KEY STAGE
1

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Phonics screening check
2015 scoring guidance

Standards
& Testing
Agency

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 pupil has to select the correct phoneme for the word, for example the 'ow' in 'blow' should not be pronounced as the 'ow' in 'cow'. However, when decoding a pseudo-word, all plausible alternative pronunciations are acceptable.

The tables on the next page provide guidance to teachers scoring the check on acceptable pronunciations of the pseudo-words in the check.

Regional pronunciations

Some of the pseudo-words in the screening check contain vowel digraphs that end with 'r', such as 'ur'. In a small number of regional dialects, the 'r' in words with these vowel digraphs is voiced and pupils who speak with these dialects will be known to their teachers. For these pupils, pseudo-words with a vowel digraph ending in 'r', such as 'nurt' may be pronounced as /nɜːrt/ instead of /nɜːt/. These pronunciations are acceptable alternatives in the relevant pseudo-words.

Section 1

Pseudo-word	Acceptable pronunciations	Phonemic representation
fip	This item uses the 'f' from 'fan' and rhymes with 'pip'.	/fɪp/
pon	This item uses the 'p' from 'pet' and rhymes with 'con'.	/pɒn/
hab	This item uses the 'h' from 'hit' and rhymes with 'dab'.	/hæb/
ulb	This item uses the 'u' from 'us' and rhymes with 'bulb'. All regional pronunciations of the 'u' are acceptable.	/ʊlb/ or /ʌlb/
dack	This item uses the 'd' from 'deck' and rhymes with 'sack'.	/dæk/
chob	This item uses the 'ch' from 'chip' and rhymes with 'blob'.	/tʃɒb/
nurt	This item uses the 'n' from 'nail' and rhymes with 'curt'.	/nɜːt/
queet	This item uses the 'qu' from 'quiet' and rhymes with 'greet'.	/kwiːt/
plap	This item uses the 'pl' from 'plot' and rhymes with 'wrap'.	/plæp/
froin	This item uses the 'fr' from 'freed' and rhymes with 'coin'.	/frɔɪn/
melp	This item uses the 'm' from 'milk' and rhymes with 'help'.	/mɛlp/
heent	This item combines the 'hee' from 'heel' and the 'nt' from 'blunt'.	/hiːnt/

Section 2

Pseudo-word	Acceptable pronunciations	Phonemic representation
yair	This item uses the 'y' from 'yoke' and rhymes with 'hair'.	/jɛə/
blies	This item combines the 'bl' from 'black' and the 'ies' from 'tries' or 'carries'.	/bliz/ or /blaɪz/
keam	This item uses the 'k' from 'keep' and rhymes with 'beam'.	/kiːm/
whape	This item uses the 'wh' from 'while' and rhymes with 'grape'.	/weɪp/
braft	This item uses the 'br' from 'brick' and rhymes with 'craft'. All regional pronunciations of the 'a' are acceptable.	/bræft/ or /brɑːft/
thrant	This item uses the 'thr' from 'throw' and rhymes with 'plant'.	/ðrænt/ or /θrænt/ or /ðrɑːnt/ or /θrɑːnt/
sprop	This item uses the 'spr' from 'spray' and rhymes with 'drop'.	/sprɒp/
strow	This item uses the 'str' from 'stray' and rhymes with 'grow' or 'brow'.	/straʊ/ or /strəʊ/