



YEAR 1 PHONICS & READING

**YEAR 1
2025 - 2026**

AIMS

- To understand how phonics and reading are taught at Bessemer and across the Gem Federation
- Explain the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check
- Share ideas and resources which you can use to support your child at home

WHAT IS PHONICS?

- The alphabet contains only 26 letters. Spoken English uses about 42 **sounds**. We call these **phonemes**.
- These phonemes are represented by letters (graphemes). In other words, a sound can be represented by a letter (e.g. 's' or 'h') or a group of letters (e.g. 'sh' or 'ear')
- Once children begin learning sounds, they are used quickly to read and spell words.

PHONICS TERMS

- Phoneme (sound)
- Grapheme (letter formation) e.g. sh
- Segmenting (breaking word into sounds)
- Blending (putting sounds together to make words)

SOME TERMINOLOGY

Digraph- 2 letters making one sound cow the children should say this as c-ow and not c-o-w

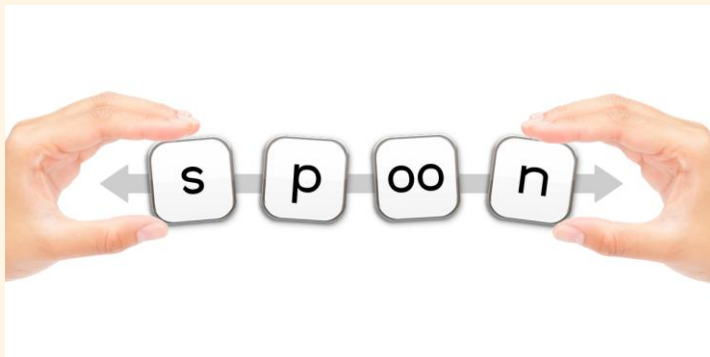
Trigraphs- 3 letters making one sound night the children should say this as n-igh-t and not n-i-g-h-t which does not sound like night.

Split digraphs- 2 vowels with a consonant in between. Sometimes this can be known as the magic e... spine - i_e home - o_e cube - u_e

Encourage your child to use their knowledge of sounds to work out the words when reading and writing.

HOW WE TEACH PHONICS

- Children have a 20 minute phonics lesson everyday.
- Children are taught to read by breaking down words 'graphemes' into separate sounds or 'phonemes'.
- They are then taught how to blend these sounds together to hear and read the whole word.



PHONICS IS TAUGHT IN PHASES:

Phase 2 Sound Mat

Aa 	Bb 	Cc 	Dd 	Ee 	Ff 	Gg 
Hh 	Ii 	Jj 	Kk 	Ll 	Mm 	Nn 
Oo 	Pp 	Qu 	Rr 	Ss 	Tt 	Uu 
Vv 	Ww 	Xx 	Yy 	Zz 		

Phase 3 Sound Mat

ch 	sh 	th 	ng 	ai 	ee 	igh 
oa 	oo 	oo 	ar 	or 	ur 	ow 
oi 	ear 	air 	er 	ow 		

Phase 5 Sound Mat

ay 	ou 	ie 	ea 	oy 	ir 	ue 
ue 	aw 	wh 	ph 	ew 	ew 	oe 
au 	ey 	ure 	a-e 	e-e 	i-e 	o-e 
u-e 	u-e 					

READING STRATEGIES

**YEAR I
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Eagle Eye

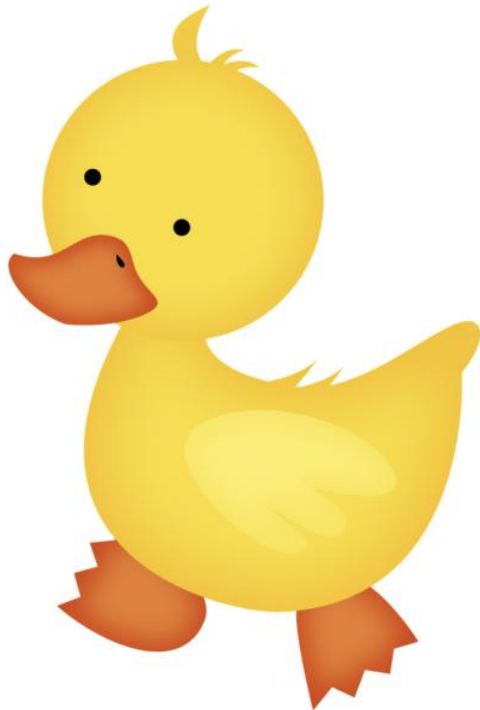


Can you spot your tricky words?

Can you look for your tricky
sounds?

Can you see something in the
picture that starts with that
sound or letter?

Duck Hands



Can you use your duck hands
and eat your sounds?

What do you think the word is?

Don't forget to use your eagle
eye first as this can help you
spot those tricky digraphs and
trigraphs!

Build-it Beaver

Use your Build it Bever to help you
build the words.

Once you have found the tricky
sounds in the word, Say one sound
at a time and 'build it' on to the
last.

c-l
cl-ow
clow-n
clown



Chunky Monkey



Break a longer word into smaller
chunks!

This will make it easier to
sound them out and then you
can put the chunks back
together.

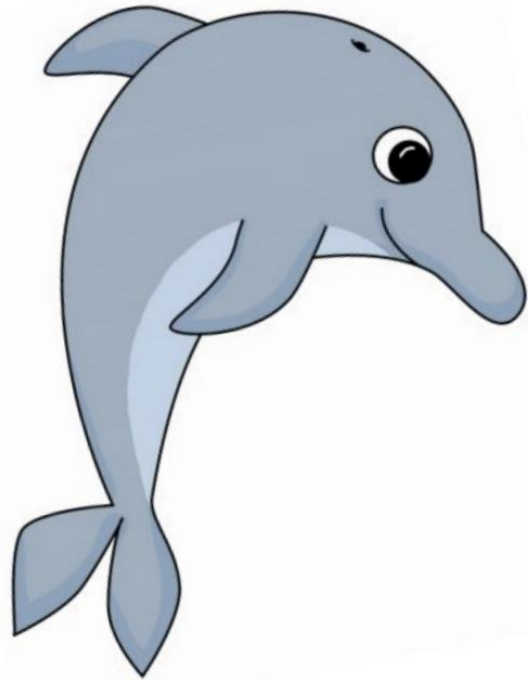
Trying Lion



Can you reread your sentence
to check it makes sense?

If it doesn't sound right go
back and try a different reading
strategy.

FLIPPY the Dolphin



If the short vowel sound
doesn't make sense try the
long vowel sound
instead.

Skippy the Kangaroo

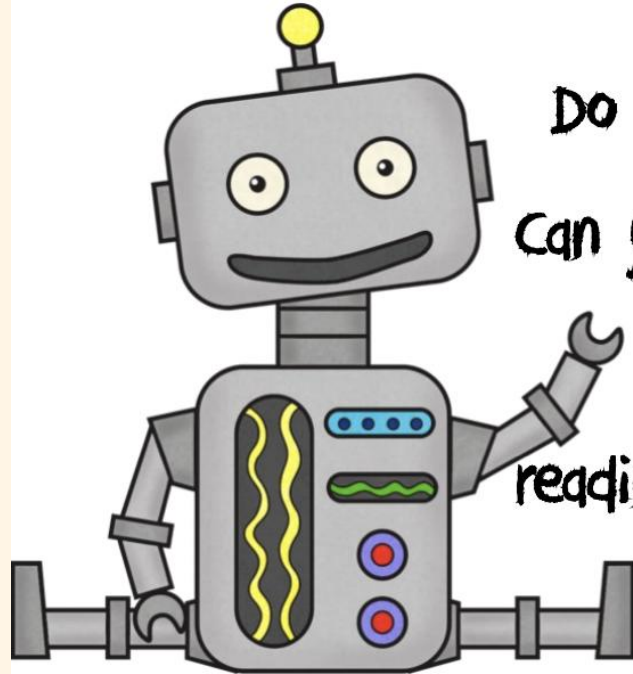


Skip the tricky word and then
read to the end of the
sentence. . .

Then jump on back and try
again.

Rocky Robots

PLLEEASEE



Do not read with a robot voice!

Can you try and read with fluency.

Oh and don't forget the
reading strategy- dot the giraffe!

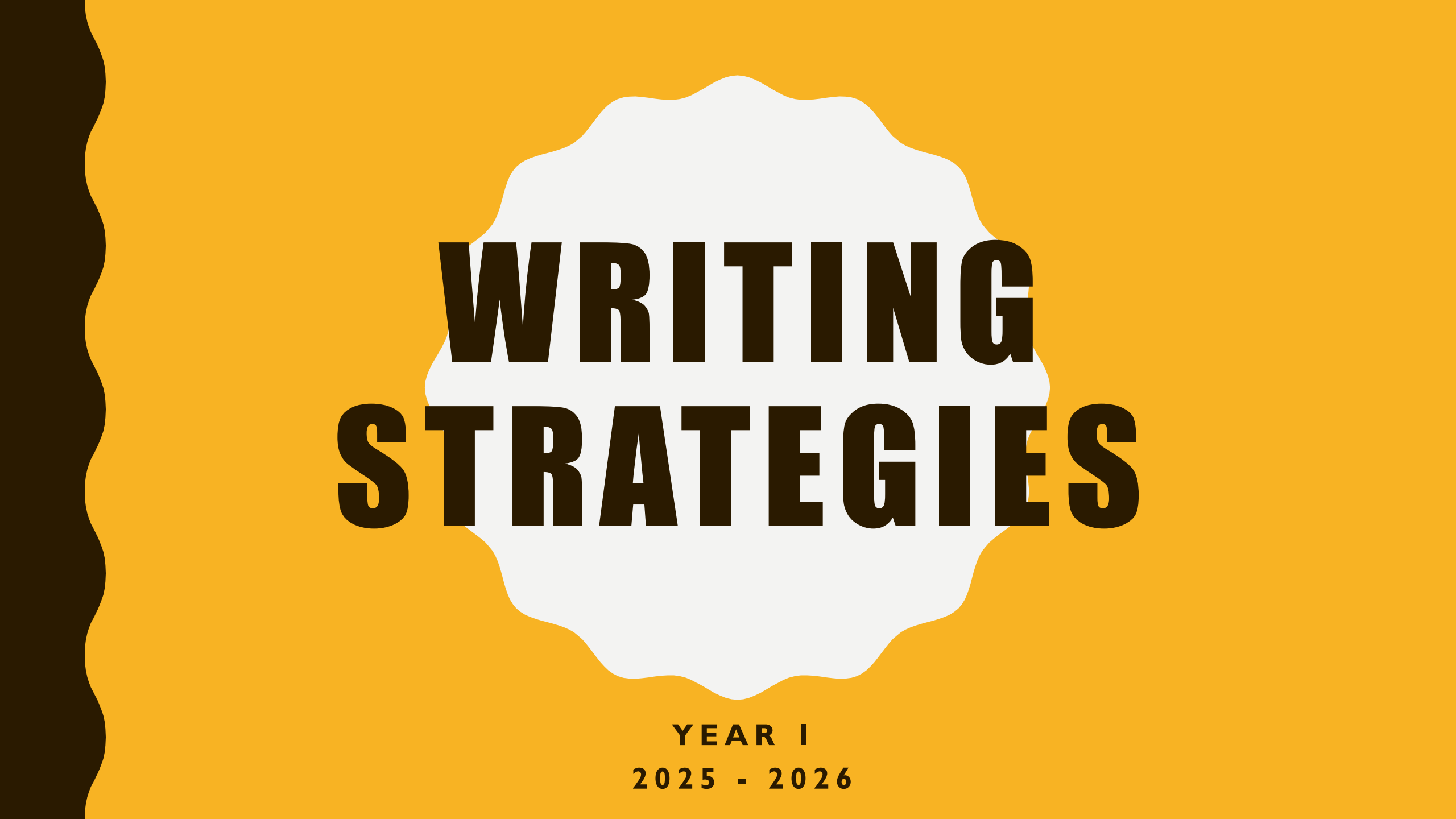


Dot the giraffe

Look at the punctuation and
read with

EXPRESSION

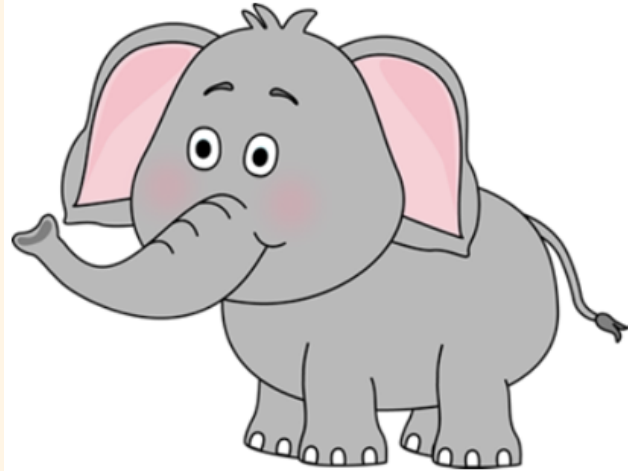
. ? !



WRITING STRATEGIES

**YEAR I
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Stompy Elephant



Get your fists
ready and stomp
the syllables in
the word,

el - e- phant
1 - 2 - 3

Stretchy Snake



Stretch out your words so
that you can hear your
sounds!

Snnnnnqqake..

Snake!

Freddy Frog



Get your fingers ready to
count your sounds!

r— di— n

3 sounds

rain

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME TO HELP YOUR CHILD TO READ AT HOME...

- Play 'I spy' using sounds as well as letter names, e.g. 'I spy something beginning with sh'.
- Create a sound box. Ask your child to find things around the house containing a certain sound. (They could draw pictures and write the words too)
- Sound sort- you write words and have your child read them and sort them into the different columns.
- Matching Rhymes- Give your child a word and ask them to write down rhyming words containing the same sounds.
- Segment words and have your child blend them back together
- [Play dough- Get your child to make words or sounds out of play dough.](#)
- Play Buried Treasure- sorting real words/ nonsense words
- Write your own alien words- child to read these/ sort them into their sound groups
- Continue reading at home with your child.

oi	coin	coil	ow	snow	crow
air	hair	chair	or	fork	cord
ear	tear	beard	ur	surf	turtle
ow	cow	clown	ure	cure	picture
ar	car	park	er	letter	ladder
ay	hay	spray	ng	king	tongue
ou	cloud	house	ch	cheese	lunch
ea	meat	peas	sh	ship	fish
aw	lawn	claw	th	thumb	cloth





PHONICS SCREENING CHECK

**YEAR 1
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WHAT IS THE PHONICS SCREENING CHECK?

- It is a statutory phonics screening that every Year 1 child will be taking in June.
- The check consists of a list of 40 words.
- Half of these are real words and half nonsense words.
- The nonsense words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien. This makes the check a bit more fun, and it also provides the children with a context for the nonsense word which is different to any existing vocabulary they may have.

It is not a reading test!

- The check is very similar to tasks the children already complete during phonics lessons and it will be done with the class teacher.
- The focus of the check is to ensure that all children can read by the end of Year 2.
- The Year 1 screening (mid point) will provide evidence to help teachers plan for Year 2.

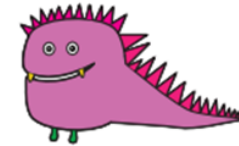
plug

sweep

soft

yards

vaw



meast



waib



zome



Why Pseudo Words/non- words / nonsense words / alien words?

Non-words are important to include as they can't be read using their vocabulary or from memory; they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess all children's ability to decode.

WHAT THE CHILDREN DO

- The check will take 4 to 9 minutes to complete.
- They will be asked to 'sound out' a word and blend the sounds together. e.g. d-o-g – dog. Sh-i-p - ship

The check will consist of 40 words and non-words. Children will be told if the word is a real or 'alien' word, with a corresponding alien image.

pab



vas



yon



shin

buzz

harp

third

ilt



HOW IT WILL TAKE PLACE

- Teachers will conduct all of the screening checks with the children in a quiet area of the school.
- The children are already familiar with this routine.
- Teachers are not allowed to tell children at the time of the check whether they have correctly sounded out and/ or blended the word.

THE RESULTS

- We will inform you of the results on your child's end of year report in the Summer.
- If your child's score falls below the national standard they will be supported and will complete the screening again in year 2.

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP...

- In school we are continually checking your children's phonic development within our approach to the assessment of reading. But there are a number of things that you can do to support early reading skill development at home.
- Let your child see you enjoying reading yourself – they are influenced by **you** and what **you value**!
- Immerse your child in a love of reading: share books and magazines with your child, take them to the library to choose books, read to them regularly,
- Make time for your child to read school books to you regularly. These are decodable and at their phonics level.
- Encourage them by pointing to the words and ask them about the story they are reading.

USE READING STRATEGIES

Encourage your child to spot the tricky sound (using eagle eyes) in the word first, before they read it.

Single sounds:

j a m
• • •

Digraphs :

c h i p
— • •

Trigraphs :

h a i r
• —

Split digraph:

s n a k e
• • —•

WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO TO HELP...

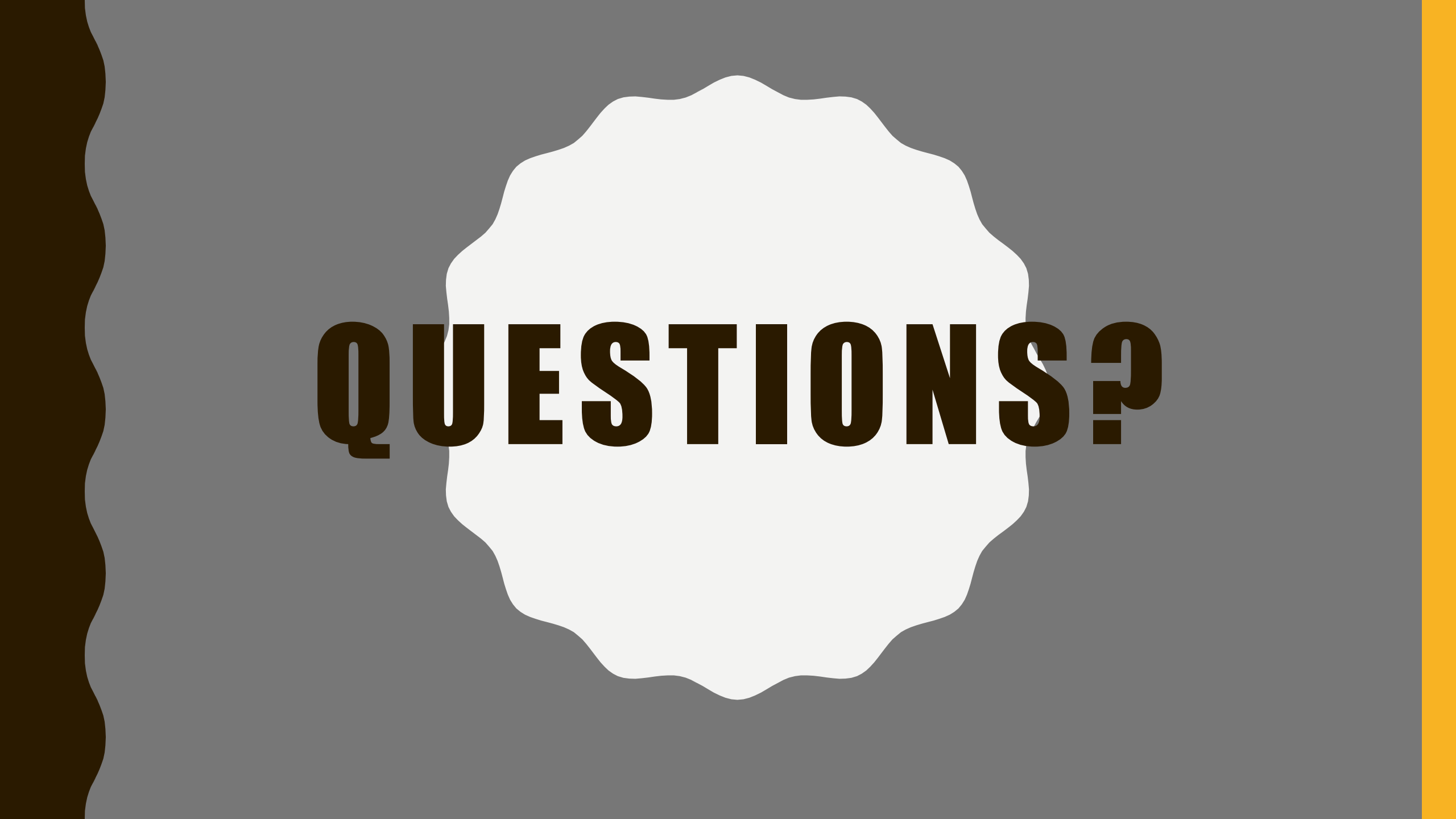
Children can practise their phonics by playing games online. They can choose phase 3, 4, or 5 e.g

- Buried Treasure
- Pop deck Pirates
- Dragons' den

Through Phonics Play

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>





QUESTIONS?