

Teaching ideas

Flashcards – Time Challenge

Phonics learning opportunities

To practise grapheme recognition for reading.

Organisation

Whole class, small group or 1:1.

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First you will need to choose which graphemes to practise. You can select a phase (or combination of phases) from the menu. Alternatively, you can select any combination of individual graphemes.

Choose whether to play the one minute or two minute challenge.

For each flashcard, ask the children to say, in chorus, the phoneme that is represented by that grapheme (and show the action for the phoneme if appropriate). If the majority of children correctly say the phoneme then click on the tick button (or press the c key on the keyboard).

If a number of children can't identify the phoneme or mispronounce it, you will need to help them out. Model saying the phoneme correctly and ask them to repeat it after you a couple of times. Then click on the cross button (or press the x key on the keyboard).

The cards are presented randomly. When they have all been practised, any ones that the class have found difficult (and you clicked the cross) will then be practised again until the class get them right. If there is still time remaining then any of the cards may be used again randomly.

The game finishes when the time is up. You will be given feedback showing how many flashcards were correctly identified within the time limit and which graphemes still need more practise. You can choose to print out a copy of this feedback.

Shaking things up

Split the class in half. Ask one half to play the minute challenge and then the other half. Which half can get the most cards correct within the time limit?

When children's confidence increases, ask one child to be teacher and click the tick and cross buttons. They may well be more strict than you are about getting the phonemes correct.

Play the game around the class. You will probably need to use the two minute version for this. For each grapheme ask a different child (or a different table group) to say the phoneme and then get the rest of the class to show with thumbs up or thumbs down whether they agree or disagree. If certain children are lacking in confidence you may wish to make sure that you target them with graphemes that they definitely know.

Challenge the class to say the phonemes in a particular way (e.g. happy, bossy, shy etc)

Top tips

Ideally, try to play Flashcards several times per week. Display the children's top score for a particular set of graphemes and challenge them to beat it each time you play.

Be strict about how children pronounce the phonemes. They will find blending and segmenting much easier if they always pronounce phonemes accurately. In particular try to stop them from



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adding an 'uh' sound on the end of consonants such as 'p', 'c', 't', 'l', 'm'. Click on the cross button (or press x) unless the phoneme is pronounced perfectly.

Initially work on accuracy but challenge children to build up speed as quickly as possible. To read fluently, children need to be able to recognise graphemes at high speed. You may be surprised at just how quick children can get with a bit of practise.

If you are playing with a group or whole class then ensure that they all stay in chorus. If some children try to go faster than the group, it will get confusing for everyone. Insist that all children keep together. If some children seem ready to go even quicker then you could give them a chance to show just how quickly they can go by playing individually with them later.

Print out (or jot down) the feedback showing which graphemes children need to practise further. Tackle these in the next session.

Remember that this game only covers the revisit element of the 15-20 min phonics session. Don't spend any more than three minutes maximum (including instructions, discussing how the children have done etc) on it. The built in time limits in this game will help with this and should leave you with plenty of time for the teaching, practising and applying sections of the phonics session.

If you are concerned about individual children, play the game with them on their own. You can then print off their results as an assessment. This will identify graphemes that they need to focus on and you can play the game in the future with the same graphemes and measure accurately how much progress they have made.

Some children who read quite well in KS1 can actually have quite big gaps in their knowledge of GPCs. Often this doesn't become apparent until KS2 when their progress in reading and spelling slows down. It can be a good idea to check more able children's knowledge of GPCs by playing this game with them individually. It will only take a minute for each child and the sooner any gaps are spotted the easier they are to fix.