

2013 Phonics screening check scoring guidance



Threshold mark

The threshold mark for the check is **32 marks** out of 40.

Children who score between 32 and 40 marks have met the expected standard in phonic decoding.

Children who score between 0 and 31 marks have not met the expected standard in phonic decoding.

If children do not meet the expected standard, schools must determine the most appropriate support for each child to help them catch up. These children must be considered for a re-take of the phonics screening check in the June of Year 2.

Pronunciation of pseudo-words

Some of the graphemes used in the check represent a number of different phonemes. When decoding a real word in the check, the child has to select the correct phoneme for the word, for example the 'ow' in 'blow' should not be pronounced as the 'ow' in 'cow'. However, when decoding a pseudo-word, all plausible alternative pronunciations are acceptable.

The tables on the next page provide guidance to teachers scoring the check on acceptable pronunciations of the pseudo-words in the check.

Regional pronunciations

Some of the pseudo-words in the screening check contain vowel digraphs that end with 'r', such as 'or' and 'er'. In a small number of regional dialects, the 'r' in words with these vowel digraphs is voiced and children who speak with these dialects will be known to their teachers. For these children, pseudo-words with a vowel digraph ending in 'r', such as 'flarm' may be pronounced as /flɑ:rm/ or /flɑ:rəm/ instead of /flɑ:m/. These pronunciations are acceptable alternatives in the relevant pseudo-words.

Contact details

For more information about the phonics screening check, please contact the National Curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.

Section 1

Pseudo-word	Acceptable pronunciations	Phonemic representation
fo t	This item uses the 'f' in 'fun' and rhymes with 'pot'.	/fɒt/
ke b	This item uses the 'k' in 'key' and rhymes with 'web'.	/kɛb/
ga n	This item uses the 'g' in 'game' and rhymes with 'ban'.	/gæn/
ul p	This item uses the 'u' in 'up' and rhymes with 'gulp'. All regional variations of the 'u' are acceptable.	/ʌlp/ or /ʊlp/
po th	This item uses the 'p' in 'pot' and rhymes with 'moth'. Pronunciations with the voiced sound for 'th' as in 'this' are also acceptable.	/pɒθ/ or /pɒð/
sha n	This item uses the 'sh' in 'shut' and rhymes with 'man'.	/ʃæn/
vee n	This item uses the 'v' in 'vest' and rhymes with 'been'.	/vi:n/
qu org	This item combines the 'qu' from 'queen' with the 'org' from 'organ'. All regional variations of the voiced/unvoiced 'r' are acceptable.	/kwɔ:g/
dra p	This item uses the 'dr' in 'drop' and rhymes with 'trap'.	/dræp/
fla rm	This item uses the 'fl' in 'flaw' and rhymes with 'harm'.	/flɑ:m/
le ct	This item uses the 'l' in 'let' and rhymes with 'sect'.	/lekt/
vo isk	This item combines the 'voi' from 'voice' with the 'sk' from 'mask'.	/vɔɪsk/

Section 2

Pseudo-word	Acceptable pronunciations	Phonemic representation
qui gh	This item uses the 'qu' in 'quite' and rhymes with 'high'.	/kwaɪ/
her ks	This item uses the 'h' in 'hum' and rhymes with 'perks'.	/hɜ:ks/
jo rb	This item uses the 'j' in 'job' and rhymes with 'absorb'.	/dʒɔ:b/
zale	This item uses the 'z' in 'zag' and rhymes with 'tale'.	/zeɪl/
blun s	This item uses the 'bl' in 'blunt' and rhymes with 'suns'. All regional variations of the 'u' are acceptable.	/blʌns/ or /blʊns/
skar ld	This item combines the 'scar' from 'scarlet' with the 'ld' from 'fold'.	/skɑ:ld/
spl ot	This item uses the 'spl' in 'splash' and rhymes with 'dot'.	/splɒt/
stra be	This item uses the 'str' in 'strain' and rhymes with 'babe'.	/streɪb/