

Glossary of terms

adjacent consonants two or three letters with discrete sounds which are blended together: **sm**, **bl**, **cr**.

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 backslashes: /t/ for the letter **t**.

multisensory the simultaneous use of visual, auditory and kinesthetic 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**).