



## Phonics screening check

### 2026 scoring guidance

#### Pronunciation of real words and 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'.

The tables on the next page provide guidance on some examples of common pronunciations of the pseudo-words in the check. When decoding a pseudo-word, all plausible alternative and regional pronunciations are acceptable.

#### 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](mailto:assessments@education.gov.uk).

**Section 1: When decoding a pseudo-word, all plausible alternative and regional pronunciations are acceptable.**

Pseudo-word	Acceptable pronunciation	Phonemic representation
<b>jad</b>	This item uses the 'j' from 'jet' and rhymes with 'sad'.	/dʒæd/
<b>kib</b>	This item uses the 'k' from 'kit' and rhymes with 'bib'.	/kɪb/
<b>tep</b>	This item uses the 't' from 'tub' and rhymes with 'step'.	/tɛp/
<b>ips</b>	This item uses the 'i' from 'inn' and rhymes with 'lips'.	/ɪps/
<b>vaff</b>	This item combines the 'v' from 'vest' and the 'aff' from 'affect'.	/væf/
<b>qued</b>	This item uses the 'qu' from 'quid' and rhymes with 'red'.	/kwɛd/
<b>dorl</b>	This item combines the 'd' from 'dear' with the 'or' from 'for' and the 'l' from 'fool'.	/dɔ:l/
<b>shars</b>	This item uses the 'sh' from 'sheep' and rhymes with 'stars'.	/ʃɑ:s/ or /ʃɑ:z/
<b>skop</b>	This item uses the 'sk' from 'skim' and rhymes with 'stop'.	/skɒp/
<b>crort</b>	This item uses the 'cr' from 'crawl' and rhymes with 'snort'.	/krɔ:t/
<b>zint</b>	This item uses the 'z' from 'zips' and rhymes with 'hint'.	/zɪnt/
<b>veest</b>	This item combines the 'v' from 'views' with the 'ee' from 'feeds' and the 'st' from 'first'.	/vi:st/

**Section 2: When decoding a pseudo-word, all plausible alternative and regional pronunciations are acceptable.**

Pseudo-word	Acceptable pronunciation	Phonemic representation
<b>jair</b>	This item uses the 'j' from 'joke' and rhymes with 'lair'.	/dʒɛə/
<b>plute</b>	This item uses the 'pl' from 'place' and rhymes with 'flute'.	/plu:t/
<b>yurp</b>	This item uses the 'y' from 'yard' and rhymes with 'burp'.	/jɜ:p/
<b>phime</b>	This item uses the 'ph' from 'phone' and rhymes with 'grime'.	/faɪm/
<b>grusp</b>	This item uses the 'gr' from 'grunt' and rhymes with 'cusp'.	/grʌsp/
<b>gloast</b>	This item uses the 'gl' from 'glow' and rhymes with 'boast'.	/gləʊst/
<b>splace</b>	This item uses the 'spl' from 'split' and rhymes with 'face'.	/splɛɪs/
<b>scrant</b>	This item uses the 'scr' from 'scrape' and rhymes with 'chant'.	/skrɑ:nt/