

Keeping-up sessions in Reception

As new graphemes are introduced, children making the slowest progress are likely to need additional support to keep up with the pace of learning. In particular, these children usually need more time to assimilate the new GPCs. Additional daily ‘keeping-up’ sessions to reinforce new graphemes can help these children keep up with their peers.

The ‘keeping-up’ sessions should take place sometime after the whole-class session (for example, in the afternoon) and could be run by a teacher or another trained adult. They should last about 10 minutes and involve grapheme recognition and word reading, using resources and activities from the whole-class sessions.

Alternatively, you could choose to use the **Phonics Practice Pupil Books** in the keeping-up sessions. Phase Two is covered in **Phonics Practice Pupil Book 1** and Phase Three is covered in **Phonics Practice Pupil Books 2 and 3**. There is a double-page spread of activities in the Pupil Books for each new grapheme. The first page reinforces the new letter or digraph and its sound. The second page provides opportunities to practise blending to read or segmenting to spell words with the grapheme, as well as providing captions and sentences to read. Children could start the activities in the keeping-up session with adult support and then complete them later in the week or at home as appropriate.

Monday to Thursday’s sessions should usually involve practising recognition of the new grapheme and some previously learnt GPCs as well as reading **Word cards** featuring the new grapheme. On Fridays, the children should practise quick recognition of all four new graphemes, and reading words and captions or sentences with the new graphemes.

Below is an example of what these sessions might look like in Week 4 of Phase Three. It can be adapted for other weeks, or for use in Phase Two. Each session uses the **Mnemonics, Grapheme cards** and **Word cards** from the whole-class session so that no additional materials need to be prepared.

Monday – reinforce the new grapheme ‘ai’

Revisit and review of graphemes: Use the **Quick-fire phonemes** activity (p.151) with **Grapheme cards** from the previous weeks (in this case, the consonant digraphs from Week 3 together with a few letters that the children still need to secure). Hold up each card in turn and ask the children to say the sound.

Reinforce the new grapheme: Show the picture side of the **Mnemonic** for the new grapheme and say the sound followed by the word or a phrase to emphasise the sound (for example, *These two letters make the sound /ai/ as in ‘rain’... The raiiin in Spaiiin is a paiiin.*). Ask the children to say the word and sound.

Show the grapheme side of the **Mnemonic**, run your finger under the two letters and ask the children to say the sound. Talk about the two letters that make the sound, using the letter names. (With ‘ai’, you can point out that the name of the first letter is the same as the /ai/ sound.)

Hold up the **Mnemonic** several times, sometimes showing the picture side and sometimes the grapheme side. Ask the children to say the word or sound as appropriate.

Practise reading words: Lay out on the table or carpet some **Word cards** containing the new grapheme and one or two words without (this could be words from the previous week, such as mash, chat, that). Ask the children to spot a word with the /ai/ sound and then run their finger under the two letters and say the sound. Sound-talk and blend one of the words together.

Give each child or pair of children their own **Word card** to sound-talk and read. Start with words that have sound buttons and check the children sound-talk and read the words correctly. In Phase Three, repeat with words without sound buttons. If necessary, you can add sound buttons or ask the children to spot the two letters that make the new sound and underline them before they sound-talk and read the word.

Include a few **Word cards** with letters or other digraphs introduced previously. This will help to reinforce those graphemes and ensure that the children are paying close attention to the letters when reading words.

If there is time, read a caption (in Phase Two) or sentence featuring the new grapheme.

Tuesday – reinforce the new grapheme ‘ee’

Repeat the same activities as above for the new grapheme ‘ee’. Include ‘ai’ in the ‘Revisit and review of graphemes’.

Include one or two ‘ai’ **Word cards** when practising reading words.

Wednesday – reinforce the new grapheme ‘igh’

Repeat the same activities again for the new grapheme ‘igh’. Include ‘ai’ and ‘ee’ in the ‘Revisit and review of graphemes’.

Include one or two ‘ai’ or ‘ee’ **Word cards** when practising reading words.

Thursday – reinforce the new grapheme ‘oa’

Repeat the same activities again for the new grapheme ‘oa’. Include ai, ee and igh in the ‘Revisit and review of graphemes’.

Include one or two ‘igh’ **Word cards** when practising reading words.

Friday – revise the four new graphemes (ai, ee, igh, oa)

Revisit and review of graphemes: Use the **Quick-fire phonemes** activity (p.151) with the **Mnemonics** or **Grapheme cards** for the four new graphemes and a few from the previous weeks. Show the new graphemes multiple times and check how confidently the children respond.

Reinforce the new graphemes: Write one of the new graphemes on the whiteboard and ask the children to say the sound. Ask the children to use their finger to trace the new grapheme on the letter side of the **Mnemonic** or finger write it on the table/carpet and then say the sound. Repeat for the other three graphemes.

Practise reading words: Show a selection of **Word cards** from the week. Say one of the sounds and ask the children to spot the words that have the letters that represent/make that sound. Sound-talk and read one of those words together. Repeat with the other sounds.

Give each child or pair of children their own **Word card**. In Phase Three, ask them to spot the two (or three) letters that make one sound and then sound-talk and read the word. You could underline the digraph or trigraph, or add sound buttons under the words if necessary.

Show the **Tricky word sentence** or another caption or sentence featuring at least one of the new graphemes. Ask the children to spot the tricky word or any word(s) where two (or three) letters make one sound. Read these words together. Then ask the children to read the complete sentence to you or with a partner.

Give each child a copy of the week's new **Mnemonics** and some **Word cards** featuring the new graphemes to take home so they can practise with parents, carers or older siblings.

Monitor each child's progress in recognising the Phase Three digraphs and blending to read words containing the digraphs as part of your ongoing assessment.