Phonics Assessment (using non-words)

CVC words

baf	wod	mek	nug	jip	ron
cuz	yen	hax	vil	sot	quet

Double consonants

tess   rill   guck   daff   bozz

Consonant digraphs

chun   shik   dath   beng   donk

R-controlled vowels (basic)

gar   kord   turb   yerd   lirz

oo, oi, oy, ow, ay, ew

goop*   moin   foy   yow*   jay   haw   zew

Vowel digraphs

boun	deek	caig	roax	pigh	rie
moe	gue	yeaf*			

R-controlled vowels (advanced)

jear*   wair   dore   lare   zoar

Other

minny   gover*   lutch   whib

e-controlled vowels

bime   cate   yode   bupe

*can have more than once correct pronunciation e.g. in 'goop' the oo can be read as the short oo sound, as in look, or as the long oo sound, as in moon

About this Phonics Assessment

Why use non-words?

Some children are very good at remembering words 'by sight'. For example, a child may see the word 'play' several times when reading / being read to, and therefore learn how to read the word 'play' without decoding it (sounding it out).

This may mean that an adult working with the child assumes that they know that the grapheme 'ay' represents the long a sound, when in fact the child has just learnt to read this word by recognising the whole word 'on sight'. (A grapheme is a letter or group of letters that are used to represent a sound.)

Assessing a child's phonics knowledge and skill using non-words ensures that the child is not simply reading the words 'on sight' by recognising them. Non-words ensure that the child has to decode the word in order to read it; therefore using non-words can give a more accurate assessment of a child's phonics knowledge and skill.

How to use the assessment?

Give one copy of the assessment to the child and keep one copy of the assessment for yourself.

Make sure that you emphasise to the child:

- that the words are made-up / not real
- that if they don't recognise the word or if the word sounds silly, this does not matter
- that they need to sound out each word, not try to read them 'on sight'

Have the child read the words, one at a time. As the child is reading, circle / underline any letters / words / graphemes that the child could not decode or found tricky. Make sure you do this in a manner so that at a later date you can still understand what mistakes the child made. If other people are helping you to assess a group of children, ensure that you all agree on a system, so that if one person completes the assessment, everyone else can understand what mistakes the child made and where they struggled.

Who is the phonics assessment for?

The phonics assessment will be mostly appropriate for children in Year 1 (age 5 to 6 years old). However, it can also be used to assess older children who struggle with reading or who join school later than is usual in the UK.

What to do once you have the results?

Once you have completed the assessment, you should have a clear indication of any gaps in the child's knowledge. You can then have the child work on these weaknesses / gaps using the appropriate phonics teaching resources on www.SaveTeachersSundays.com.

Who developed this Phonics Assessment?

As with all of the resources on SaveTeachersSundays.com, I (Raymond Rodgers, owner of STS) developed this phonics assessment. In addition to working in a Reception class in an outstanding primary school in London, I have also completed a Postgraduate Diploma (a Masters without the dissertation) in Dyslexia and Literacy.