| Term | Definition | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Phoneme | The smallest unit of sound in a spoken word. You cannot see a phoneme; you can only hear it. | The sound /d/ at the beginning of the word 'dog'. |
| Grapheme | The written representation of a phoneme. A grapheme can comprise either one, two or three (and very occasionally four) letters. | The grapheme 'ck' represents the /k/ sound at the end of the word 'chick'. |
| Digraph | A digraph is a grapheme that comprises two letters. | The word 'queen' has two digraphs – 'qu' and 'ee'. |
| Split Digraph | A split digraph is a digraph that is split by a consonant, usually a long vowel sound. | In the word 'some' the sound /u/ is represented by the 'o' **and** the 'e' even though they are separated by the grapheme 'm'. We would refer to this as the split digraph 'o-e'. |
| Vowel Digraph | A vowel digraph is a grapheme with two letters that represent a vowel sound (either short or long). | The digraph 'ea' represents the /e/ sound in the word 'head'. The digraph 'ue' represents the /oo/ sound in the word 'blue'. |
| Trigraph | A trigraph is a grapheme that comprises three letters. | The trigraph 'tch' represents the /ch/ sound in the word 'pitch'. |
| Vowel Trigraph | A vowel trigraph is a grapheme with three letters that represent a vowel sound (either short or long). | The trigraph 'oul' represents the /oo/ sound in the word 'could'. |
| Grapheme–Phoneme Correspondence (GPC) | The relationship of the phoneme and the grapheme that represents it and vice versa. | To see the grapheme 'sh' and know the sound that it will make. Or, to hear the sound /sh/ and know how to write the grapheme. |
| Blending | To say the sounds in individual words sufficiently quickly that they synthesise to make a word. | To hear the separate sounds /sh/ … /ee/ … /p/ and to 'glue them together' to say the word 'sheep'. |
| Segmenting | The opposite skill to blending. It involves being able to break a word into component phonemes. | To hear the word 'fish' and say the phonemes /f/ /i/ /sh/. |
| Decoding | To look at the individual graphemes that comprise a word, from left to right, and link with the corresponding phonemes. | To see the written word 'dog' and then say the phonemes /d/ /o/ /g/. |
| Encoding | To represent the phonemes in an individual word with the appropriate graphemes (spelling and writing). | To hear the spoken word 'cat', say /k/ /a/ /t/, and write appropriate graphemes to spell the word. |