

# St. Mary's Phonics - Key vocabulary and definitions.

## Phoneme

The smallest unit of sound within a word (what you hear).

Can be written with one or more letters.

## Grapheme

A letter, or combination of letters, that are used to visually represent a single phoneme (sound) within a word. (what you see).

## Grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs)

The sound-letter relationship between each element of the alphabetic code.

## Digraph

Two letters that represent one sound.

For example;

Consonant digraphs -  
sh th ch ph ng qu

Vowel digraphs -  
ai ie oa ue ee

## Split-digraph

Two letters that represent one sound, separated by a consonant.

a-e i-e o-e u-e e-e

## Trigraph

Three letters that represent one sound.

For example;

igh air ere dge

## Quadgraph

Four letters that represent one sound.

For example;

ould, augh

## Vowel

The letters a, e, i, o and u.

## Vowel sound

Each vowel can make a short, and a long, phoneme. More complex vowel forms such as ear air, plus 'y' can make the long 'ee' and 'i' vowel sounds.

## Consonant

The letters of the alphabet (apart from the vowels a, e, i, o and u).

## Adjacent consonants

Two, sometimes three, consonants next to each other in a word that still each make their own sound.

For example:

bl, sl, tr, str,

Blending - merging the phonemes in a word together in order to pronounce it.

cat = /c/ /a/ /t/

Segmenting - breaking up a word that you hear into its phonemes.

/c/ /a/ /t/ = cat

Syllables - a "word chunk" that contains a single vowel sound. A word may have one, two, or even more syllables.



Compound words - a word made by joining two individual words together.



## Common exception words

Words that don't follow the rules we have learnt so far.

## Polysyllabic words

Words with more than one syllable.

syll a bles



Alternative spelling  
A different way of spelling a phoneme.

igh  
ie  
i-e



## Alternative pronunciation

A different way of pronouncing a grapheme.



## Homograph

Words that have the same spelling but different meanings, for example, 'pen' (writing implement) and 'pen' (animal enclosure).

## Homophone

Words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings or meanings, for example,

blue (colour)   
blew (the wind blew) 

Prefix - unit of language added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning.

Suffix - unit of language added to the end of a word to change its form.

Mnemonic - a simple device used to assist memory - a picture or phrase.

