Systematic Synthetic Phonics
for reading, spelling and writing

Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills

*"The online **Phonics International** programme provides a fully comprehensive range of systematic synthetic phonics material for people internationally to use in a diverse range of circumstances – but not everyone needs or requires the extensive range of resources available in the full programme. Whilst the full programme is ideally suited for schools and teachers, feedback has suggested that parents and tutors would prefer something more structured and prescriptive. Whatever the context, it is the same English alphabetic code knowledge and three core skills for reading, spelling and handwriting that need to be taught and learned. These highly practical, all-in-one 'teaching and learning eBooks' have been produced in response to that feedback."*

Debbie Hepplewhite

Author: Debbie Hepplewhite MBE FRSA

This series of 8 'Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills' books can be used as 'stand alone' eBooks:

| Unit 1 | Unit 2a | Unit 2b | Unit 3 | Unit 4 | Unit 5 | Unit 6a | Unit 6b |

Please note that further **Phonics International** and **Early Years Starter Package online** resources can be used to *supplement*, or *complement*, or *extend* the eBooks if required or desired – either viewed online or printed as pdfs.
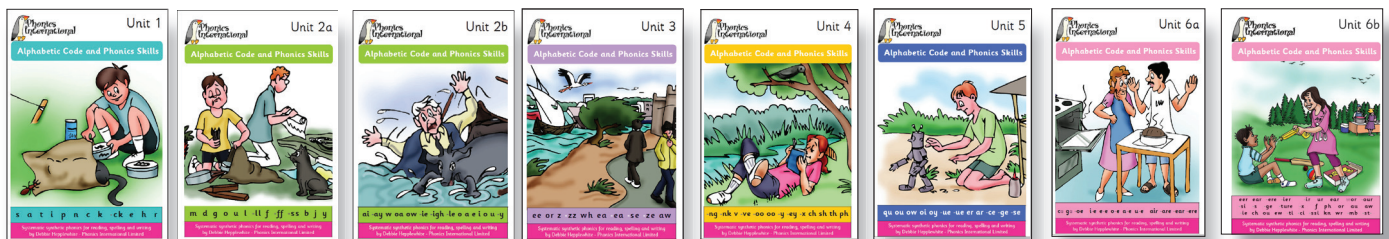
The 8 '**Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills**' eBooks are based on the **organisation** (*colour-coded* 'Units' of work) and **structure** (*same order* of systematically introducing the *letter/s-sound correspondences* of the English *alphabetic code*) of the online **Phonics International** programme using *especially selected resources* from Units 1 to 6 of the **Phonics International** programme and the Phonics International **Early Years Starter Package**. The 8 eBooks *systematically* introduce **ALL the sounds of English** (44+ phonemes). The sounds of English speech can be heard via video clips at www.phonicsinternational.com where you will find other very useful free resources and guidance. Free full **Alphabetic Code Charts** can be downloaded at www.alphabeticcodecharts.com as preferred - free additional handwriting and alphabet resources and video guidance are provided at: www.debbiehepplewhitehandwriting.com

Cumulative and full Alphabetic Code Charts and information about the code are provided within the 8 eBooks:

Unit 1   Unit 2a   Unit 2b   Unit 3

Unit 4   Unit 5   Unit 6a   Unit 6b

The 8 '**Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills**' eBooks are compiled to establish a routine '*Teaching and Learning Cycle*' from **code** level to **word** level, extending to **sentence** and **text** level, for the 115+ letter/s-sound correspondences introduced '*systematically*'. The graphemes (letters and letter groups) introduced are listed on the front cover of each book:

s a t i p n c k -ck e h r

-ng -nk v -ve -oo oo -y -ey -x ch sh th ph
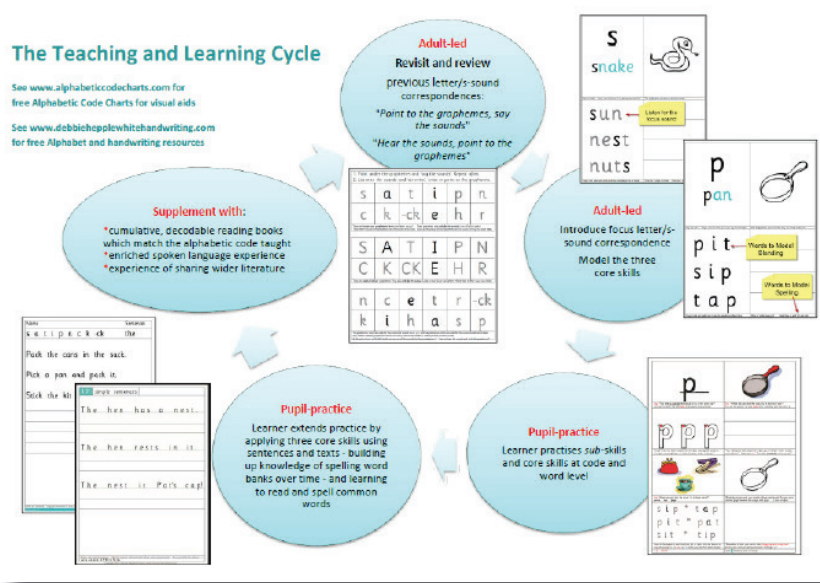
m d g o u l -ll f -ff -ss b j y

qu ou ow oi oy -ue -ue er ar -ce -ge -se

ai -ay w oa ow -ie -igh -le o a e i o u -y

c g o -oe i-e e-e o-e a-e u-e air -are -ear -ere

ee or z -zz wh ea -ea -se -ze aw

eer ear -ere ier ir ur ear wor our -si -s -ge -ture x f ph or au aw -ie ch ou ew -ti ci ssi kn wr -mb -st

The Teaching and Learning Cycle

See www.alphabeticcodecharts.com for free Alphabetic Code Charts for visual aids

See www.debbiehepplewhitehandwriting.com for free Alphabet and handwriting resources

Adult-led
Revisit and review previous letter/s-sound correspondences:
"Point to the graphemes, say the sounds"
"Hear the sounds, point to the graphemes"

Adult-led
Introduce focus letter/s-sound correspondence
Model the three core skills

Pupil-practice
Learner practises sub-skills and core skills at code and word level

Pupil-practice
Learner extends practice by applying three core skills using sentences and texts - building up knowledge of spelling word banks over time - and learning to read and spell common words

Supplement with:
*cumulative, decodable reading books which match the alphabetic code taught
*enriched spoken language experience
*experience of sharing wider literature

Adult-led
'Revisit and review' code and *sub*-skills

Adult-led
'Introduce' new code and model phonics skills

Learner-practice
'Practice' *sub*-skills and three core skills

Learner-practice
'Apply' code knowledge and skills to sentences

Learner-practice
'Extend' practice to texts with additional code and common words

Constantly revise the letter/s-sound correspondences cumulatively in the 8 *'Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills'* eBooks:

Point under the graphemes and 'say the sounds'. Listen to the sounds and 'air-write', write or point to the graphemes.

| Unit 1 | Unit 2a | Unit 2b | Unit 3 | Unit 4 | Unit 5 | Unit 6a | Unit 6b |

Common words and **tricky** words and many **further letter/s-sound correspondences** are introduced steadily and '*incidentally*' within the sentences and texts (for example, double consonant letters such as '**bb**' and '**tt**' and rare or unusual letter/s-sound correspondences such as '**ie**' in 'fr**ie**nds', '**eo**' in 'p**eo**ple' and '**eir**' in 'th**eir**').

The supporting adult can teach and model **within** the books, and teach based on the content of the books, and the learners can practise and **have ownership** of the books, sharing the content and their progress with parents and guardians – informing them fully and routinely.

Please note that when English is a new language, **parents may learn alongside their child or children**! The supporting adult, however, needs to understand and speak in the English language.

Learn to read and spell lists of words provided in the Unit 3, Unit 5 and Unit 6b eBooks:

Common words which may have unusual 'code' or the 'code' has not yet been taught!

Capital and lower case letters are introduced *as code for* the sounds and as 'The Alphabet' with various resources:
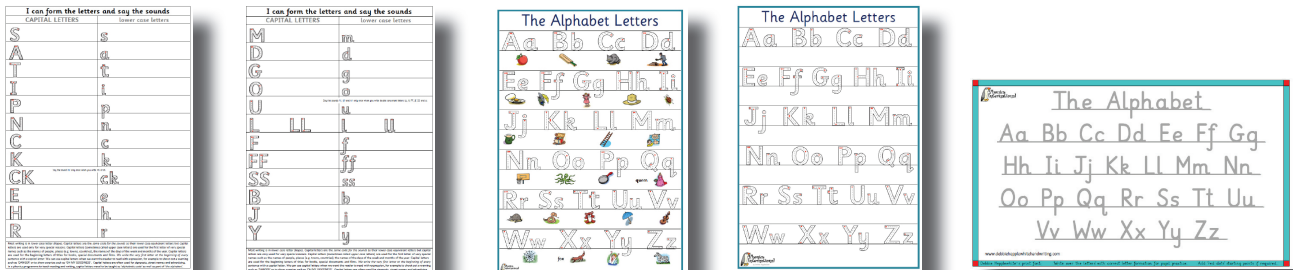
Guidance for fully joined
handwriting is in Unit 6b

Summary of Content:

- Selection of core resources from Units 1 to 6 of *Phonics International* and the PI *Early Years Starter Package*
- Additional purpose-designed resources
- Supporting adult guidance throughout the 8 eBooks and internet links provided for free Alphabetic Code Charts, '*Hear the Sounds*' video and free handwriting, alphabet and other useful resources.

Pace:

The pace of introducing the lessons in the 8 '**Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills**' eBooks will depend entirely on the age, stage and needs of the individual learner, or group, or class, and the frequency and duration of lessons.

The eBooks are useful in a large range of contexts because it is the **same alphabetic code knowledge and skills** that need to be taught and learned **regardless of the circumstances and age of the learner**. Thus, there is no definitive answer to the 'pace' of using the books and delivering and practising the lessons. The eBooks may last two, three or four years in some contexts such as **multilingual** families and/or for younger learners, and a much shorter time in other contexts**.**

An example of shared use of the 'Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills' eBooks:

Sharing the work within the eBooks in a tutoring situation: The learner may *'revisit and review'* the **say the sounds** sub-skills resource followed by the tutor *'introducing'* the new letter/s-sound correspondence and *'modelling'* the sub-skills and core skills. Then the learner may *'practise'* using the **multi-skills activity sheet** – and possibly *'apply'* the new learning to the **simple sentences** if time allows. The **sentences/text** resource could then provide *'extension'* work to be practised, at first, under the supervision of the supporting adult/parent in the home as 'homework'. The parent/tutor can supervise the learner **re-reading** all or some of the words and sentences at the beginning of the next full lesson as part of the *'revisit and review'* process before introducing the next letter/s-sound correspondence.

Underpinning rationale of *Phonics International* and the 8 'Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills' eBooks:

- The **Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles** (based on research, leading-edge practice and extensive experience)

- The **Simple View of Reading** (recommended by the UK government in 2006 following the independent Rose Review)

- The **Teaching and Learning Cycle** (a process undertaken for every letter/s-sound correspondence introduced)

The Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles

Teach the **alphabetic code knowledge** (the relationship, or links, between the smallest sounds of speech and the letters or letter groups) by **systematically** introducing the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code and teach that the code is **reversible**: **print-to-sound** for **decoding** and **sound-to-print** for **encoding**. [Debbie encourages **incidental** teaching of the letter/s-sound correspondences **in addition** to the systematic introduction – *as required*.]

Model how to put the letter/s-sound correspondences introduced (the alphabetic code knowledge) **to immediate use** with **cumulative** real written and spoken words, sentences and texts teaching the **three core skills** of:

1. **Decoding** (reading):
    - i)   Scan the printed word from left to right to recognise any *letter groups*.
    - ii)   Then synthesise the word - that is, say the sounds for the letters and letter groups all through the printed word and *blend* the sounds to 'hear', or 'discern', the target word.
    - iii)   Modify the pronunciation of the word to sound like the actual spoken word if necessary.
2. **Encoding** (spelling):
    - i)   Orally *segment* (split up) all through the spoken word to identify the phonemes (sounds)
    - ii)   Allot graphemes (letters and letter groups) as the correct code for the identified sounds.
3. **Handwriting**:
    - i)   Learn to write the 26 lower case letters and the 26 upper case (capital) letters of the alphabet correctly (starting points and direction of formation, position on writing line, relative sizes).
    - ii)   Hold the writing implement with the tripod grip.

Emphasis is on *sounds* at first and *not letter names*. Teach *letter names* and *alphabetical order* by chanting the alphabet or singing an alphabet song. Never use letter names for reading activities. Avoid spelling with letter names when learners are in the *earliest stages* of learning to spell. Teach that conveying a spelling from one person to another by letter names is a *convention to convey precise spelling* – **not** the spelling **skill** – and that the spelling **skill** is *oral segmenting* and knowing which *spelling alternatives* (the letters and letter groups) to allot for the sounds. *Raise awareness* of the need to learn **spelling word banks** where words are spelt with the same sounds and spelling alternatives. Create spelling word banks, and provide spelling word banks, with **activities** to help embed the words in memory such as linking the word banks to '*story-themes*' and '*illustrations*,' and '*acting out*' the words in a word bank. *Avoid* asking learners to read **independently** books which lead to them **guessing** many of the words from *multi-cueing strategies* such as picture clues, initial letter prompts and the context of the sentence.

Learner-practice based on the **Synthetic Phonics Teaching Principles:**

*Practise the **sub**-skills of the **three core skills** *repeatedly*: '*See the letter/s, say the sounds*' and '*Hear the sounds, point to, or write, or air-write the letters and letter groups*'. [See the guidance for the *sub*-skills of the three core skills at the back of the **Unit 1** and **Unit 4** eBooks, also provided on the 'Free Resources' page at www.phonicsinternational.com]

*Revisit previous **code** (letters and letter groups as code for specific sounds), and re-visit the words, plain sentences and texts **frequently** to embed learning and increase fluency [content and routines provided in the *'Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills'* eBooks].
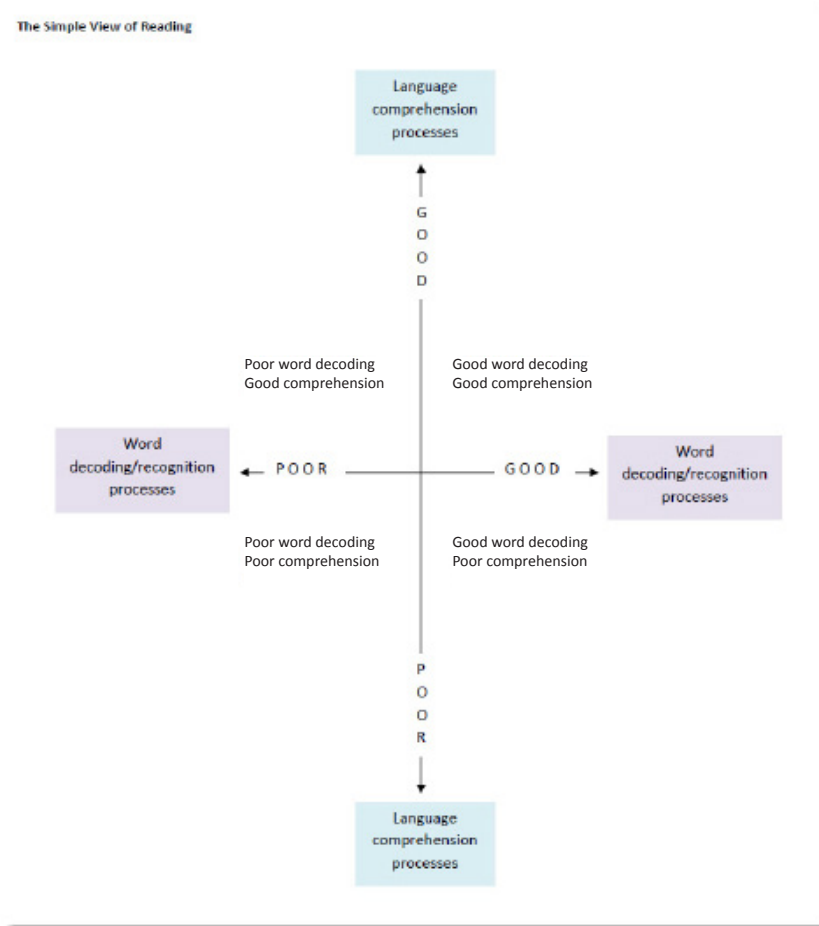
*Respond to regular parent/tutor-led dictation from letter level, to letter groups, to words, to sentences as appropriate, and undertake **self-dictation** exercises [learner *re-reads* sentences, *holds them in memory* and *writes them* on paper with writing lines using the **'simple sentences'** and **'sentences'** resources from the *'Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills'* eBooks].

*Practise blending, segmenting and handwriting skills with *cumulative*, decodable words, sentences, plain texts and reading books which match the level of alphabetic code knowledge taught to date, when being asked to do exercises mainly *independently*.

*Pull words out of **cumulative texts** [the **'simple sentences'** and **'sentences'** resources from the '**Alphabetic Code and Phonics Skills**' eBooks] to create *spelling word banks* (words with the same letter/s-sound correspondences). Add further words if required. *Draw illustrations* to help embed the word lists in memory. Practise memory games and *link words to pictures and story themes, and provide 'acting out' activities for the bank of words* to help re-call. **Note specific words with very unusual and rare spellings**.

The Simple View of Reading

The *Simple View of Reading* diagram illustrates the **two main processes** that underpin '**being a reader**' and helps us to understand the reader's *reading profile*: To be a reader you need the ability to **decode** the printed words (What **ARE** the words?) and the language comprehension to *understand* the words that have been decoded (What do the words **MEAN**?). To gain meaning from the words that have been decoded, the reader must be able to understand the language at a **SPOKEN** level. Teachers and parents need to teach *explicitly* the **knowledge** of the English *alphabetic code* and the technical **phonics skill** to decode the words and, at the same time, **develop the learner's spoken language** and **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Masses of **TALK** and access to a wide range of **BOOKS** hugely enhances the learner's capacity to become a good reader:

The Simple View of Reading

Language comprehension processes

G
O
O
D

Poor word decoding
Good comprehension

Good word decoding
Good comprehension

Word decoding/recognition processes ← POOR ——— GOOD → Word decoding/recognition processes

Poor word decoding
Poor comprehension

Good word decoding
Poor comprehension

P
O
O
R

Language comprehension processes

Original concept: Gough and Tunmer (1986); model recommended by Sir Jim Rose (*Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading Final Report, March 2006*); model adopted by UK government (2006) as a *'useful conceptual framework'*.

For the diagram of the **Simple View of Reading** and the **Simple View of Writing**, see:
http://www.phonicsinternational.com/The_Simple_View_of_Reading_model.pdf