



Activities Guide

Phonics Drilling: Graphemes and Blending

teacher plus foundation

V0.6E



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Icons



Important! Be Careful!



A good idea, but optional



Poison! Don't do this!



Model



Monitor



Activity Guide: Phonics Drilling

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Introduction

Phonics Drilling is similar to other traditional teacher-centred techniques. However, instead of getting students to recite the spelling by rote, the teacher uses **phonics** to promote good pronunciation, as well as reading.

There are three types of **Phonics Drilling**:

- Identifying single **graphemes**
- **blending graphemes/phonemes** into syllables
- Using **phonics** to teach pronunciation and spelling of real vocabulary

This Activity Guide deals with **graphemes** and **blending**. Vocabulary will be covered in a separate guide.

You may notice that this guide does not include all the usual stages for an activity. That is because drilling is not an activity itself. It is only part of the preparation stage for other activities.

As with any teacher-centred technique, teachers should not spend too much time with **Phonics Drilling**, especially with large classes. Student-centred activities are much more efficient and effective at practising **phonics** once the content for a lesson has been introduced.

Before Class



! Practice the pronunciation of each **phoneme** in the lesson. Make sure to follow the pronunciation guide in the unit notes. It is possibly quite different to what you have learned before.

Prepare Yourself



Break the **graphemes** for the lesson into groups of 3-4. The unit notes give some guidance about the order of introduction.



! Practice **blending** the **phonemes** together to form syllables. Start with consonant-vowel (**CV**) combinations, then consonant-vowel-consonant (**CVC**).

! If your lesson includes **consonant clusters** (**CCVC**, **CVCC** or **CCVCC**), pay extra attention when practising them.

My notes



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Before Class



Prepare the **graphemes** that you will practice in the lesson. At the beginning of each unit, there are lists for full-size **flashcards**, half-size **flashcards**, and the small **activity cards**.

! Sometimes the lists are different for **flashcards** and **activity cards**.

For **Phonics Drilling**, you only need full-size **flashcards**, although you will likely need the other sizes for other parts of the lesson.

Prepare your Materials



Check the rest of your equipment for this lesson:

- Uniforms
- Scoreboard Headers
- Score-sheets
- Flashcards**
- etc.

Put everything together in your **Team English Basket**.

My notes

In Class



Set The Scene:

If this is your student's first lesson in **phonics**, tell them that you realise they have been studying ABC since Anuban, but they probably never learned the sounds of the letters, as they have in Thai. You will start solving this problem today!

Prepare your Students: General



Set The Scene:

Ask your students how many of them feel that they can read English well.

Tell them that if they work hard at **phonics**, **every** student (even those with Dyslexia or Downs Syndrome) will be able to read English.



Try to arrange your classroom so that you can walk around easily. If your classroom is too crowded for that, think about how you can indicate to each student that you want them to respond.

If you cannot remember every name, you can use **Team English** numbers (e.g. "Blue 10").



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In Class

Prepare your Students: Single Graphemes



Arrange your **flashcards** on a table near you. Take the first group of 3-4 **flashcards**, and hold them in one hand.



Hold up the first **flashcard** and get the whole class to say the **phoneme** that the **grapheme** represents.

! Be careful to follow the pronunciation guide in the **Phonics Unit** notes. Sounds of letters in **phonics** are possibly quite different to what you have learned before.



If students are confused by the names and sounds of letters, show them a picture of a dog.

Ask your students to give the dog a name.

Then ask them what sound the dog makes.

Contrast the dog's name (e.g. Nam Wan) with its sound ("hong hong")



! Once the class is pronouncing the **phoneme** correctly, do **NOT** say it again yourself, except to correct students' pronunciation.

The purpose of drilling is to help students memorise things, but if they are mindlessly repeating after the teacher, their brains will not be active, so they will not remember anything.



If students cannot remember the sounds, try to give them hints instead of just telling them the answer.

Examples:

- For s: "It sounds like a leaking tyre"
- For p: "It's like blowing out a candle" (shown in picture)



Continue **randomly** to drill the first set of **graphemes/phonemes**.

! Keep changing the **flashcards**. Remember that the purpose of drilling is to help students **memorise** the **grapheme** to **phoneme** correspondences.

If you ask each team to respond to the same **flashcard**, only the first team must use their brains – the rest simply copy!



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In Class

Prepare your Students: Single Graphemes



When the class is responding well to the random **flashcards**, start **individual** drilling.

! Choose students **randomly** as well as the **flashcards**. If you go around the class in order, many students will not pay attention because they know that it will be a long time before their turn!

💡 Try to keep the energy level high, and the atmosphere a little chaotic! **Every student** in the class should feel a bit nervous – that it might be their turn next **at any time!**



If a student cannot answer, push them gently but ...

! Don't get angry! If you are patient, and supportive of your students, you will be very surprised at their abilities.

! And don't forget to praise your students when they are correct!



After a couple of minutes of random individual drilling, finish off this section with a few seconds of random whole-class drilling (to complete the sandwich).

Saying the **phonemes** together with their friends helps to give students confidence, especially if they have been embarrassed during the individual drilling.



Now take the next set of **flashcards** and repeat from step **5**.



Once you have drilled each set of 3-4 **flashcards**, **briefly** revise by drilling all of them together.

My notes



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In Class

Prepare your Students: Blending CV



Separate your **flashcards** into two piles – consonants and vowels.



Pick up two **flashcards** – one consonant and one vowel.

⚠️ If **blending** is new to your class, start with a consonant that can be sustained (e.g. “mmmm” or “ssss”) as it is easier to **blend** these consonants with vowels.



Hold up the two **flashcards** together, and show the whole class how to **blend** them.

💡 It is good to remind the students of the **graphemes**' Thai equivalents at this point. Show them that **blending** the **CV** in English is the same as in Thai.



Once the class is **blending** the **CV** correctly, change the vowel, and try to get students to **blend** the new vowel with the old consonant.



Continue changing vowels **randomly** until you have drilled all the vowels for this lesson.



Now select one vowel and **randomly** change the initial consonants.

⚠️ As usual, avoid simply telling your students the **blends**. Encourage them to try themselves first.

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In Class



Finally, get two students to help you. One holds the consonants, the other the vowels.

Prepare your Students: Blending CV



The helpers take turns to randomly change their **flashcards**.



Try some individual drilling, and finally whole-class drilling to complete the sandwich.

In Class



Separate your **flashcards** into three piles – initial consonants, vowels and final consonants.

! Most consonants can be either initial or final in English, but be careful of some. For example ‘h’ cannot be final and ‘ng’ cannot be initial.

Prepare your Students: Blending CVC



Get three students to help you. One holds the initial consonants, one the vowels and one the final consonants.



Remind your students that final consonants are different in English and Thai. In English, a consonant sounds the same at the end, as at the beginning of a syllable.

Although we used Thai equivalents to help students **blend CV**, do **not** use them for the final consonant or your students will pronounce them wrongly.

My notes



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In Class



Proceed as you did with **CV** drilling. Your helpers take turns to randomly change their **flashcards**.

Prepare your Students: Blending CVC



Swap the initial and final consonant sets from time to time, being careful of **graphemes** such as “ng” and “h”.



Continue, as usual, with individual drilling, and finally whole-class drilling to complete the sandwich.

My notes

After Class



Sit down and write a few notes about:

- What was good?
- What problems you had?
- What you should change next time?

Evaluation

My notes