

Glossary

blend

to say the separate sounds in a word and merge them together to make the whole word

Blending is the reverse of **segmenting** and is an important skill to acquire when learning to read. **Oral blending** does not involve written words. Instead, the child listens to someone saying the sounds and then blends them together to make the word. It is not necessary to have the word written down in order to do this. **Blending for reading** involves looking at a word, recognising the letters, saying the letter sounds and then blending them to read the word. This is more complex and at this stage many children will need help. Try saying the letter sounds aloud as you point to the letters. Then ask the child to say the whole word.

digraph

a combination of two letters representing one sound (for example, 'ck')

segment

to break a word into separate sounds in order to spell it

Segmenting is the reverse of **blending** and is a skill that is vital to the process of learning to spell. **Oral segmenting** is breaking words orally into their separate sounds. The child does not need to identify the letters that make those sounds: the focus is simply on saying them. **Segmenting for spelling** involves breaking words up into separate sounds and choosing the letters that make those sounds in order to spell the word. At this stage, the child might not be able to write the letters or words: they could simply find and point to the letters.

sound button

a mark appearing below each letter or **digraph**, which the child can touch as they say the sound. A dot is used when one letter represents one sound; a line is used when two or more letters represent one sound. **Sound buttons** encourage children to say the sounds for each letter, in order, so they can **blend** them to read words.

sound-talk

the process of saying, in the correct order, each separate sound in a word

tricky word

a word that contains a letter or a group of letters that make an unusual or unfamiliar sound

For example, the words 'go' and 'no' are **tricky words** because the letter 'o' does not correspond to the sound that the children know for this letter. The word 'the' is particularly tricky because none of the letters correspond to their familiar sounds. Children need to learn to read **tricky words** so they do not get stuck on them when reading captions or sentences.