

Phonics 1: alphabet sounds, ch, sh, th, CVC and blends

A letter name and a letter sound are different. Say the name of b when spelling a name, but use its sound when blending the word bag. This phonics guide helps you notice short vowels, digraphs and consonant blends.

Anglais 1AC - Supplementary practice - Updated 27/10/2026

Learning goals

- Move from spelling names to reading sounds
- Short vowels, digraphs and consonant blends
- Hear the contrast before speeding up

1. What is the difference between a letter name, a digraph and a blend?

Letter names help you spell, while sounds help you read. A digraph such as sh in ship uses two letters for one sound. A blend such as fr in frog keeps both consonant sounds. Practise the short middle vowels in cat, pen, sit, hot and cup.



Letter names help you spell; sounds help you read.

2. Move from spelling names to reading sounds

A digraph uses two letters for one sound in a word: sh in shop and ch in chair. Th has two common sounds: compare thin and this. A consonant blend keeps the consonant sounds, as in green, brown, frog, drum, tree and crab. Say the sounds together without adding an extra vowel.

A CVC word has a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern. Compare cat, pen, sit, hot and cup. These beginner examples use short vowel sounds. Read a word, identify the middle vowel, blend it slowly, then read it naturally. Spelling is a guide; ask your teacher to model unfamiliar words and compare your pronunciation with the model.

3. Short vowels, digraphs and consonant blends

Pattern	Letters	Example words
Digraph	sh / ch / th	shop / chin / thin / this
Short vowels	a / e / i / o / u	cat / pen / sit / hot / cup
Blends	gr / br / fr	green / brown / frog
Blends	dr / tr / cr	drum / tree / crab

4. Blend words in a short reading practice



A digraph can represent one sound; a blend keeps its sounds.

Read and explain this example

Read slowly: a green frog; a brown crab; a red drum. Next, sort shop and chair by their first sound. Finally, spell your name using letter names. The activity changes between reading sounds and spelling letters.

5. Hear the contrast before speeding up

When a teacher asks you to spell cat, answer with the letter names C-A-T. When the task is to read cat, blend its sounds and say the word naturally. These are different tasks. In frog, keep f and r close together without adding a vowel between them. In ship, do not read s and h as separate letter names. This page supplies written prompts; a teacher or another reliable spoken model should check the sound.



Practise the short vowels in cat, pen, sit, hot and cup.

Check this

This is written pronunciation practice. It does not include an audio recording. Do not pronounce sh as two separate letter names when reading shop.

Put the idea into practice

1. Look at the task: spelling, sorting or reading aloud.
2. Identify the initial pattern and the vowel in the word.
3. Blend slowly, then say the complete word and compare it with a spoken model.

Remember

- Letter names help you spell; sounds help you read.
- A digraph can represent one sound; a blend keeps its sounds.
- Practise the short vowels in cat, pen, sit, hot and cup.

Practice - Try before checking

Answer in your notebook. Use evidence from the examples and check your sentences.

Exercise 1. Sort the starts

Group shop, chair, ship and chin under sh or ch.

Exercise 2. Find the blend

Identify the initial blend in frog, tree, crab and drum.

Exercise 3. Read and spell

Read cat and cup aloud, then spell each word using letter names.

Exercise 4. Sort by the beginning, not the meaning

Sort ship, chin, frog and brown into digraphs and blends, then identify the letters.

Explained answers

Exercise 1. Sort the starts

Sh: shop, ship. Ch: chair, chin. Each pair begins with the same digraph.

Exercise 2. Find the blend

Fr; tr; cr; dr. Keep both consonant sounds together.

Exercise 3. Read and spell

The middle vowel sounds differ. Spell C-A-T and C-U-P using letter names. Ask a teacher or partner to check the spoken contrast.

Exercise 4. Sort by the beginning, not the meaning

Digraphs: sh in ship and ch in chin. Blends: fr in frog and br in brown. The task concerns initial sounds, not what the words mean.

Frequently asked questions

What is the difference between a letter name, a digraph and a blend?

Letter names help you spell, while sounds help you read. A digraph such as sh in ship uses two letters for one sound. A blend such as fr in frog keeps both consonant sounds. Practise the short middle vowels in cat, pen, sit, hot and cup.

Should I pronounce the two letters of sh separately?

Not when reading ship. In that word sh represents one sound. Use separate letter names only when someone asks you to spell it.

Is th always pronounced the same way?

No. Thin and this have different th sounds. Practise each word with a spoken model from your teacher.



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