



PHONICS
FAMILY

Tips to encourage blending



What is blending?

Oral blending is when children can HEAR the individual sounds (phonemes) in words and then push those sounds together to form the whole word. This is a skill developed in Phase 1. You say the individual sounds and children merge those sounds to say the whole word.

Play games like Simon Says. You say "can you stand u-p?" or "can you c-l-a-p your hands?" and they blend the sounds to perform the action.

Model Blending

Model blending sounds as much as you possibly can.

"I need my c-oa-t". "coat"

"I'm making a cup of t-ea". "tea"

"I can see a 'b-ir-d". "bird"

You can see if after a while they can naturally blend the sounds they hear rather than you.

Use Pure Sounds

Try to avoid using an 'uh' at the end of the letter sounds. So not 'muh, luh, suh' but 'mmm, llll, ssss'. The technical term for the 'uh' is a Schwa.

Using the pure sounds makes it easier for children to blend the sounds together to form the word.

It's easier to merge "ssss, u, nnnnnn"
rather than "suh, u, nuh"

Struggling with oral blending of phonemes?

1. Try syllables in words for your child to practise blending chunks of sounds.

win - dow

rab - bit

You'll find that they will pick this up fairly quickly.

2. Move onto blending the onset and rime in words

c-at

b-at

h-at

Easier if you firstly concentrate on the same word
family (rhyme)

Blending to Read

When children move on to begin blending for reading this requires a lot of complex skills all needed at the same time. Children need to be able to quickly identify the graphemes (letters or combinations of letters) and their corresponding sounds, remember them and then merge the sounds together.

If a child is struggling to do this then check whether they recognise all the graphemes and can recall the sounds quickly. You might need to go back and fill some gaps in grapheme recognition.

Start with VC words

A VC word is a word that is a vowel followed by a consonant. Blending two sounds will be easier than blending three. If they've had practise at blending two syllables this might come easily.

Words to start with using Set 1 and 2 sounds from Phase 2.

i-n

a-t

i-t

a-n

Continuous Consonants

To help children blend CVC words try starting the word with a continuous consonant. These are consonants that have a longer, stretched sound like ssss, mmmm, ffff rather than short sounds like p, d, g.

This will make it easier to merge the sounds together.

ssss-i-t

ffff-u-n

mmm-o-p

Sound Buttons

These are the dots and lines you might see under words. A dot for a single letter that makes one sound and a line for combinations of letters that make one sound. Every time the button is pushed your child says the corresponding sound and then merges the sounds to form the word.

bat
● ● ●

moon
● — ●

night
● — ●

Blending Activities

- playdough sound buttons
- magnetic letters pushed closer together on a baking tray
- letter cards on a washing line moved closer together
- drive a toy car or train across letter cards
- jump on letter cards and blend
- letter cards on the stairs and blend the sounds as you walk up
- write letters on jigsaw pieces and place together
- write letters on Duplo pieces and build words