

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. **Blending for reading** involves looking at a word, recognising the letters, saying the sounds and then blending them to read the word. At this stage some children will need help with this. Try saying the 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, 'ar')

grapheme

a letter or sequence of letters representing a **phoneme** (one of the separate sounds that a word contains).

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. **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 should be writing the letters.

short vowel

the short vowel sounds are /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, as found in the words 'cat', 'peg', 'bin', 'dog' and 'cup'. They are all said with a short sound.

sound button

a mark appearing below each letter, **digraph** or **trigraph**, 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 'my' and 'you' are **tricky words** because the letter 'y' in 'my' and the **digraph** 'ou' in 'you' do not correspond to the sounds that the children know for these letters. Children need to learn to read **tricky words** so they do not get stuck on them when reading captions or sentences.

trigraph

a combination of three letters representing one sound (for example, 'ear')