

Phonics Games for Every Phase

Phonics can be practised through lots of different games. The more fun children have, the more likely the learning is to stick in their brain. In this resource, you will find a selection of popular games which can all be adapted for the stage at which your child is working at.

In this document, the terms 'level' and 'phase' are both used. 'Level' refers to the Twinkl Phonics scheme - you can find more information about it [here](#). Use the word bank at the end of the document to help you find words and sounds suitable for your child.

All of these games are suitable for use with:

- Sounds (graphemes)
- Decodable words (words you can sound out)
- Tricky or Common Exception Words

Where possible, there are suggestions of how to play the games so that different ages can play at the same time - even younger toddlers. At the end of the document is a word bank to help you select appropriate sounds or words for your child



Cross the River



Suitable for:

- Sounds (graphemes)
- Decodable words (words you can sound out)
- Tricky or Common Exception Words

What do I need?

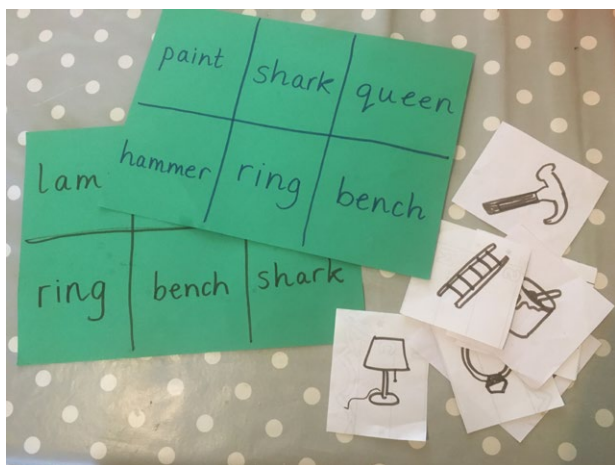
- Blue piece of fabric (or a rug, blanket or towel in a similar colour)
- Sound or word cards
- Puppet or toy (optional)

How do I play this game?

1. Lay the fabric on the floor so it looks like a river.
2. Give your child a sound or word card. Explain to them that to cross the river, they need to be able to read the word to the puppet (or you if not using a puppet).
3. Encourage your child to either say the sound, sound out the decodable word or say the Tricky Word.
4. Once they have read the sound or word, tell them to ask the puppet 'May I cross the river?' If they are correct, the puppet can tell them yes or nod their head. (Sometimes, our puppet is a bit cheeky and pretends to nibble their toes as they hop over! You can make up your own silly things for the puppet to do; the children really enjoy it and it encourages them to want to read even more words.)
5. Give your child another sound or word card and repeat steps 3 and 4.

Children of all ages or stages can play this game together – just give them words from the Level or Phase that is suitable for them. Toddler siblings could join in with pictures or colours to say before they can jump over the river.

Bingo



Suitable for:

- Sounds (graphemes)
- Decodable words (words you can sound out)
- Tricky or Common Exception Words

What do I need?

- Bingo base board – you can make this from a piece of paper, card or a cereal packet – 1 for each player. If you have access to a printer, you can use one of the boards listed below.

- Pen for decorating/writing on the boards
- Counters / buttons / milk carton lids – 6 for each player
- Picture or word cards to match the bingo board

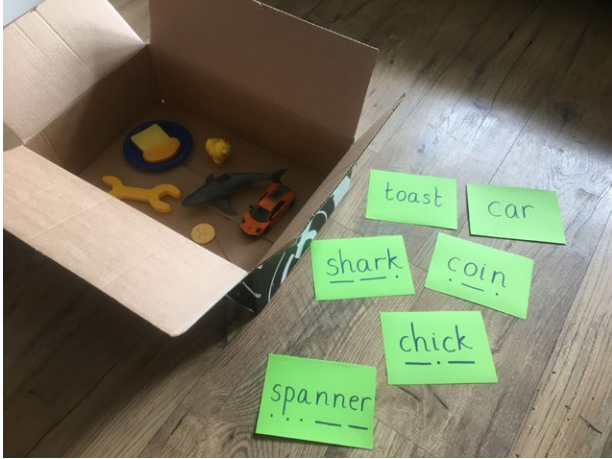
How do I play this game?

1. Draw lines to divide your piece of paper or card into six boxes.
2. Write one sound or word in each of the boxes.
3. Draw or find pictures to match the sound or word card.
4. Each player has a bingo board and six counters.
5. Hold up one of the picture cards. Each player must read the sounds or words on their bingo board to see if it matches. Say the sound or word if it matches and cover it with a counter.
6. The first player to cover all of their sounds or words shouts 'bingo' and is the winner.

You may wish to use these resources:

- [Blank Bingo Template](#)
- [Phase 2 Tricky Word Bingo](#)
- [Phase 2 CVC Decodable Word Bingo](#)
- [Phase 3 Tricky Word Bingo](#)
- [Phase 3 Grapheme Bingo](#)
- [Phase 4 Decodable Word Bingo](#)
- [Phase 4 Tricky Word Bingo](#)
- [Phase 5 Grapheme Bingo](#)
- [Phase 5 Tricky Word Bingo](#)

What's in the Box?



Suitable for:

- Sounds (graphemes)
- Decodable words (words you can sound out)

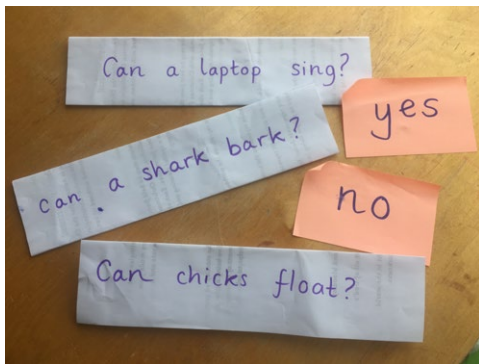
What do I need?

- Sound or word cards
- Box or bag to hide the objects or pictures in
- Objects or pictures to match the sound or word cards (e.g. picture of feet to match the 'ee' sound)

How do I play this game?

1. Hide the objects or pictures in the box or bag.
2. Spread the sound or word cards around the box or bag.
3. Ask your child to choose one of the sound or word cards. Ask them to say the sound or sound out the word. You can support your child by adding sound buttons to the word to help them sound out.
4. Once your child has said the sound or word, encourage them to look in the box or bag to find the picture that matches.

Silly Questions



Suitable for:

- Decodable words (words you can sound out)
- Tricky or Common Exception Words

How do I play this game?

1. Write silly questions that contain words that your child can sound out or words that can be sounded out and Tricky Words.
2. Stick the 'yes' card at one side of the room or space and the 'no' card at the other.
3. Ask your child to read the silly question. You may need to support them to sound out the words or help them read the tricky words.
4. When your child has read the word, give them some thinking time to answer the question.
5. On your say so, they can walk/run/hop to the 'yes' or 'no' card. As long as your child can read the question to you and give you a reason why they went to 'yes' or 'no', then their answer is valid. If they want to be silly, that's ok!
6. Repeat steps 3 – 5 for other silly questions.

What do I need?

- Questions containing decodable words and Tricky Words
- Card saying 'yes'
- Card saying 'no'
- Sticky tack - optional

Phase/Level 2 examples: Can a man hop? Can a hen dip? Can a map nip? Can a man nap? Can a bag hiss? Can a bus hug? Is a pig red? Can a kid hug a doll? Is a pip big? Can a dog dig?

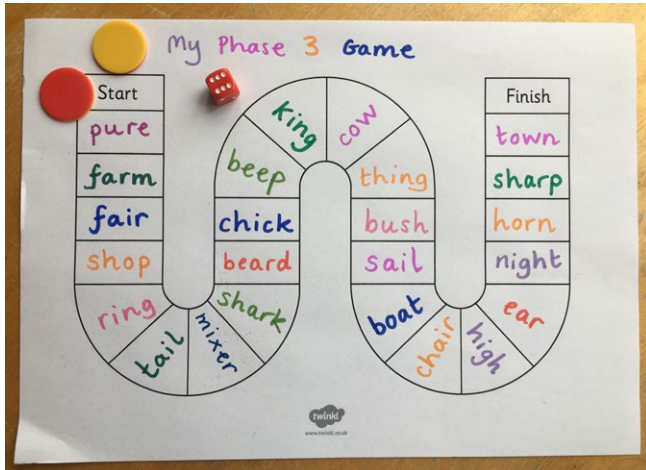
Phase/Level 3 examples: Can a vet quack? Can a web buzz? Can a chicken peck? Can a sheep park a car? Is a shark big? Can a chair beep? Can a king hang a ring on his ear? Can feet go in a bath? Can a cow go to town? Can a hammer bang a nail? Can a moth howl at the moon?

Phase/Level 4 examples: Can a frog swim and jump in a pond? Can a train cook a roast dinner? Can a clown smell a flower? Can you mix milk with a spoon? Can you sleep in a tent? Can a goat swing on a star?

Phase/Level 5 examples: Could a snake eat a shark? Would a boy enjoy a cake? Can a boy and a girl play a game? Can a crayon spray clouds? Is glue gold? Will a lion eat sprouts? Will a dolphin swim where it sleeps?

Phase/Level 6 examples: Does a squirrel princess have a shiny gold crown? Do babies fly in the sky? Can a wren blow bubbles? Are lambs born in April? Can a knight tie a knot in an acorn?

Board Game



Suitable for:

- Sounds (graphemes)
- Decodable words (words you can sound out)
- Tricky or Common Exception Words

What do I need?

- Dice
- Counters / buttons / old lids
- Game board – make your own or use this [Board Game Template](#)

How do I play this game?

1. Design your own game board using sounds or words from the word bank on page 10.
2. Have one counter for each player. The first player rolls the dice and moves that many spaces. When they land on the sound or word, they have to say the sound or read the word. If it is a decodable word, you may need to support your child to sound it out. You could also write the sound buttons underneath the word to help your child sound out the word. If they cannot read the word then they move back to the previous space.
3. Each player takes it in turns until one player gets to the end square and is the winner.

Balloon Toss



Suitable for:

- Sounds (graphemes)
- Decodable words (words you can sound out)
- Tricky or Common Exception Words

What do I need?

- Balloon
- Marker pen

How do I play this game?

1. Blow up the balloon.
2. Carefully write sounds or words on the balloon.
3. Throw the balloon to your child to catch.
4. When your child catches the balloon, read the sound or word where their hand is.
5. Keep throwing the balloon and catching it until all of the sounds or words have been read.

You can play this game with children of different ages by writing different words, beginning sounds or even pictures for very young children. Children can throw and catch the balloons themselves or with someone else. You could colour code the balloons so each child knows which balloon and words are theirs.

Stepping Stones/Puddle Jumping



Suitable for:

- Sounds (graphemes)
- Decodable words (words you can sound out)
- Tricky or Common Exception Words

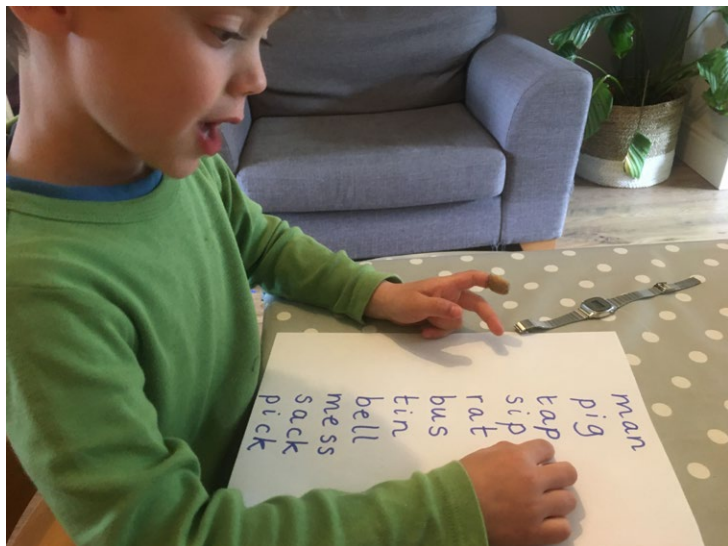
What do I need?

- Card or paper 'stepping stones' or 'puddles'
- Pen
- Wellies (optional)

How do I play this game?

1. Write sounds or words on the card 'stones' or 'puddles'.
2. Spread the words out on the floor or outside.
3. Encourage your child to hop onto a 'stone' or into a 'puddle' and read the word they have landed on. Ensure care is taken if the surface is slippery. If you are playing the games as 'Puddle Jumping', your child could wear their wellies as they jump between the 'puddles'.

Countdown



Suitable for:

- Sounds (graphemes)
- Decodable words (words you can sound out)
- Tricky or Common Exception Words

What do I need?

- List of words
- Stopwatch or timer

How do I play this game?

1. Write the sounds or words in a list.
2. Set a timer for an agreed amount of time. 20 seconds is a good starting point.
3. Read as many words as you can in that time and write down your score.
4. Play the game again and try to beat your previous score.

Word Bank

This is a small selection of some of the sounds and words for each Level or Phase. It is not comprehensive.

| | Sounds (graphemes) | Decodable words Words that can be sounded out | Tricky or Common Exception Words Words that have been learnt by sight |
|--|--|--|---|
| Phase 2 Level 2 FS2 | s, a, t, p, n, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, ck, e, u, r, h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss | tap, tin, map, man, pip, sit, pig, dog, pot, cap, sock, sack, peg, mug, mud, rat, rug, hut, bun, bed, leg, doll, bell, kiss, hiss, puff, mess | to, the, no, go, I |
| Phase 3 Level 3 FS2 | j, v, w, x, y, z, qu, sh, ch, th, th, ng, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er | jam, vet, web, box, zip, quack, fox, six, chop, chin, ship, shell, fish, moth, bath, ring, king, rain, feet, jeep, night, zoo, book, moon, hook, goat, car, fork, turnip, cork, coin, foil, beard, near, chair, sure, pure, dinner, letter | he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, they, here, all, are |
| Phase 4 Level 4 FS2 | N/A Phase/Level 4 teaches children how to read a word when two or more consonants are next to each other rather than teaching any new sounds. | frog, flag, twin, plum, swim, green, tree, train, spoon, clown, star, brush, belt, tent, lamp, wind, nest, sink, gift, pond, chest, bench, toast, paint, hand, milk, brown | said, so, have, like, come, some, were, there, little, one, do, when, out, what |

Phase 5
Level 5

Y1

Phase: ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, au, wh, ph, ew, oe, ey, a_e, e_e, i_e, o_e, u-e, mb, kn, gn, wr, tion

New ways of saying graphemes already known: a saying 'ai', e saying 'ee', i saying 'igh', o saying 'oa', u saying 'ue', c saying 's' (soft c), g saying 'j' (soft g), ow saying 'oa', ie saying 'ee', ea saying 'e', a saying 'o', y saying 'igh', y saying 'ee', ch saying 'c', ch saying 'sh', ou saying 'oa'

Twinkl Phonics: ay, ou, ie, ea, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh, ph, ew, oe, au, a_e, e_e, i_e, o_e, u-e, tch saying 'ch', are saying 'air', ear saying 'air', ve saying 'v', ore saying 'or'

New ways of saying graphemes already known: y saying 'ee', long vowel sounds, ch saying 'c', ch saying 'sh', ow saying 'oa', c saying 's' (soft c), g saying 'j' (soft g), ea saying 'e', ie saying 'ee',

Phase: cloud, crayon, boy, pie, meat, whisker, phone, screw, toe, money, snake, bike, bone, cube, lamb, knock, gnome, write, motion, Eve, angel, lion, gold, unicorn, chef, Christmas, bird, glue, happy, paw, laundry, window, circle, gem, boulder

Twinkl Phonics: cloud, crayon, boy, pie, meat, snake, bike, bone, cube, Eve, match, stare, ware, live, more, angel, lion, gold, Christmas, bird, glue, screw, happy, paw, laundry, window, circle, gem, bread, field

Phase: oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked, said, so, have, like, some, come, were, there, water, where, who, again, thought, through, work, mouse, many, laughed, because, different, any, eyes, friends, once

Twinkl Phonics: could, should, would, want, oh, their, Mr, Mrs, love, your, people, looked, called, asked, water, where, who, why, thought, through, work, house, many, laughed, because, different, any, eye, friend, also, once, please, live, coming, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, brother, more, before, January, February, April, July, scissors, castle, beautiful, treasure, door, floor, bought, favourite, autumn, gone, know, colour, other, does, talk, two

Phase 5
Level 6

Y2

Phase: Suffixes: -ing, -ed, -er, -est, -ful, -ly, -y, -ment -ness, plurals -s, -es
Homophones: there, they're, their, to, two, too
Contractions: I'm, can't, don't, let's

Twinkl Phonics: y saying 'igh', dge and ge saying 'j', gn, kn, wr, -le, -el -al, -il, eer saying 'ear', ture, mb, al saying 'or', o saying 'u', ey saying 'ee', s saying 'zh', wa saying 'wo', qua, saying 'quo', -tion

Phase: bushes, catches, hopped, hoping, careful, playful, runner, writer, slower, biggest, happiest, latest, sadly, happily, brightly, lately, payment, development, sadness, happiness, darkness, funny, smoky, sandy, knives, leaves, loaves,

Twinkl Phonics: reply, bridge, orange, gnome, knock, wrong, bubble, camel, total, pencil, steer, picture, lamb, hall, brother, money, treasure, watch, quality, motion

Y2 Common Exception Words: door, floor, poor, because, find, kind, mind, behind, child, children, wild, climb, most, only, both, old, cold, gold, hold, told, every, great, break, steak, pretty, beautiful, after, fast, last, past, father, class, grass, pass, plant, path, bath, hour, move, prove, improve, sure, sugar, eye, could, should, would, who, whole, any, many, clothes, busy, people, water, again, half, money, Mr, Mrs, parents, Christmas, everybody, even

Twinkl Phonics: door, floor, bought, favourite, autumn, gone, know, colour, other, does, talk, two, four, eight, world, work, poor, great, break, steak, busy, clothes whole, listen, build, earth, delicious, fruit, learn, search, famous, shoe, pretty, neighbour, England, tongue, group, country, heart, dangerous, special, enough, aunt, father, prove, improve, hour, move, sure, sugar, half, quarter, straight, touch, caught, daughter, journey, area, heard, early