

## The No Nonsense Phonics Skills Programme

The **No Nonsense Phonics Skills** programme provides a content-rich body of work and highly practical guidance based on international summaries of research on reading. These include the instructional features described as the **Five Pillars of Literacy**: **1) phonemic awareness** (awareness of the smallest sounds in speech), **2) phonics** (teach the alphabetic code and phonics skills explicitly and systematically), **3) vocabulary enrichment** (teach new words explicitly), **4) fluency** (requires ample repetition and repeat reading), **5) language comprehension** (of spoken language and reading comprehension of how to interpret literature).

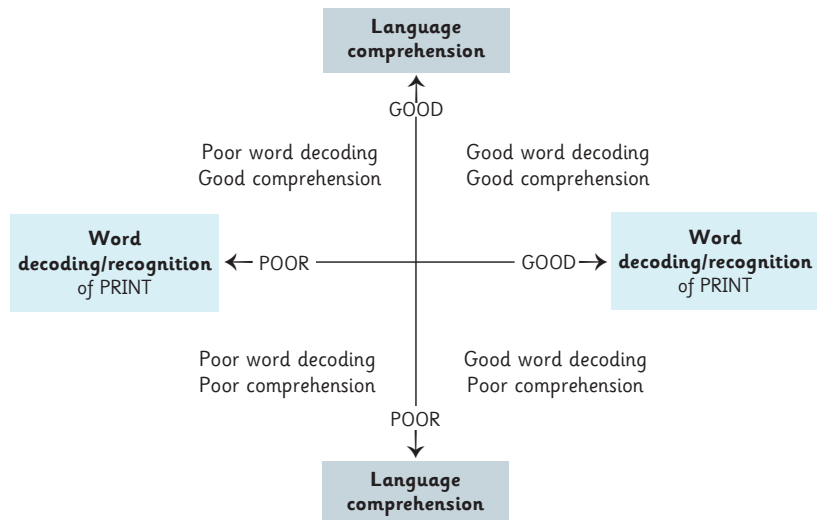
In addition, the **Simple View of Reading** model is important as it illustrates the relationship between the technical code knowledge and skills of **word decoding and word recognition** with the meaning-making of **language comprehension**. The diagram also enables teachers to consider learners' broad reading profiles.

### The Simple View of Reading

(Original concept: Gough and Tunmer 1986)

There are two main processes for being a 'reader' in the full sense:

1. Word decoding and word recognition:  
What **ARE** the words?
2. Language comprehension:  
What do the words **MEAN**?




**The Alphabet and the Alphabetic Code:** The spelling system of the English language has the most complex *Alphabetic Code* in the world. Teachers should introduce systematically the 44+ *phonemes* (smallest sounds) identifiable in speech and the large number of *graphemes* (letters and letter groups) that are code for the sounds. Teachers should also introduce the 26 capital letters and 26 lower case letters, and *alphabetical order*, of the Alphabet. To help distinguish between the alphabet and the alphabetic code, the information and purpose of each concept is most clearly provided via the visual aids of Alphabet Posters (which can also show letter formation) and Alphabetic Code Charts which list the phonemes and many spelling alternatives.

**Two-pronged systematic and incidental phonics teaching and learning:** Two-pronged phonics provision is a much more flexible approach than systematic phonics alone, and enables an earlier and greater understanding of English spelling for reading and writing – therefore increasing the likelihood of self-teaching and engagement, and phonics application in the wider curriculum. The two-pronged approach soon leads to flexible teachers and learners who understand the need to try *pronunciation alternatives* to achieve the target words when decoding new printed words, and who understand about the notion of multiple *spelling alternatives* for most sounds, and the need to be very attentive to which words are spelt with which spelling alternatives. This understanding is supported by the use of Alphabetic Code Charts. 'Spelling word bank' work is also embodied in this approach. Within the nine *No Nonsense Phonics Skills* books, the alphabetic code is built up in 'chunks', with accompanying guidance for the teacher.


New letter/s-sound correspondences in wider reading experiences can be explained with reference to 'the code' like this:

Josh



"In *your* names, *these* letters are code for the /sh/ sound."

Charlotte



"In *this* word, *these* letters are code for the /ai/ sound."

**The phonics exercise book:** Each learner requires a personal lined exercise book for class, group or individual activities to use alongside the nine *No Nonsense Phonics Skills* books. Where individual learners struggle to remember specific letter/s-sound correspondences, or letter formation, this information should be noted immediately by the teacher in the exercise book as a form of monitoring and to ensure extra personalised practice as required. The exercise books are also required for the spelling routine which is the last activity of the *Multi-skills Activities* pages. Use the exercise books routinely for any copy-writing of the *Mini Stories* and the more challenging 'self-dictation' (highly recommended) whereby learners read, reread, and then write each sentence of a story held in memory, in their best handwriting. Eventually, learners can write their own ideas for 'what happens next' in the *Mini Stories*, or write their own thoughts in response to the comprehension questions. Quick sketches are drawn in the books to illustrate the *Mini Stories* to deepen and evidence the learners' language comprehension.

# Teaching and Learning Cycle for Books 1–9

Books 1–8: Follow the order of activities as provided in each book.  
Book 9: The Multi-skills Activities pages are replaced with Spelling Word Bank activities.



## Session One

Teacher-led, whole class interactive:  
'revisit and review'  
with **Frieze Cards** on screen  
or hard copy cards



### Individual pupil revision:

- at code level with a **Say the Sounds** page
- at word level with cumulative word bank from a previous **Multi-skills Activities** page
- and/or at text level with previous **Mini Story**



### Teacher-led introduction of the new or focus letter/s-sound correspondence:

Use **Frieze Cards** on screen or hard copy cards

- Model the 'decoding' reading routine
- Model the 'encoding' spelling routine (with handwriting)
- Clarify the picture-words for the 'Phonemic awareness puzzle' of new **Multi-skills Activities** page

## Wall Display

- Giant Alphabetic Code Chart
- Giant Alphabet Poster
- Frieze Cards
- Say the Sounds Posters
- Word Posters

## Tabletop Support

- Mini Alphabetic Code Chart
- Mini Alphabet Poster

### At first, individual pupil practice:

'apply and extend' with **Mini Story** page

- Say the sounds and highlighted words at top
- Underline focus grapheme and note total
- Read story independently, circle unknown words

### Followed by, teacher with pupils:

- Re-read story together, discuss in full
- Instruct pupils in follow-up activities: e.g. copywrite, self-dictation, write 'what happens next', illustrate – option to label (in pupils' exercise books as necessary)
- Complete **Spelling Word Banks** and other activities as presented in the nine books



## Session Two

### Individual pupil revision:

- at code level with **Say the Sounds** page
- at word level with cumulative word bank from a previous **Multi-skills Activities** page
- and/or at text level with previous **Mini Story**



### Individual pupil practice at code and word level:

- Complete new **Multi-skills Activities** page (independently at first)

### Teacher together with pupils:

- Repeat all words in word bank: 1) sound and blend 2) say whole words
- Select words from bank to teach new vocabulary – note homophones

### Teacher-led:

- Teacher says aloud some words from word bank for the *spelling routine*. Pupils write spellings in exercise books (check all spellings at the time)



## Guidance for the Phonics Routines

**Learn the code:** Use the terminology “is code for” in preference to saying that letters “make sounds” or “say sounds” (they don’t). Learners may know the focus letter/s-sound correspondence already but will still benefit from all the phonics skills practice and vocabulary enrichment.

**Link letter formation with sounds:** Explain that capital letters are code for the same sounds as their lower case (equivalent) letters and they are used for special reasons such as the first letter of names and beginning sentences. Constantly reinforce the tripod pencil grip saying, “Let me help you...”. Encourage slow, very careful handwriting.



**Phonemic awareness puzzle:** Model how to say each picture-word very slowly and naturally to identify the focus sound at the beginning, within, or at the end of the word. The ‘odd one out’ is the picture-word that does not include the focus sound. Show learners how to put a cross next to it.

**Decoding:** The *reading routine* is print-to-sound. Model how to point under each grapheme as you say each sound then run your finger under the word, from left to right, as you say the word.

**Marking:** Engage pupils with a sense of their own learning. They sound out and tick **in pencil** the graphemes (letters and letter groups) they think they know. They also tick after sounding out and blending the whole printed words. They circle any decoded words where the *meaning* is not known.

Teachers tick **in pen** the graphemes and printed words they hear sounded out correctly. Do not mark incorrect responses with a cross – simply leave blank any graphemes or words not known.

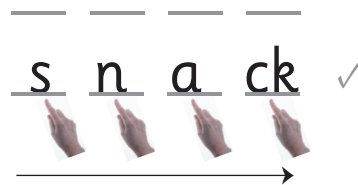
**More activities:** 1) Match capital and lower case graphemes. 2) Pupils decode all the words themselves, then re-read with the teacher, then discuss the meanings together. Use the exercise books as necessary. When English is a new language, select only a few words for teaching vocabulary.

**Oral segmenting:** This is a sub-skill of spelling. **How to tally:** Say each picture-word very slowly and naturally to identify all the sounds from beginning to end of the word. Then say each sound separately and tally the sounds on thumb and fingers of the left hand, palm facing. Count the sounds. **Note:** Identify how many *sounds* all through the word, NOT how many *letters*. In Book 1, ONLY write the number of sound dashes. Do not attempt to spell the picture-words.

**Encoding:** The full *spelling routine* is sound-to-print. Complete this skills activity *last* and in the exercise books.

1. Model how to orally segment the whole spoken word and tally the identified sounds to thumb and fingers of the left hand, palm facing.
2. Write a *sound dash* for every sound identified (dashes long enough for 2 letters).
3. Use the sound dashes as writing lines to write the correct graphemes (letters and letter groups) correctly formed and positioned on the dashes.
4. Next, sound out and blend to check the word. Immediately check and tick, or correct if required.
5. Re-write the whole word on a line below whilst saying or thinking the sounds /s/ /n/ /a/ /k/.

“/s/ /n/ /a/ /k/”



Say each sound then run your finger under from left to right as you say the word.

snack

**Note:** This full *spelling routine* starts from introducing letter ‘t’ on page 3 of Book 1.

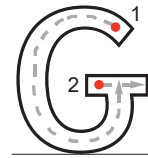
## Multi-skills Activities

g

Refer to the focus grapheme on the Alphabetic Code Chart.



**Learn the code:** This letter is code for the sound /g/ as in *girl*.



G

g

g

Check carefully for correct letter formation and provide extra practice, as required, in the learners’ personal exercise books.

**Link letter formation with sounds:** Find capital and lower case letters, while saying Provide the spoken words for the pictures.



X



**Phonemic awareness puzzle:** Where can you hear the sound /g/ in these words? pegs glasses hen flag

a<sup>✓</sup> k<sup>✓</sup> m<sup>✓</sup> p<sup>✓</sup> d<sup>✓</sup> s<sup>✓</sup> e<sup>✓</sup> r<sup>✓</sup> t<sup>✓</sup> i<sup>✓</sup> g<sup>✓</sup>  
 D<sup>✓</sup> I<sup>✓</sup> G<sup>✓</sup> E<sup>✓</sup> T<sup>✓</sup> C<sup>✓</sup> (R) I<sup>✓</sup> S<sup>✓</sup> P<sup>✓</sup>  
 gap<sup>✓</sup> tag<sup>✓</sup> dig<sup>✓</sup> drag<sup>✓</sup> get<sup>✓</sup>  
 peg<sup>✓</sup> gas<sup>✓</sup> grip<sup>✓</sup> rag<sup>✓</sup> magnet<sup>✓</sup>

**Decoding:** Point under the letters and letter groups from left to right and say the sounds. Sound out and blend to read the words. **Encoding:** Use some of these words for the *spelling routine*.

Books 2–8: The spellings in the section below include letter/s-sound correspondences previously introduced.



a n t



n e t



**Oral segmenting with spelling:** Say the words, identify and tally the sounds, write a *sound dash* for each sound. Write the graphemes on the dashes.

See the letters, say the sounds: m d g

## Suggested Comprehension Questions for Mini Stories

Page	Title/Questions
3	<b>The Map</b> Who has a map? What happens to the map? What do you think Menna could use to mend the map?
5	<b>The Red Pen</b> Who sent a pen to Dan? What colour is the tip of the pen? Why do you think Dan's hand gets into a red mess?
7	<b>The Cat and the Mat</b> Why does Greg dig a pit? Why do you think Greg gets a sack? Why do you think the mat attracts Pip?
9	<b>The Pin Lid</b> What makes Dad mad and hop on the spot? What does Dad discover about the pin tin? Where does Sam keep his pet cricket?
11	<b>Dad's Hut</b> Where does Sam hide his pet cricket at first? What animals run into Sam's den and why do you think this is? What does Sam do next. Why do you think he moves his cricket into his Dad's hut?
13	<b>The Slug</b> What creature pecks at a log? Where does the slug travel? What might the hen be thinking about the slug and why?
15	<b>Mum</b> Is Nanna sick? What does Dad ask Nanna to get? Who needs the glass of milk, and why?
17	<b>That Fat Rat!</b> What is the rat called? Why is Pip, the cat, fed up? Do you think this is the first time that Fred has drunk Pip's milk?
19	<b>Flop, Plop!</b> The first elf is full of fun but what does the other elf do to give the impression that he is 'full of himself'? What does the second elf do that makes him feel a bit daft (silly)? What do you think the first elf might do when the second elf falls off the log?
21	<b>The Last Lesson</b> Who sent the class off? Where did the class go? What job do you think Miss Fusspot does? Give some reasons for your thoughts.
23	<b>Ben's Bag of Tricks</b> What does Ben grab? Who dips his hand into the bag of tricks? How do you think Ben might have played a trick on his dad?
25	<b>Jenna and Justin</b> What does it mean to 'jump on a jet'? What does Justin have in his backpack? Why do you think Jenna has just packed 'a good book' in her handbag?
27	<b>Yasmin's Pup</b> How is the pup behaving in his basket? Who asks Yasmin whether the pup has been fed? Why do you think the pup is making such a fuss in the basket?