



| Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

Information for parents and carers

Phonics knowledge and skills are essential for learning to read and write. To be effective readers, students need to learn how to blend sounds together in words quickly so that they can read and understand the meaning.

About the assessment

The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check is a quick assessment that tells teachers how your child is progressing in phonics.

Phonics is important for students who are learning to read. This screening check observes how your child can read words with different letter combinations.

The main purpose of the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check is to provide your child's teacher with information which will allow them to plan for your child's learning.

Each child is individually assessed by a teacher and all Year 1 students will be assessed.

Why is phonics important?

To be successful readers, students need to learn the code for the English language - the sounds represented by individual letters or different letter combinations - and the skill of blending these sounds together to read words.

It is important for students to develop quick recall of the sounds represented by different letters and letter combinations, to support successful reading.

Developing blending skills, which is the ability to blend together sounds to read words, is also important. Beginning readers need to learn how to blend sounds together in words quickly and fluently, so as not to disrupt the flow of reading and their comprehension of the text.

How will I support my child?

Children need frequent opportunities to practise and apply their developing phonics knowledge and skills. You may like to try some of the following activities at home with your child:

- Encourage your child to play games with letters such as bingo, snap or scrabble. Support them to say the correct sound represented by individual letters and different letter combinations.
- Practise blending the sounds in simple, one syllable words together. For example, by first pointing to each letter in the word cat and saying each individual sound 'c-a-t', then reading again by blending all the sounds together 'caaaat', and finally reading the word nice and fast 'cat'. When your child is confident with blending 3 letters together, support them to blend and read 4 letter words like frog (f-r-o-g, fffrrog, frog).
- Model being a word detective and point out special letter patterns found when reading with your child. For example words with a 'ch' sound on the end are sometimes spelt with the letters tch, like the words match, catch and hatch.
- Support your child's reading success by providing them with plenty of opportunities to practise their phonics knowledge and blending skills by reading decodable books together. Decodable books are written using words with letters that your child has learnt. Ask your child's teacher to suggest decodable books with the correct phonics focus for your child.
- When reading books encourage your child to look at the words and 'sound out' any unfamiliar words, blending those sounds together, from left to right, to read the word. This is the best strategy and more helpful than looking at the pictures to guess the meaning.

Useful resources

Resources for helping your child with phonics at home can be found on the following NSW Department of Education webpages:



[Helping your child with literacy and numeracy at home](#)



[Phonics](#)



[Decodable texts](#)



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What is phonics?

Phonics is the relationship between letters and sounds and is vital in learning to read. Some children struggle with learning to read so it is important that these children are identified quickly so teachers can plan for any specific support they may need.

What is the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check?

The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check is a short, quick assessment that tells teachers how your child is progressing in phonics. Your child will sit with the class teacher and will be asked to read 40 words aloud. These words include 20 real words and 20 nonsense words. The test normally takes a few minutes. If your child is struggling the teacher will stop the check. The check is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.

Why use nonsense words?

The assessment includes pseudo or nonsense words to see if the student is able to use their knowledge of blending to read a word rather than their memory of having seen that word before.

More information

If you have any further questions, please talk to your child's class teacher.
