

Phonics Bug

Teaching and Assessment Guide

Interactive synthetic phonics
for reading and spelling

Reception (P1)

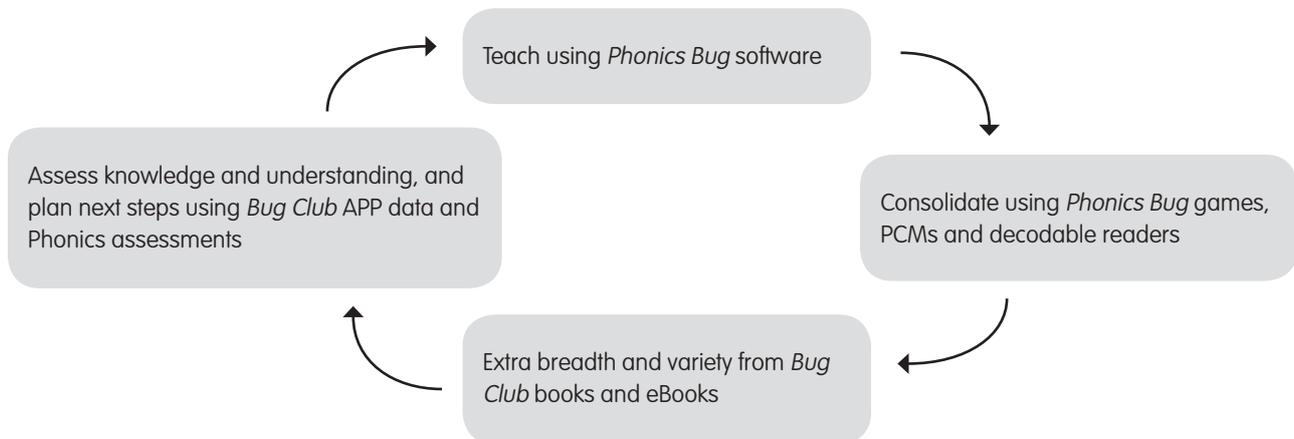


Joyce Watson & Rhona Johnston

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Overview



Phonics Bug is the dedicated phonics strand of *Bug Club*, a core reading programme that can be used for independent and guided reading from Reception (Primary 1) to Year 6 (Primary 7). Together, *Phonics Bug* and *Bug Club* provide a complete solution to helping you teach children in Reception (P1) and Key Stage 1 (P2 and 3) to read.

This Teaching and Assessment Guide focuses on *Phonics Bug*. The programme is a balanced approach to the teaching of reading using synthetic phonics (see page 4 for details). It simultaneously teaches the segmentation of words for spelling, and develops phonemic awareness skills. The programme is the product of seven years' research in Clackmannanshire, Scotland, which produced remarkable gains in reading and spelling among those children who followed the programme (the full research details are available within the software).

This interactive edition of the programme unites the proven pedagogy of the original programme with the most engaging and motivating delivery methods. This edition comprises:

- Teaching and Assessment Guides for Reception (P1) and Key Stage 1 (P2 and 3)
- Flashcards
- Photocopy Masters
- 79 decodable readers
- 79 eBooks and activities, available on www.bugclub.co.uk
- Teaching software and pupil games, available on www.bugclub.co.uk

Phonics Bug Quick Start

- 1) Go to **Before starting the programme** (page 24) and check that your children are ready to begin the programme.
- 2) Open the software and read **Software navigation and controls** (page 9).
- 3) Read the **Guide to teaching Sessions** (page 40).
- 4) Start using the programme!

Essential tips

- Teaching Sessions will take around 40-45 minutes to deliver, and the guided independent work approximately 10 minutes.
- Ideally the Sessions should be delivered on consecutive days, and if this is achieved, Units 1-12 will take around 16 weeks to complete.
- You will need an interactive whiteboard, but if you do not have access to one, simply use the Flashcards and make sure you have a large magnetic letter board and letters for modelling. (The Flashcards are available as printed items and are also downloadable from the software. They include picture stimuli, letters, words and sentences.)
- Your class will need small magnetic letter boards and letters for individual use or to share between two, as your professional judgement dictates.

What is synthetic phonics?

In synthetic phonics the graphemes and corresponding phonemes are taught just before the introduction of words that contain these letters. To read these words, children are taught to pronounce the individual phonemes (sounds) associated with the graphemes (letters) they see, and then to blend them together (synthesise) to form the word. The process is as follows:

- Children see a word, e.g. "cat"; it is not pronounced for them.
- They break it down into its individual letters (graphemes) and pronounce the corresponding sounds (phonemes) for each letter in turn: /c/ /a/ /t/
- Then they blend the separate phonemes together to form the word.

This process is known as **blending**.

Synthetic phonics teaches letter sounds very rapidly, explicitly showing children how to build up words with letters from the start, and always includes blending with printed words.

Synthetic phonics does not normally teach spelling, but *Phonics Bug* does teach spelling by reversing the reading process described above, i.e.

- Children hear a word, e.g. "cat".
- They segment it into its constituent phonemes and say them in turn: /c/ /a/ /t/
- They write a corresponding grapheme for each phoneme.

This process is known as **segmenting**, and is followed by the children reading the word they have produced by sounding and blending.

Synthetic phonics differs from analytic phonics in that in analytic phonics children are shown word families. For example, they may be introduced to the letter sound 'c', and then be shown a list of words all starting with the same letter sound, e.g. 'cat, cake, cut, cup'. Sounding and blending starts when all the letters of the alphabet have been taught in the beginning, middle and final positions of words, whereas in synthetic phonics this process starts after the first few letter sounds have been taught.

Programme rationale

Pace and order of teaching

In Reception, *Phonics Bug* teaches a new grapheme and related phoneme in every Phoneme Session. This fast pace, backed up by daily revision of past teaching, has proved the most effective and successful method of phonic training. This means that the basic 40+ phonemes are acquired quickly, and early reading skills develop rapidly leaving plenty of time after the programme to apply the taught strategies and enrich learning through contextualised reading experiences.

The order of grapheme introduction (see page 6) matches that recommended by the DfES in *Letters and Sounds* (2007) and ensures that children are able to start reading and spelling a wide range of words at the earliest possible stage.

Introduction of graphemes and phonemes

In *Phonics Bug* children are taught graphemes and phonemes at the same time. The research study showed that children progressed quickly if they learnt about phonemes in the context of letters and print right from the start of the phonics teaching.

Blending and segmenting

In *Phonics Bug* blending for reading and segmenting for spelling are given equal prominence, though blending is always taught first in a Session.

The Primary National Strategy recommends practice of oral blending and segmentation in Phase 2 (see page 6 for more information on these 'Phases'). We suggest that these activities be done outside the lesson; for example, when there are a few minutes before the bell goes. We have included suggested activities for oral blending and segmentation in the Language session for Unit 1.

Introduction of letter names

The names of letters can be taught first, via the Alphabet song and magnetic letters. During the seven or so years over which the programme has been in use, children have not had any difficulties learning both letter names and sounds early on. One of the benefits of this is that any child who misses a Session will know the names of the letters they have missed. In many cases the letter names give a good guide to the letter sounds. However, the teaching of letter names is optional in this programme.

Multi-sensory learning

Bringing a multi-sensory element to the teaching of phonics is widely recognised to be hugely beneficial to its effectiveness. *Phonics Bug* recommends the use of magnetic letters and boards to consolidate children's blending and segmenting abilities. Mini-magnetic boards are to be used by pairs (or individuals) during and after the Whole Class Teaching Sessions. The interactive whiteboard acts as an electronic magnetic letter board for teacher demonstration.

Additionally, teaching the formation of the letters at the same time as the sounds helps to consolidate the letters in memory.

Handwriting

Phonics Bug does not necessarily seek to replace your normal handwriting programme, but it does recognise that letter formation helps kinaesthetic consolidation of grapheme acquisition and so spelling. The teaching of letter formation accompanies the introduction of every grapheme and the talking-through element of such teaching also supports the children's cognitive processes.

Note: The letter formation is non-cursive, so if you teach cursive handwriting, you may wish to omit this feature from your lessons and deal with handwriting separately.

Less common grapheme–phoneme correspondences

Based on experience of the hundreds of children who have been through the programme over the last seven or so years, *Phonics Bug* takes the view that children are best served by learning the basic 40+ grapheme–phoneme correspondences in the first year at school. The less frequent pronunciations, particularly for vowels, are taught when the children are secure in the basic principles, normally in the second year of school (see page 19).

Very minor variations in pronunciation are not taught separately, and this has been found to pose no relevant difficulties for the children. We do, however, provide special notes within daily lesson plans, which outline areas where you may want to adapt to your own regional pronunciation.

High frequency (common) words and irregular words

Decodable common words are included for reading and spelling throughout *Phonics Bug*. Common words that are non-decodable at a certain point in the programme are taught as ‘irregular words’ within the Language Sessions (see below), although *Phonics Bug* approaches ‘irregular’ words with the premise that almost all words can be phonically decoded to some extent. Children are encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to help them decode a word as far as they can, while you can point out and talk through the irregular aspect to help them to read the word.

Irregular words are introduced into the programme on the basis of their degree of frequency in the English language, and also match the ‘tricky words’ within *Letters and Sounds*. You may want to introduce additional irregular words as deemed necessary by the content of your particular reading schemes. You may also want to practise the irregular words throughout the school day.

The following chart shows the *Phonics Bug* progression in common words (decodable and non-decodable) in Reception (Primary 1).

Phase	Unit	Decodable words	Non-decodable words (Irregular words)
2	1	at, as	
	2	an, it, in, is, dad	
	3	can, on, not, got	and, to
	4	mum, up, get	the, no, go
	5	had, back, his, big, him, if, of, off, but	I, into
3	6	will	me, be
	7	–	he, my, by
	8	that, this, then, them, with	they, she
	9	look, see, too	we, are
	10	for, now, down	you, her
	11	–	all, was
4	12	went, from, children, just, help	said, have, like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what

Language Sessions

Language Sessions occur at the end of each Unit. These Sessions combine the teaching of irregular words with using words in the context of captions and sentences. The acquisition of skills for reading single words is only part of the reading process. To read with fluency and comprehension, children need to apply and develop the skills taught during the synthetic phonics teaching element of the programme. The Language Sessions serve to consolidate the teaching of reading and spelling in the Phoneme Sessions, and promote early comprehension skills.

Comprehension is not an end product. It is a process which occurs during active interaction between the reader and the text. In the *Phonics Bug* Language Sessions, a progressive programme of text-related directed activities has been assembled to enable children to progress from single-word reading to reading intelligently to grasp meaning from the text.

While there are no new grapheme–phoneme correspondences in Phase 4, it is important that children learn to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants and read more decodable and non-decodable common words. For this reason there are three (rather than one) Language Sessions in Unit 12 (Phase 4).

Guided independent work

Although *Phonics Bug* is delivered through teacher-modelling and rehearsal with the whole class, there are also resources for guided independent work. These can be tailored to meet the needs of an individual or groups and to give you a chance to work with children who may need more help to consolidate their learning. The resources consist of one photocopy master (PCM) for each Session, plus up to five pupil games per Unit.

Introduction of graded readers

Phonics Bug is supported by decodable readers which match the order of phoneme introduction.

When the children have completed the first two Units of *Phonics Bug*, they will have acquired a sufficient number of grapheme–phoneme correspondences to start reading their own books. This should be a motivating and enjoyable experience for them.

There are books to match each Unit of the teaching programme and these help children to practise and consolidate their learning at each stage.

Before, during and after the introduction of the *Phonics Bug* readers, children should be exposed constantly to a rich and varied diet of book experiences to ensure their enthusiasm for reading is nurtured, their comprehension skills are being developed, and their speaking and listening skills are extended.

Teaching synthetic phonics using *Phonics Bug*

Speaking and listening skills

Our strategy of teacher-modelling and rehearsal for teaching reading and spelling provides opportunities for pupils to be both spectators and participants. As spectators, they listen to words and structures; as participants, they try them out. While sharing pupil magnetic boards, working in pairs or small groups, pupils respond to each other, learning to adjust the language to suit the situation and the response of partners. Using graded readers, the teacher can encourage pupils to express opinions and explore, develop and sustain ideas through talk and discussion.

Teaching sequence

Phonics Bug is structured with Phoneme Sessions and Language Sessions (see page 7 for the breakdown of the 'Teaching Elements' in both these Session types). This structure fully supports the daily phonic teaching sequence recommended by the Primary National Strategy in the renewed Framework. The following diagram illustrates the alignment of the *Phonics Bug* lesson structure to this teaching sequence.

Recommended Teaching Sequence	<i>Phonics Bug</i> Lesson Structure
Introduce ▼	Learning intentions and outcomes for the day are discussed at the start of the lesson. The daily lesson plans in this guide provide an overview of these learning intentions/outcomes.
Revisit and Review ▼	Every Phoneme Session begins with Revision to review previous learning (with the exception of Unit 1). In Reception (P1) the Revision is of the previous day's learning. In Key Stage 1 (P2&3) the Revision is sometimes a review of previous learning which links with the planned teaching for that day.
Teach ▼	Every Phoneme and Language Session is composed of Teaching Elements (e.g. Sounds, Reading, Spelling etc) which are easily navigated to structure the new phonic teaching. The teaching of grapheme-phoneme correspondences and high-frequency (common) words is covered.
Practise ▼	Practise opportunities are available in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Follow-up' parts of the lessons • Unit-linked pupil games • Unit-linked photocopy masters • 'Free-teaching' within the software's Magnetic Board
Apply ▼	Language Sessions provide opportunities to apply developing phonic skills to the reading, spelling and writing of captions and sentences. This application also covers Irregular (non-decodable) common words. In addition the linked decodable readers allow regular application of children's phonic skills, from as early as Unit 2 of <i>Phonics Bug</i> .
Assess Learning	Assessment guidance and materials provided within this guide and in the software enable ongoing formative assessment during the daily lessons and summative assessment at regular periods through the programme.

Programme structure

Unit structure

The following table shows what is covered in each of Units 1–12 of *Phonics Bug* and relates the content to the 'Phases' of progression recommended by the Primary National Strategy in *Guidance for practitioners and teachers on progression and pace in the teaching of phonics* [September 2006]. (See also the section '*Phonics Bug* and the Phases of Progression' on page 7.) The Unit structure of *Phonics Bug* also matches exactly the phoneme order recommended by the DfES in *Letters and Sounds* (2007).

- Each of the 12 Units represents a group of letters.
- Each phoneme within a group is introduced in one Phoneme Session, and each Unit concludes with a Language Session, which includes the teaching of associated irregular words.

Phase	Unit	Focus	Irregular words
2	1	s a t p	
	2	i n m d	
	3	g o c k	and, to
	4	ck e u r	the, no, go
	5	h b f, ff l, ll ss	l, into
3	6	j v w x	me, be
	7	y z, zz qu	he, my, by
	8	ch sh th ng	they, she
	9	ai ee igh oa oo (long) oo (short)	we, are
4	10	ar or ur ow oi	you, her
	11	ear air ure er	all, was
	12	Adjacent consonants (cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc)	said, have, like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what

(See page 39 for a table showing what is covered in each of Units 13–30 of *Phonics Bug*.)

Teaching synthetic phonics using *Phonics Bug*

Session structure

The following table illustrates the breakdown of Teaching Elements in Phoneme and Language Sessions.

- Every Phoneme and Language Session is composed of the same Teaching Elements (with the exception of Unit 1).
- Each Phoneme Session starts with Revision to review previous learning (with the exception of Unit 1).
- Each Lesson within the Phoneme Session starts by introducing the new letter sound for the day, sometimes using a fun video clip. Children examine Asset bank words in order to highlight the new grapheme in beginning, middle or end positions. Some Asset bank words are beyond the decodable experience of the children at this point and so are not intended for blending and reading; those that are will appear for blending in the reading part of the Lesson.

Phoneme Session

<i>Teaching Element</i>	<i>Description</i>
Alphabet song	Sing the Alphabet song
Revision	
Letters and Sounds	Quick-fire practice of previously taught phonemes
Reading	Children practise reading words composed of previously taught phonemes
Writing and Spelling	Children practise spelling and letter formation using previously taught graphemes and words
Lesson	
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Discuss learning intentions and outcomes for the day</i>
Sounds	Children are introduced to new grapheme with corresponding phoneme, highlighting its position in words from the Asset bank
Reading	Children blend phonemes for reading words
Spelling	Children segment words for spelling
Writing	Children form letters to cement letter–name correspondence
Follow-up	Children are introduced to guided independent work, consolidating any teaching from Lesson
<i>Plenary</i>	<i>Discuss learning outcomes</i>
Alphabet song	Sing the Alphabet song

Language Session

<i>Teaching Element</i>	<i>Description</i>
Alphabet song	Sing the Alphabet song
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Discuss learning intentions and outcomes for the day</i>
Irregular	
Reading	Children read irregular word(s)
Spelling	Children spell irregular word(s)
Lesson	
Reading	Children read captions and sentences
Spelling	Children spell captions and sentences
Writing	Children write captions and sentences
Follow-up	Basic comprehension and introduction of guided independent work
<i>Plenary</i>	<i>Discuss learning outcomes</i>
Alphabet song	Sing the Alphabet song

Phonics Bug and the Phases of Progression

Phonics Bug provides inbuilt formative and summative assessment that follows closely the phonic phases of progression outlined in the renewed Primary Framework (2006). Phase 2 and early Phase 3 skills are examined by Assessments 1 to 3, where the children's knowledge of letter–sound correspondences is tested. The letter order used in this programme follows that recommended by the DfES in *Letters and Sounds* (2007), following a sequence that early on makes the reading of a large number of CVC words possible. In *Phonics Bug*, children proceed from Phase 2 to the end of Phase 3 very rapidly. The skills for these phases are tested in Assessment 4, where the children are asked to read and spell CVC nonwords. Phase 3 skills are assessed in Assessment 5, where the ability to read and spell some consonant and vowel digraphs and trigraphs is tested. Phase 4 skills (adjacent consonants) are assessed in Assessment 6, where children are asked to read and spell CCVC, CVCC and CCVCC nonwords. We have also provided catch-up activities for slower-learning children, to follow on from these assessments.

How to run the programme

Duration of programme

Units 1–12 support the suggested timetable for teaching Phases 2, 3 and 4 within the first year of school – for example, teaching four letters per week in Phase 2. The Units can take as little as 16 weeks to complete, but you should of course use your professional judgement to moderate the pace in accordance with the needs of the class. You may, for example, want to break for a week or so after you have finished introducing the single-letter phonemes, and use this time for assessment and catching up.

It is envisaged that the Sessions will be delivered on consecutive days. This will not always be possible or sensible, but you should try to maintain the brisk pace of lesson delivery as far as possible in order to achieve maximum benefits from the programme.

Daily time allocation

The Whole Class Sessions should take about 40–45 minutes to deliver. The independent work will take around another 10 minutes. The independent work does not necessarily have to be done immediately after the Whole Class Session, but it should be completed before the next Session if possible. You will notice that Unit 1 contains less content than the other Units, but it is still recommended to allow around 40 minutes for these Sessions as the children will need more support when first introduced to the programme.

Classroom organisation

It is recommended that the children are kept together for the Daily Sessions in spite of different ability levels. This has been shown to foster a sense of social inclusion and boost the performance of the children who are progressing more slowly. However, you will need to differentiate your questioning within the lesson to ensure that all children are fully engaged. Some of the follow-up activities are provided at different levels to help support different ability levels. See page 37 for further information on how to form a nurture/needs group for slower learners.

Classroom management of the magnetic letters

The children should be provided with small magnetic letter boards and sets of magnetic letters. One board between two is ideal. Paired work is useful because it enables the children to explain what they are doing and hear explanations from others, and in so doing consolidate the learning. (Additional magnetic letters will be required when double letters are being practised.)

The boards should be available on the children's tables, and the children should return to their seats when the Spelling Teaching Element is reached during the Daily Phoneme Session to build the target words themselves on their boards. As children become more advanced they will begin to spell using pencil and paper instead of magnetic letters.

You may find it useful to place the photocopiable alphabetic overlay provided in this guide (page 107) on top of each of the boards. The magnetic letters should be placed in their correct positions on the overlay at the end of each Session, thereby consolidating knowledge of the alphabet and making it easier to see if any letters are missing.