

EAL & NEW ARRIVALS · GRADES K–3

EAL Phonics Starter Pack

Sound-by-sound, with pictures

How EAL phonics differs

Standard phonics teaching assumes children know spoken English already — when you say the sound 'a', you can ask them to think of an APPLE. EAL learners may not yet know the word APPLE. This pack uses universally recognisable visual cues for each sound. The picture comes BEFORE the English word. The child learns: this picture → this English word → this sound → this letter.

Set 1 — Single letters (start here)

Letter	Sound	Picture	English word
s	/s/	■	snake
a	/a/	■	apple
t	/t/	■	tree
p	/p/	■	pig
i	/i/	■	insect
n	/n/	■	nose
m	/m/	■	moon
d	/d/	■	dog
g	/g/	■	goat
o	/o/	■	octopus
c	/k/	■	cat



Letter	Sound	Picture	English word
e	/e/	■	egg
u	/u/	■ ■	umbrella
r	/r/	■	rainbow
h	/h/	■	house
b	/b/	■	bee
f	/f/	■	fish
l	/l/	■	lion
v	/v/	■	van
w	/w/	■	water
y	/y/	■	yellow
z	/z/	■	zebra

Set 2 — Letter pairs (after Set 1 is solid)

Letters	Sound	Picture	English word
sh	/■/	■	shoe
ch	/t■/	■	chair
th	/θ/	■	thumb
ng	/■/	■	ring
ai	/e■/	■	train
ee	/i■/	■	tree
oa	/o■/	■	boat
oo	/u■/	■	moon
ar	/■r/	■	star
or	/■r/	■	corn
er	/■r/	■	sister



Sounds that don't exist in some languages

Some English sounds are difficult for speakers of certain languages because they don't exist in the L1: • /th/ as in 'three' — doesn't exist in most languages. Many EAL learners say 'tree' or 'free'. • /sh/ vs /s/ — Spanish speakers often merge these. • Long vs short vowels — Polish, Italian, Spanish speakers may not hear the difference. • /v/ vs /w/ — German speakers often swap these. Don't drill these endlessly — children develop the right pronunciation over time. Model the correct sound, but don't make children feel ashamed of accent.

Daily routine

10 MINUTES A DAY of structured phonics is more effective than 45 minutes once a week. With each new letter: 1. Show the picture cue 2. Say the English word 3. Isolate the first sound 4. Show the letter 5. Children copy the sound 3 times 6. Children write the letter 3 times 7. Find the letter in their name or in something around the room Review yesterday's letter at the start of every session. Repetition is everything.

