ELS Essential Letters and Sounds
developed by Knowledge Schools Trust

Phonics Glossary

A definition of the terms used in phonics

Phoneme

A single sound made by a grapheme, also known as a 'letter sound'.

Digraphs

Two letters that together one sound, such as 'ch' in 'chip'.

Segmenting

The process of splitting up the individual sounds that make up a word to help with spelling.

Trigraphs

Three letters that together make one sound, such as 'igh' in 'night'

CVC words

A word that is made up of a consonant sound, a vowel sound and another consonant sound, such as 'c-a-t' or 'sh-o-p'.

Grapheme

A letter or a number of letters that represent a sound (phoneme) in a word.