

Teaching ideas

Acorn Adventures

Phonics learning opportunities

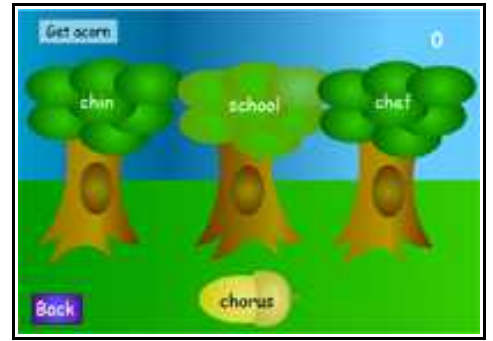
To know common alternative pronunciations for graphemes.

To practise reading words and deciding which pronunciation of a grapheme makes most sense.

Organisation

Whole class, small group, 1:1.

Once children are familiar with this game they can play independently.



Teaching ideas

Choose the grapheme you want to investigate from the menu. The main game screen will show a number of trees with words on them (the number of trees will depend on the number of pronunciations for that grapheme). Model sound talking each word. Discuss the fact that the particular grapheme is pronounced differently in each word. Ensure the children are confident with each of these pronunciations. Try pointing to each tree while children say the pronunciation of the grapheme. Gradually speed up and see how fast you can go.

Click on the Get Acorn button. An acorn will appear in the centre of the screen showing a new word containing the same grapheme. Model sound talking this word and try blending the phonemes together. Experiment with using different pronunciations of the grapheme. Talk through your thought processes in deciding which pronunciation makes this word make sense. Tell the children that you need to drag this word to the tree that shows the same pronunciation of the grapheme. Point to each tree in turn and ask the children to give a thumbs up or thumbs down. Drag the acorn to the tree that most children choose.

For subsequent words, ask the children to sound talk, blend the word and decide which pronunciation is appropriate for this word. It works quite well to ask individual children to do this and then get the whole class to repeat the sound talking and the blended word. If the chosen child struggles, ask other members of the class if they can help out. Again, ask children to show the correct tree with thumbs up/down.

Shaking things up

In the printable resources section of the site you will find a printable tree, acorn and squirrel. You can use these to play the game with small groups.

Alternatively, you can use this game for a PE warm up. Make large versions of the trees (or just use whiteboards) and place them around the hall or playground. Gather the children together away from the trees and show them an acorn with a word written on it. Count to three (to give children a chance to sound talk the word and try out the alternative pronunciations in their heads) then say 'Go!' Children have to run to the tree that uses the same pronunciation. Gather the children back together and repeat with another word.

Top tips

You will need to do lots of training in guided reading and shared reading sessions to help children learn to transfer these skills from phonics sessions into their own independent reading.