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*A British certified
approach to
support literacy
development.*



.. with you every step of the way ..

**STEP-BY-STEP
PROGRESSION**

**FUN,
INTERACTIVE
PHONICS
ACTIVITIES**

**COMMON
MISTAKES TO
AVOID**

**A SAMPLE
LESSON FROM
FOOTSTEP
PHONICS**

FREE PHONICS GUIDE



ERRINGTON HOUSE
WE MAKE LEARNING MATTER

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome to your Phonics Welcome Pack!

This guide is designed to be your roadmap to effective phonics instruction, whether you're a teacher, parent, or homeschooling advocate. Here's how to make the most of it:

Follow the Phonics Progression –

Start with the 6 Steps of Phonics to see where your learner is and what comes next.

Use the Interactive Activities –

Choose from fun, hands-on games that match different learning styles.

Avoid Common Mistakes –

Check the teaching pitfalls and quick fixes to ensure effective phonics instruction.

Try the Sample Lesson –

Follow the structured lesson plan for an easy, step-by-step approach.

Grab More Free Resources –

Check the final page for printables and extra support.

This guide is meant to be a living document—refer back to it as you progress through the curriculum, and adapt the activities to suit your learner's needs. Happy teaching, and here's to building confident, fluent readers!

WHERE DO I START? THE 6 STEPS OF PHONICS PROGRESSION

Teaching phonics without a clear sequence can leave kids struggling to decode words. That's why following a structured progression is essential for reading success!



STEP 1

Letter Sounds & Phonemic Awareness

What it Means: Children learn to hear, recognise, and produce letter sounds.

Goal: Build sound awareness before blending words.

STEP 2

Blending & Segmenting CVC Words

What it Means: Kids combine individual sounds to read simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words (e.g., cat, dog, run).

Goal: Develop early decoding & word-building skills.

STEP 3

Digraphs & Beginning Blends

What it Means: Introducing two-letter sounds (ch, sh, th) and blends (bl, st, gr).

Goal: Strengthen sound recognition for longer words.

STEP 4

Magic E (Silent E) & Long Vowel Sounds

What it Means: Learning how Magic E changes words (cap → cape) and mastering vowel teams (ea, ai, oa).

Goal: Help learners read & spell more complex words.

STEP 5

R-Controlled Vowels & Tricky Words

What it Means: Understanding that "r" changes vowel sounds (ar, er, or) and learning non-decodable sight words.

Goal: Improve fluency & reading confidence.

STEP 6

Advanced Phonics & Fluency Building

What it Means: Introducing suffixes, diphthongs (oy, ow), and complex word patterns.

Goal: Develop independent reading fluency & comprehension.



By following this step-by-step progression, your child will develop strong phonics skills, decoding confidence, and a **love for reading!**

MAKE PHONICS FUN! ENGAGING ACTIVITIES FOR INSTANT LEARNING

Phonics lessons don't have to be boring!
The best way for kids to master reading is through hands-on, engaging activities that reinforce what they learn.



Try these low-prep, high-impact phonics activities to keep learners excited and progressing! Each one supports a key reading skill!

Sound Hunt (Perfect for Early Phonics & Letter Sounds)

Skill: Letter-sound recognition & phonemic awareness

How to Play:

- Choose a target sound (e.g., /s/).
- Have kids search the room for objects that start with that sound (e.g., sock, sun, spoon).
- Say the words together, emphasising the first sound.

Why It Works: Helps kids connect sounds to real objects, making phonics feel meaningful!

Goal: Develop independent reading fluency & comprehension.

1

Blend & Jump (Great for Active Learners!)

Skill: Blending sounds into words

How to Play:

- Write different letters on flashcards and place them in a line on the floor.
- Say a CVC word (e.g., "dog"), and have the child jump from letter to letter, blending the sounds as they go:
 - /d/ (jump) /o/ (jump) /g/ (jump) = dog!

Why It Works: Adds movement & energy, keeping active learners engaged!

2

PHONICS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

3

Phonics Puzzle Match (Perfect for Visual Learners)

Skill: Word decoding & spelling patterns

How to Play:

- Write simple words on index cards and cut them in half (e.g., "cat" becomes "c- | -at").
- Mix them up and challenge kids to match the pieces back together by reading aloud.

Why It Works: Reinforces word patterns & blending in a fun, hands-on way.

4

Mystery Word Bag (Builds Sound Awareness & Listening Skills)

Skill: Identifying beginning, middle & ending sounds

How to Play:

- Place small objects or pictures in a bag (e.g., sun, map, dog).
- Have the child pull one out, name it, and say the sounds slowly (e.g., "/s/ - /u/ - /n/").
- Challenge them to blend the sounds back together to say the full word.

Why It Works: Builds sound segmentation & blending skills through tactile learning.

5

Roll & Read (Simple & Effective Fluency Game)

Skill: Reading fluency & decoding practice

How to Play:

- Create a word list or flashcards with phonics patterns (e.g., CVC, digraphs, blends).
- Roll a dice:
 - 1-2 = Read the word
 - 3-4 = Clap out the sounds
 - 5-6 = Use it in a sentence

Why It Works: Encourages repetition & fluency without feeling like "drill practice"!

AVOID THESE 3 COMMON PHONICS MISTAKES (AND WHAT TO DO INSTEAD!)



Here are 3 common mistakes and how to avoid them to ensure kids build strong reading skills from the start!

Relying Too Much on Sight Words Instead of Phonics

Many reading programs introduce sight words too early, encouraging kids to memorise words instead of decoding them.

This can lead to guessing instead of real reading.

Instead...

- ✓ Focus on phonics-based decoding first before introducing sight words.
- ✓ Teach high-frequency words using phonics rules (e.g., "can" should be sounded out, not memorised).
- ✓ Limit rote memorisation – kids should understand why words are spelled a certain way.
- ✦ Better Approach: Teach sight words strategically (e.g., words that can't be decoded easily like "said" or "one").

Teaching Sounds in Alphabetical Order

Many parents & teachers assume kids should learn letter sounds in A-Z order, but this doesn't help them start reading sooner.

Instead...

- ✓ Teach the most commonly used sounds first (e.g., s, a, t, p, i, n) so kids can start blending simple words quickly.
- ✓ Introduce letters in a logical sequence that allows for early success with reading.
- ✓ Avoid letter pairs that may cause confusion when taught too close together (e.g., b & d).
- ✦ Better Approach: Teach high-frequency sounds first, and build toward more complex patterns.

Skiping Blending Practice

Some phonics programs focus only on individual sounds, but if kids don't practice blending, they won't learn to read fluently.

Instead...

- ✓ Teach blending from day one—don't wait!
- ✓ Use blending drills like "Say It, Stretch It, Blend It" (e.g., /c/ - /a/ - /t/ = cat).
- ✓ Encourage decodable reading practice so kids build real reading confidence.
- ✦ Better Approach: Daily blending builds strong reading skills faster than isolated letter practice.

Phonics Lesson Plan



Sound: /Ss/

Lesson #1

Time: 30 Minutes

Materials Needed:

- Letter 's' flashcard
- Pictures of items beginning with 's' (sun, sock, sand, star)
- Sand tray or salt tray
- Play dough
- Snake-shaped toy or puppet (optional)
- Small mirrors (for students to observe mouth position)

Lesson Focus and Goals:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- ✓ Recognise the letter Ss and its sound (/s/)
- ✓ Identify words that begin with Ss
- ✓ Write the letter Ss correctly

Step 1: Warm-Up (5 Minutes)

Activity: I Spy

- Begin with a sound awareness game: "I spy with my little eye something beginning with /s/..."
- Introduce the snake puppet/toy and explain that today we're learning the sound that snake makes: "sssss"
- Have children practice making the /s/ sound, feeling how their tongue sits behind their teeth

Step 2: Multisensory Introduction (5 minutes)

Visual:

Show the letter 's' card and pictures of objects beginning with 's'

Auditory:

Model the /s/ sound clearly.

"This letter makes the sound /s/ like a snake: sssss"

Kinesthetic:

Demonstrate the formation of 's' in the air using your finger

Tactile:

Practice tracing the letter 's' in a sand/salt tray

Step 3: Guided Practice (10 Minutes)

Sound Recognition Game:

Show various picture cards and have children stomp when they hear a word beginning with /s/

Say pairs of words (sun/moon, sock/shoe, sand/dirt) and have children identify which word starts with /s/

Letter Formation Practice:

Children form the letter 's' using play dough

Practice writing 's' on individual whiteboards, following the formation rhyme: "Start at the top, curve around and down like a snake"

Sound Position Activity:

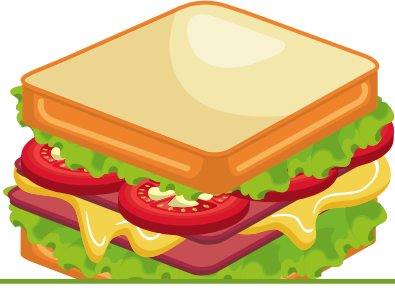
Use picture cards to identify if /s/ is at the beginning (sun), middle (basket), or end (bus) of words

Children can sort the pictures into three groups based on sound position

Step 4: Independent Application (10 minutes):

- Complete the FootStep Phonics Step 1 workbook (pg. 1-4)
- Provide a sensory bin with hidden objects beginning with 's' for early finishers

Assessment/Reflections:



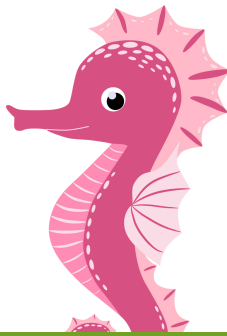
sandwich

THE LETTER

Ss



sun



seahorse



snail



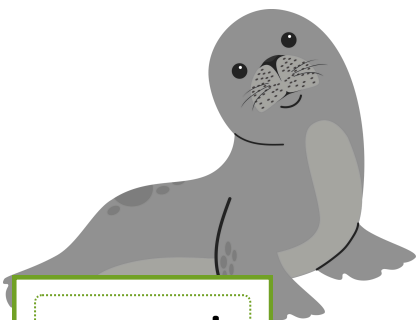
snowman



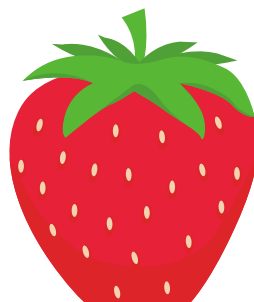
star



sandals

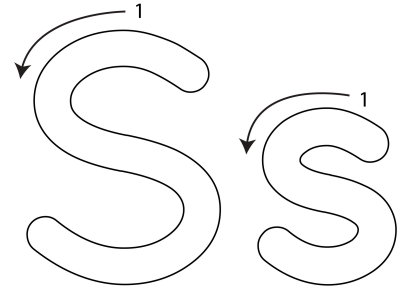
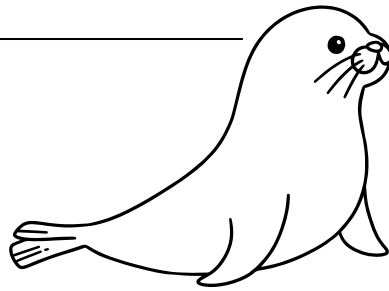


seal

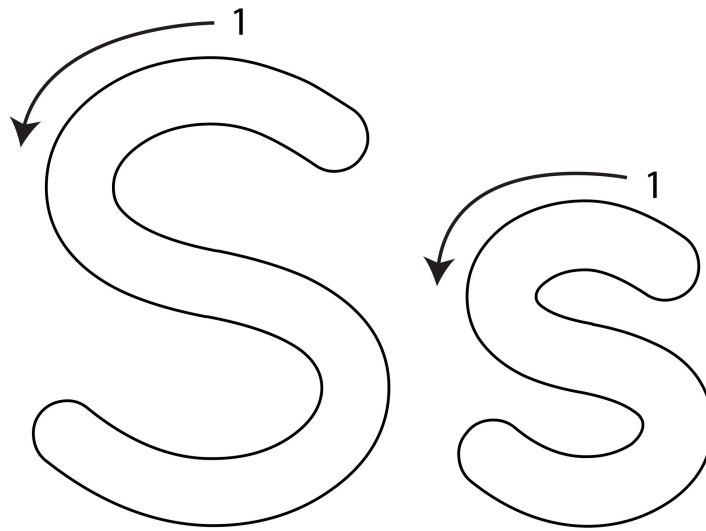


strawberry

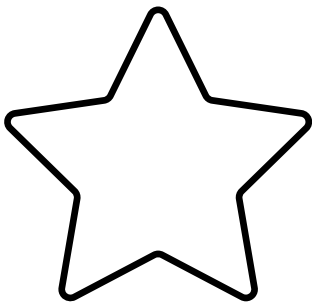
Date: _____

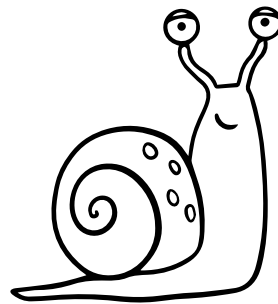
- ① Trace the letters with a pencil.
Say the name and sound of the letter.



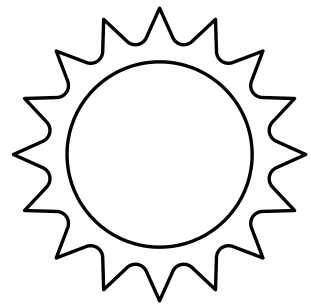
- ② Colour the pictures that start with the letter **Ss**.
Trace the letter to complete the word.



star



snaail



sun

Date: _____

- ① Trace the letters with a pencil, then try writing a few of your own.



S s

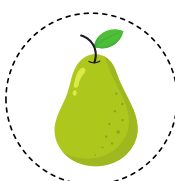
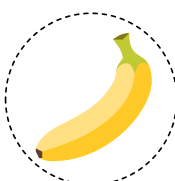
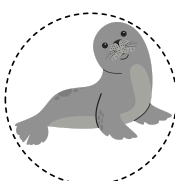
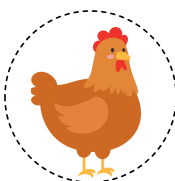
S

s

- ②  Tick the boxes that contain the letter **Ss**.

t s e N s Q S b a S

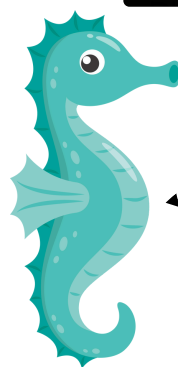
- ③ Circle the pictures that begin with the letter **Ss**.



S s



Fluency poem



seahorse

S is for sun,



S is for snail.



S is for spider,



on my pail.

S S S

spider



CONGRATULATIONS!



You've taken the first step in building strong reading skills. Phonics is the key to confident, fluent reading. Keep practicing, exploring, and making learning fun!



Ready for a **complete**
step-by-step curriculum?



@footstep_phonics