



Phonics screening check

2023 scoring guidance

Pronunciation of real words and pseudo-words

Some of the graphemes used in the check represent a number of different phonemes. When decoding a real word in the check, the child has to select the correct phoneme for the word, for example the 'ow' in 'blow' should not be pronounced as the 'ow' in 'cow'.

The tables on the next page provide guidance on some examples of common pronunciations of the pseudo-words in the check. When decoding a pseudo-word, all plausible alternative and regional pronunciations are acceptable.

Contact details

For more information about the phonics screening check, please contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.

Section 1

Pseudo-word	Acceptable pronunciation	Phonemic representation
fod	This item uses the 'f' from 'fur' and rhymes with 'nod'.	/fɒd/
bep	This item uses the 'b' from 'big' and rhymes with 'step'.	/bɛp/
zat	This item uses the 'z' from 'zoo' and rhymes with 'cat'.	/zæt/
ult	This item uses the 'u' from 'umbrella' and rhymes with 'adult'.	/ʊlt/ or /ʌlt/
heng	This item combines the 'h' from 'hall' with the 'e' in 'step' and the 'ng' in 'sing'.	/hɛŋ/
shob	This item uses the 'sh' from 'show' and rhymes with 'blob'.	/ʃɒb/
farn	This item uses the 'f' from 'foil' and rhymes with 'barn'.	/fɑ:n/ or /farn/
chesh	This item uses the 'ch' from 'chess' and rhymes with 'fresh'.	/tʃɛʃ/
trun	This item uses the 'tr' from 'trap' and rhymes with 'spun'.	/trʌn/ or /trʊn/
glork	This item uses the 'gl' from 'gloom' and rhymes with 'fork'.	/glɔ:k/ or /glɔrk/
remp	This item combines the 'r' from 'rack' with the 'e' from 'belt' and the 'mp' from 'lamp'.	/rɛmp/
deebz	This item combines the 'd' from 'daily' with the 'ee' from 'beech' and the 'bz' from 'grabs'.	/di:bs/ or /di:bz/

Section 2

Pseudo-word	Acceptable pronunciation	Phonemic representation
jer	This item uses the 'j' from 'jaw' and rhymes with 'her'.	/dʒɜ:/ or /dʒɜr/
drave	This item uses the 'dr' from 'drone' and rhymes with 'shave'.	/dreɪv/
teap	This item uses the 't' from 'tail' and rhymes with 'heap'.	/ti:p/
phibe	This item uses the 'ph' from 'phone' and rhymes with 'tribe'.	/faɪb/
slimp	This item uses the 'sl' from 'slide' and rhymes with 'crimp'.	/slɪmp/
craint	This item uses the 'cr' from 'creep' and rhymes with 'paint'.	/kreɪnt/
splet	This item uses the 'spl' from 'splash' and rhymes with 'bet'.	/splet/
strave	This item uses the 'str' from 'string' and rhymes with 'crave'.	/streɪv/