

You Can... **Plan a daily discrete lesson**

The latest guidance from the Primary National Strategy states that it is important to plan a daily discrete phonics lesson as part of a systematic programme for the teaching of phonics. This should be part of a rich literacy environment which provides plenty of opportunities for speaking and listening activities and explores the wonderful wealth of children's literature. Regardless of which phonics programme is used, teachers need to ensure that opportunities are provided for practice and over-learning of phonemes and applying them to reading and writing.

Thinking points

- It is important to have a clear structure to lessons that provides practice in hearing, saying, reading and writing the phonemes.
- Lessons should be short (about 15 to 20 minutes maximum), lively and interactive.
- Lessons should be daily, and opportunities for practice included at other times during the day and in other areas of the curriculum, as appropriate.
- Use multi-sensory techniques that include singing, actions, visual aids, and so on.
- Do children already know an alphabet rhyme or song? If so, can you make links to this?
- Include partner work to encourage maximum interaction amongst pupils and more opportunities to practise.
- Observe children carefully to pick up quickly any who need additional support.
- Can you provide follow-up activities that children can do at home in order to involve parents?

Tips, ideas and activities

- Start the lesson with a fun rhyme or song – an alphabet song is ideal, especially if you include actions and have a visual aid for each letter or a frieze.
- Introduce a new phoneme every day. The emphasis should be on teaching the 44 phonemes and their graphemes quickly so that children are able to apply these skills to their developing literacy skills.
- Each lesson should include revision of those phonemes already taught. This can be done quickly by pointing to letters on a chart and children saying the sounds.
- The use of alliterative phrases when teaching consonant and short vowel phonemes is helpful to reinforce the sounds. For example, for the consonant 'l': 'lick the lemon lolly'. This should be accompanied by an action to aid the memory.
- The order of teaching should be as follows:
 1. Say lots of words that contain the sound (to begin with, in the initial position) so that children can listen to it.
 2. Help them to say the sound, ensuring correct pronunciation.
 3. Read the grapheme that represents the sound.
 4. Finally, children should write the grapheme.This process helps children apply their phonic knowledge to reading and writing. For guidance, see the photocopyable generic lesson plan on page 56.
- Blending phonemes for reading and segmenting words into phonemes for spelling should begin as soon as children have learned a few phonemes. It is therefore important to introduce short vowel sounds early.