

Brandesburton Primary School

Phonics Terminology

Phoneme - A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word. It is generally accepted that most varieties of spoken English use about 44 phonemes.

Grapheme - A grapheme is a letter or group of letters representing a sound.

Oral Blending – Hearing a series of spoken sounds (phonemes) and merging them together to make a spoken word. No text is used.

Blending – Merging the individual phonemes together to read a word.

Segmenting - Consists of breaking words down into phonemes to spell.

Digraph - This is when two letters come together to make a phoneme. For example, /oa/ makes the sound in 'boat' and is also known as a vowel digraph. There are also consonant digraphs, for example, /sh/ for ship and /ch/ for chick.

Trigraph - This is when three letters come together to make one phoneme, for example, /igh/ for night.

Split Digraph - A digraph in which the two letters are not adjacent – e.g. make, bone. (This used to be known as 'magic e' but this phrase should not be used now.)

Homographs – Words that have the same spelling but differ in meaning and pronunciation, for example, a row of chairs or a row like an argument.

Homophones – Words with common pronunciations but different spellings, for example, to / two / too or there / their.

Syllable – One or more letters representing a unit of spoken language consisting of a single uninterrupted sound.

Polysyllabic word – A word containing more than one syllable.

Adjacent Consonant – Two consonants next to each other in a word, for example, trip or bend. These used to be known as 'blends'. They need to be taught as separate sounds.

