

# Glossary of terms

**adjacent consonants** two or three letters with discrete sounds which are blended together: **s-m**, **b-l**, **c-r**.

**alliteration** a phrase containing words beginning with the same initial sound: **C**lever **C**at collects coins; **M**unching **M**ike loves to **m**unch **m**ushrooms in the **m**eadow.

**base word** a word minus any prefix or suffix added to it: **unconcerned**, **kindness**, **goats**, **snowing**.

**blending** the process of sounding out each individual phoneme in a word and then blending them together to read the word. For example, /c/ /ă/ /t/ blended together is **cat**.

**compound word** a word which consists of two words put together with each retaining its meaning: **playground**, **roundabout**, **notebook**.

**comprehension** understanding the text being read.

**consonant** all alphabet letters except the vowels **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**.

**contraction** a word that combines two words with one or more sounds left out: **I'm**, **wasn't**, **we've**. An apostrophe is placed where one or more letters are left out.

**decoding** the process of going from printed or written words to verbal language whether reading aloud or silently.

**digraph** two letters representing one phoneme: **thin**, **luck**, **shop**, **grow**, **treat**, **cloud**.

**grapheme** a written representation of a single phoneme; may consist of one or more letters. For example the phoneme /s/ can be represented by the graphemes shown: **sun**, **mouse**, **city**, **science**.

**letter name** the name commonly used when referring to letter shapes: **aye**, **bee**, **cee**, **dee**, **ee**, **eff**, **gee**.

**letter shape** the form of the letter.

**letter sound** the speech sound represented by a letter, often represented in print between back slashes: /t/ for the letter **t**.

**multisensory** the simultaneous use of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic senses (VAK) to enhance learning.

**phoneme** the smallest identifiable unit of sound in a word. A phoneme can be represented by one, two, three or four letters. The following words end in the same phoneme: **to**, **shoe**, **through**.

**phonemic awareness** the ability to hear, identify and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. A child shows phonemic awareness when they can separate the phonemes in a word (**map**, /m/ /ă/ /p/).

**phonics** the teaching of the relationship between sounds and spellings (phonemes and graphemes).

**pictogram** a picture embedded in a letter or digraph that helps children remember the shapes and sounds even when they see the plain letters.

**prefix** a part added at the beginning of a base word that changes the meaning: **unseen**, **rewrite**, **disappear**, **preview**.

**schwa** an unstressed vowel phoneme. Any vowel can be pronounced as a schwa if the syllable is not stressed (shown underlined): **man** → workman.

**segmenting** the process of splitting up a spoken word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it: **cat** /c/ /ă/ /t/ → **cat**

**slow speak** a term used to describe stretching out a word by saying it slowly enough to identify each sound to aid spelling: **run**, rrrrrruuuuuunnnn.

**split digraph** two letters, split, making one sound, For example, **a\_e** as in **make**.

**suffix** a part added to the end of a word that may change its tense, number, meaning, part of speech, or use in a sentence: **reached**, **wishing**, **bells**, **careless**, **kindness**, **thinks**.

**syllable** each 'beat' in a word is a syllable. Words with only one syllable (**cat**, **fright**) are called monosyllabic; words with more than one syllable (**super**, **superman**) are polysyllabic.

**Tricky Words** frequently used words that cannot be decoded easily. They often have one or more unusual spelling patterns: **was**, **said**, **what**, **they**, **of**. Also called common exception words, sight words, irregular high-frequency words.

**trigraph** three letters representing one phoneme: **high**; **hear**.

**vowel** the five vowel letters, **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**. They can represent short or long sounds (**cat**, **cake**). The letter **y** can also represent vowel sounds (**fly**, **very**, **bicycle**).