write with finger, write on a friend's back, write in sand, etc.). For children who have difficulty with their fine motor skills, we practise 'writing' in other ways, such as selecting on a chart or electronic device, or by typing into a word processing software.

Mnemonic to Support Letter Formation

- a – Round the apple down the leaf.
- b - Down the laces to the heel, round the toe
- c – Curl around the caterpillar
- d – Round his bottom, up his tall neck, down to his feet
- e – Lift off the top and scoop out the egg
- f – Down the stem and draw the leaves
- g – Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl
- h – Down the head to the hooves and over his back
- i - Down the body, dot for the head j – Down his body, curl and dot
- k – Down the kangaroos body, up his arm, down his tail and down the leg
- l – Down the long leg
- m – Maisie, mountain, mountain
- n – Down Nobby, over his net
- o – All around the orange
- p – Down the plait and over the pirates face
- q – Round her her head, up past her earrings and down her hair
- r – Down his back, the curl over his arm
- s – Slither down the snake
- t – Down the tower, across the tower
- u – Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle
- v – Down a wing, up a wing
- w – Down up, down up
- x – Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side
- y – Down a horn, up a horn and under his head
- z - Zig, zag, zig



Pronunciation

These sounds should be **stretchy** sounds:

m – mmmmmountain (keep lips pressed together hard)

s – ssssssnake (keep teeth together and hiss – unvoiced)

n – nnnnnnet (keep tongue behind teeth)

f – ffffflower (keep teeth on bottom lip and force air out sharply – unvoiced)

l – llllleg (keep pointed curled tongue behind teeth).

r – rrrrrrobot (say rrr as if you are growling)

v – vvvvvvulture (keep teeth on bottom lip and force air out gently)

z – zzzzzzig zzzzzag (keep teeth together and make a buzzing sound)

th – thhhhank you (stick out tongue and breathe out sharply)

sh – shhhh (make a shhh noise as though you are telling somebody to be quiet!)

ng – thinnnnngg on a strinnnnngg (curl your tongue at the back of your throat)

nk – I think I stink (make a piggy oink noise without the oi! nk nk nk)

These next sounds cannot be stretched, they are called **bouncy** sounds. Make the sound as short as possible avoiding **uh** at the end of the sound:

t - (tick tongue behind the teeth – unvoiced)

p - (make distinctive p with lips – unvoiced)

k - (make sharp click at back of throat)

c - as above

h - say h as you breathe sharply out – unvoiced)

ch - (make a short sneezing sound)

x - (say a sharp c and add s – unvoiced)

Order of Teaching Speed Sounds

Set 1 Sounds:

1.1 m, a, s, d, t,

1.2 i, n, p, g, o,

1.3 c, k, u, b,

1.4 f, e, l, h, sh, r,

1.5 j, v, y, w,

1.6 th, z, ch, qu, x, ng, nk

Set 2 Sounds:

ay: may I play

ee: what can you see

igh: fly high

ow: blow the snow

oo: poo at the zoo

ar: start the car

or: shut the door

air: that's not fair

ir: whirl and twirl

ou: shout it out

Set 3 Sounds:

ea: cup of tea

oi: spoil the boy

a-e: make a cake

i-e: nice smile

o-e: phone home

u-e: huge brute

aw: yawn at dawn

are: share and care

ur: purse for a nurse

er: a better letter

ow: brown cow

ai: snail in the rain

oa: goat in a boat

ew: chew the stew

ire: fire fire!

ear: hear with your ear

ure: sure it's pure?

tion: (celebration)

tious / cious: (scrumptious /
delicious)

e: he me we she be

Structure of lessons:

Phonics is taught 1-1 or in small groups at Highbury. We don't teach it to full classes as children are usually at different stages of the programme.

We try to teach phonics little and often, as we find that children learn better this way and are more likely to keep interest.

Phonics is usually taught daily, with opportunities throughout the day for children to apply their knowledge and practise.

Although we follow the RWI scheme, exactly how it is taught and in what order will vary depending on the child and how they learn best. At Highbury, phonics is very much tailored to individual needs.

Below is a typical order of teaching phonics, which is the basis of our teaching:

Learning a new speed sound:

- say the sound (mmmm)
- say objects / picture cards that begin with that sound (mmouse)
- read the sound from a flashcard (m)
- review other known sounds and read at speed
- write new sound (using mnemonic for letter formation) / select / type the letter
- Fred talk (oral blending words with new learnt sound) m - a - t mat

Learning to read:

- review 5 to 10 known sounds
- Fred talk (oral blending with those sounds)
- blend with sound cards
- blend with magnetic letters
- read green words - sound out whilst tapping each sound and then blend (stroking across the word), count sounds and identify any 'special friends'

All the steps above can be repeated as often as is required to support children's learning.

Lots of modelling and praise gives children the confidence to learn phonics.

This booklet has been created to support families of Highbury School during the coronavirus outbreak and should not be reproduced or copied in any form. Information used belongs to the RWI scheme by Ruth Miskin.

Please visit <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/reading-schemes-oxford-levels/read-write-inc-phonics-guide/> for more information and for free online resources. Flashcards and other resources can also be purchased online.