

Glossary:

Word	Meaning
Affix	A letter or group of letters attached to the beginning or end of a base or root word, which alters the word's meaning or changes its grammatical form. See also prefix and suffix.
Alphabetic principle	The relationship between a phoneme (sound) and the grapheme(s) (letter/s) which represent it.
Analogy	A resemblance/correspondence between two words/concepts. A reader (or speller) may read/write a word based on recognising some sort of similarity with another word, for example, may work out how to spell 'alarm' based on knowledge of how to spell 'farm'.
Articulation	Production of distinct speech sounds depending on the position of the mouth, lips and teeth.
Assimilation	The process by which a sound is affected by and becomes like an adjacent sound.
Automaticity	Ability to respond quickly, without attention or 'conscious' effort (thereby allowing effort/thinking to concentrate on other aspects of the task). Automaticity in reading fluency is the ability to read at a good pace without great effort.
Base word	A word which can stand alone, but to which an affix can be added, for example, 'stable' can become 'unstable'.
Blend	Two or more adjacent consonants whose sounds flow together but retain discrete sounds, for example, 'sp' in 'spin', is an initial consonant blend and in 'lisp' it is a final consonant blend.
Bottom-up approaches	An approach to reading based on recognising or decoding every word. Phonics-based teaching (whether analytic or synthetic) and sight vocabulary reading are examples of bottom-up teaching (see top-down approaches).
Closed syllable	A syllable ending with one or more consonants, for example, 'rab-bit' has two closed syllables.

Compound words	Two words are put together to form a different word, for example, 'handbag', 'snowman'.
Decoding	Translating written words into the sound of the language.
Decode in reading	To determine the pronunciation of a word by understanding how letters represent sounds.
Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)	Difficulty understanding or using language.
Diagnostic Assessment	An assessment that aims to identify a child's current strengths, weaknesses and abilities to determine the most helpful teaching strategies and content to move the child forward. The aim is to make teaching more efficient.
Digraph	Two adjacent consonants or two adjacent vowels in a syllable representing a single sound, for example, 'th' in 'this' or 'ai' in 'maid'.
Etymology	The study of the origins and the history of words. The etymology of 'phonics' is for example, from the Greek 'phone' meaning 'voice'. It was originally used in the 17th century to mean the science of sound but has come to mean an approach to teaching reading.
Executive Functions	Cognitive processes involved in monitoring and controlling behaviour, including attention, planning and self-regulation.
Expressive vocabulary	The words that a pupil can express through speaking or writing.
Formative assessment	The process of monitoring child learning on an ongoing basis as part of day to day, whole class teaching and adapting teaching to meet child's learning needs as they change over time.
Grapheme-phoneme correspondence	Making a link between a grapheme (letter or letter clusters) and the phoneme (single speech sound) that it represents.
Grapheme	A letter or combination of letters used to represent a phoneme. Phonemes are the smallest units of speech sounds.

Guided Discovery teaching	A teaching strategy where new concepts or knowledge are presented in ways which support learners in discovering or deducting a fact or rule.
High Frequency Words	High Frequency Words (HFWs). Commonly occurring words in texts, often irregular in spelling.
Inference	Using information from a text or from speech to arrive at another piece of information that is implicit.
Irregular word	An irregular word in spelling, 'said'
Kinaesthetic	A sensory experience related to movement of muscles and joints of the body.
Lexicon	A body of knowledge either written or spoken.
Long-term memory	The part of memory to which information is sent for permanent storage. It is seen as having an infinite capacity.
Metacognition	A critical awareness of one's own thinking and learning and an understanding of oneself as a thinker and learner. The process of metacognition is used when planning, monitoring, concluding and evaluating tasks.
Mind map	This is a method of visually recording thoughts and ideas using a diagram which contains words, symbols and pictures to represent those ideas. It shows a central idea with branches containing sub-themes around that main idea which then helps to organise and recall thoughts. It is usually used for planning an assignment or exam revision.
Mnemonics	A strategy devised to aid recall. The most commonly used mnemonic is the use of the initial letter in a group of words to create an acronym or acrostic. Other forms could involve using rhymes or songs, Visualisation (picture association) or chunking.
Morpheme	The smallest units of words that contain meaning, such as, the 'root' word 'child' and the affix 'ish', which in combination make a new word 'childish'.
Morphological Awareness	Awareness of the form and meaning of language, especially the smallest units of words that contain meaning.

Multisensory literacy programme	An approach for teaching literacy that involves the simultaneous use of several senses (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic/touch) and teaches listening, speaking, reading, writing and spelling together.
Onset	The initial consonant(s) in a word, for example, 'c' in 'cat' and 'scr' in 'scream' (see also rime).
Orthographic Awareness	Awareness of the rules for writing a language, including spelling, punctuation and capitalisation. Those with good orthographic awareness recognise commonly occurring spelling patterns and sequences in words, to help them read and spell with greater fluency and accuracy.
Phoneme	A phoneme is a speech sound. It is the smallest unit of spoken sound that distinguishes one word (or word part) from another, for example, 't' and 'd' in 'tip' and 'dip'.
Phonemic Awareness	Awareness of the smallest units of sound and the ability to distinguish and manipulate individual units of sound in speech.
Phonics	A method of teaching the association between the printed form of letters and the sound(s) they represent.
Phonological Awareness	Knowledge of and sensitivity to the phonological properties of words in a language.
Phonology	The science or knowledge of the sound system of a language both segmental and non-segmental
Prefix	A group of letters (forming a syllable) which is added at the beginning of a base or root word to change its meaning, for example, 'mis' added to 'represent' to make 'misrepresent'.
Rime	The written or spoken vowel and final consonant(s) in a word or syllable, for example, 'at' in 'cat' and 'eam' in 'stream'.
Root	A word or part of a word to which affixes can be added. Some roots are morphemes (often Greek or Latin origin) which cannot stand alone as English words, for example, 'struct' in 'destruct,' 'instruct,' instructions'.
Segmentation	Separating a word into parts (such as onsets and rimes, syllables or individual units).

Semantic	Referring to the meaning of words.
Short-term memory	The term short-term memory refers to information presented verbally or visually that is stored for only a short period of time (seconds).
Sky writing	The technique of 'writing' a letter or word in the air using the writing hand and arm so that the upper arm muscles are used to help the writer establish kinaesthetic traces or memories.
Specific Language Impairment (SLI)	A communication disorder that prevents the development of language in children. It can affect a child's listening, speaking, reading and writing. (see Developmental Language Disorder).
Suffix	Letters (forming a syllable) which are added at the end of a base word or root to change its meaning. For example, it can change singular to plural, 's' added to 'house' changes it to the plural 'houses'; it can mark the third person singular present tense of a verb, for example, 'He runs'; it can change a noun to an adjective, for example, 'ful' changes 'beauty' to 'beautiful'.
Syllable	A spoken or written unit that must have a vowel sound and include preceding and/or a following consonant(s).
Syntax	The structure of grammar - the system governing how words must be ordered in phrases or sentences.
Top-down approaches	These refer to teaching reading by emphasising that the main purpose of reading is to extract meaning from a text. The learner draws on their own experiences and knowledge to make sense of the text. The text is practised and understood before decoding/word recognition strategies are introduced.
Vowel suffix	A suffix beginning with a vowel, for example, 'ing' and 'ed'. The addition of this suffix often affects the ending of a base or root word, particularly where that word ends in a vowel, for example, 'shine'/'shining'.
Working memory	The part of short-term memory that holds onto information long enough to manipulate or use it, for example, as in carrying out a mental calculation or following an instruction.