



# Reading Planet Rocket Phonics Parent Guide



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## Parent Guide author

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# What is Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP)?

Systematic Synthetic Phonics is a way of teaching children to read, write and spell. The sounds that children learn are taught in a specific, systematic order (not alphabetically) so that children can begin to build words from these sounds as early as possible.

Phonics supports children to hear, identify and link the sounds that letters make (phonemes) to what the letters look like when written down (graphemes). This helps children to recognise and read words, using knowledge of the sounds to read new or unfamiliar words.



# What is Reading Planet Rocket Phonics?

Rocket Phonics is a Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme that supports your child to learn all the skills needed to successfully read, write and spell. It is part of the Reading Planet scheme (learn more about the scheme on page 12).

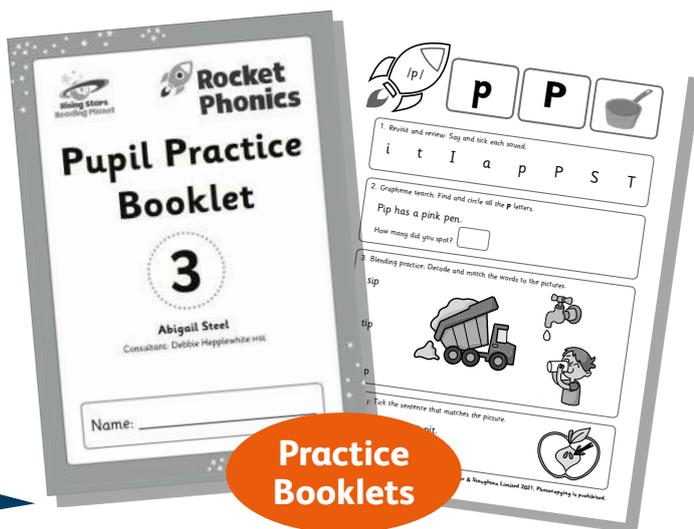
Within the programme, there are lots of beautifully created and engaging resources such as flashcards, sound mats, and online, interactive Big Books and quizzes to develop learning further. There is also a fully matched series of decodable reading books from a variety of genres, which will be used in class as well as sent home for home reading. These books can also be accessed on the online platform to read as eBooks. If your school has a subscription to Rocket Phonics Online, they can allocate the eBooks for home reading.



Fully-decodable reading books



Online resources



Practice Booklets



# What does this mean for my child?

In their Rocket Phonics lessons, your child will learn to recognise, identify, say and read all of the 44 sounds of the English language along with writing and spelling them.

They will revisit sounds they have learned, learn new sounds, take part in stimulating activities to practise and apply their reading, writing and spelling skills and contribute to comprehension quizzes to check for understanding.

On pages 6 to 8 are the sounds in the order that your child will learn them and a few examples of words that they will be able to read once each sound is learned and retained. Along with example words, each sound for the Pink A, Pink B, Red A and the majority of the Red B colour band sounds have a little tip with regards to the pronunciation of the sound. For the later sounds in Red B and moving on to Yellow book band sounds and beyond, it is much easier to say the example words slowly a few times, as these letter-sound correspondences are much more complex.

The sounds are grouped into colour bands, relating to the colour books that your child will be able to read as they explore new letter-sounds.



# Colour bands and sounds

## Pink A

s – ssssun (keep teeth together and hiss)

sat, sit

a – a-a-a (open mouth wide as if to bite an apple)

as, at

t – (tick tongue behind the teeth)

tap, tan

i – i-i-i (make a sharp sound at the back of the throat)

it, is

p – (push lips together and let go saying 'p', avoid the 'uh' at the end, almost like a short outward breath)

pat, pin

n – nnnnet (keep tongue behind teeth)

nap, an

m – mmmmouse (keep lips pressed together hard)

mat, map

d\* – (tap tongue behind teeth)

dip, and

g\* – (make a soft sound in your throat)

gap, dig

o – o-o-o (push out lips; make an 'O' shape with your mouth)

got, pot

c – (make a sharp click at the back of your throat)

cat, can

k – (make a sharp click at the back of your throat)

kit, kid

## Pink B

ck – (make a sharp click at the back of your throat)

pick, sock

e – e-e-e (release mouth slightly from an open position)

peg, met

u – u-u-u (make a short sound at the back of your throat)

up, sun

r – rrrrabbit (say rrr as if you're growling)

rat, run

h – (say 'h' as you sharply breathe out with mouth open)

hop, hen

b\* – (press lips together and say 'b', pushing lips out as you say it)

bat, big

f – fffffrog (keep teeth on bottom lip and force air out sharply)

fun, fit

ff – (keep teeth on bottom lip and force air out sharply)

off, huff

l – lllladder (keep pointed, curled tongue behind top teeth)

let, luck

ll – (keep pointed, curled tongue behind top teeth)

hill, tell

ss – (keep teeth together and hiss)

mess, fuss

🔊 Listen to the pronunciation for every sound on the [Reading Planet Rocket Phonics YouTube playlist](#)

## Red A

**j – jjjjjug** (push lips forward, lips slightly open, pressing teeth together and force air out)

jam, jump

**v – vvvvvan** (keep teeth on bottom lip and gently force air out)

van, velvet

**w\*** – (keep lips tightly pursed and push air out softly)

went, wind

**x** – (say a sharp 'c' and add 's')

mix, next

**y\*** – (keep edges of tongue against teeth)

yes, yuck

**z & zz** – zzzzebra (keep teeth together and make a buzzing sound)

zip, buzz

**/z/ s** – (keep teeth together and make a buzzing sound)

hens, bags

**qu** – (keep lips pursed as you say 'cw')

quick, squid

## Red B

**ch** – (keep edges of tongue against teeth, push tongue to roof of mouth and purse lips, force short, sharp air out)

chop, bench

**sh** – shhhheep (make the shhhhh noise as if you are telling someone to be quiet!)

ship, brush

**th** – thhhhumb (place tongue forward in front of top teeth and breathe out sharply)

bath, then

**ng** – rinnng (push tongue up to roof of mouth, make sound from the back of the throat)

song, bring

ai – chain, tail

ee – sheep, feel

igh – light, bright

oa – goat, coach

oo – spoon, boot

oo – book, good

\*You will find these sounds difficult to pronounce without making a natural 'uh' sound at the end.



## Yellow

ar – smart, garden  
or – thorn, sort  
ur – fur, turn  
ow – how, crowd  
oi – point, coin  
ear – fear, beard  
air – hair, chair  
ure – pure, secure  
er – dinner, longer

## Blue

wh – which, whisper  
ph – dolphin, phonics  
ay – play, crayon  
a-e – make, shake  
a – acorn, label  
ea – peach, team  
e-e – complete, these  
ie – field, cookie  
ie – pie, tried  
i-e – shine, smile  
y – sky, dry  
i – find, remind  
ow – snow, window  
o-e – home, alone  
oe – toe, tomatoes  
o – go, both  
ey – donkey, valley  
y – happy, silly

## Green

ue – clue, glue  
u-e – flute, rule  
u – push, put  
ue – due, statue  
u-e – cube, confused  
u – unicorn, human  
ew – chew, screw  
ew – news, stew  
ir – shirt, thirteen  
er – herb, desert  
ou – cloud, sound  
oy – toy, enjoy  
au – launch, author  
aw – yawn, claw  
ou – you, soup  
ou – shoulder, mould  
oul – could, should  
ear – earth, search  
or – world, worth  
eer – cheer, career  
are – care, square  
ear – bear, wear  
ere – there, everywhere  
al – all, walk  
our – four, your  
ore – more, before  
oor – door, floor  
augh – caught, daughter

## Orange

ci, cy, ce – city, cycle, parcel  
gi, ge, gy – giant, gemstones, energy  
se – house, grease  
ce – prince, bounce  
ea – head, feather  
ch – school, chemist  
ch – chef, machine  
ge – cage, cottage  
dge – bridge, fudge  
o – brother, wonder  
le – bottle, giggle  
ed – yelled, roared  
ed – mixed, stopped  
mb – comb, thumb  
kn – know, knuckle  
gn – gnome, sign  
wr – wrong, wrap  
tch – catch, kitchen  
s, si, ge – treasure, television, collage  
ture – picture, creature  
y – gym, pyramid  
sc – scissors, scene  
st – whistle, castle  
(w)a – watch, want  
ssi – mission, passion  
ci – magician, special  
ti – station, potion

# Rocket Phonics Next Steps

## What is *Rocket Phonics Next Steps*?

Rocket Phonics Next Steps is the continuation of Rocket Phonics. This programme supports children aged 6–7 with spelling, however with a specific focus on phonics. We encourage children to utilise their phonics skills already learned to support them with their spelling knowledge.

## Why do schools use *Rocket Phonics Next Steps*?

We find that once children have completed the alphabetic code, they are quickly moved onto a spelling programme. Often this programme does not have enough of a focus on phonics. Therefore, children can sometimes begin to lose their phonics skills (blending and segmenting) that they worked so hard to master and then begin to struggle with spelling. This is why, Rocket Phonics Next Steps aims to solve this issue, through focusing on spelling with an emphasis on phonics. Spelling words correctly is very much reliant on segmenting words into individual letter sounds to be able to hear which sounds the word contains, to be able to attempt to spell it. The way that Rocket Phonics Next Steps is structured, allows children to develop their spelling knowledge and skills through actively utilising their phonics skills alongside spelling, to ensure practice, application, and retainment.

## What do children learn in *Rocket Phonics Next Steps* and why?

In Rocket Phonics Next Steps, children learn to spell using their phonics knowledge to support them. Rocket Phonics Next Steps is very effective, with regards to the structure. The content that is taught very much reflects the order of teaching that Rocket Phonics has followed already and therefore, this gives children a chance to revise and have another opportunity to further embed their knowledge on a deeper and broader scale.



## Colour banding for *Rocket Phonics Next Steps*

### Reading Planet Levelled Reading Books.

The levelled Comet Street Kids and Galaxy reading books provide focused practice of age-appropriate word reading and comprehension skills. The books are fully aligned with the programme, and can be used for whole-class, group guided, one-to-one and independent reading sessions.

The books are available in print as well as eBooks that can be assigned to children for home use with a Rocket Phonics Next Steps subscription. The eBooks include comprehension quizzes, where results are visible to teachers, who can then provide further support and challenge to specific areas of reading for individual children.

Colour band	Features
<b>Turquoise</b>	<p>Books include longer descriptions and include a wider range of punctuation and unusual vocabulary.</p> <p>Simple plots with a greater variety of sentence structures and lengths are used in fiction texts.</p> <p>Non-fiction texts contain longer, more formal sentences, though still with some repeated vocabulary.</p>
<b>Purple</b>	<p>Children may be able to pick up on simple themes.</p> <p>There are more opportunities for children to ask and answer questions about characters. Sentence structures become longer and more complex but are still straightforward to understand.</p>
<b>Gold</b>	<p>Books contain more challenging sentence structures, including new and unfamiliar words.</p> <p>The storyline may be more involved and reflect the feelings of the writer but still predominantly include a simple and defined beginning, middle and end.</p>
<b>White</b>	<p>Children may be surprised or have their expectations challenged during reading. There may be more than one point of view presented and information is suggested, encouraging children to infer. Short chapters and a wider range of texts are introduced.</p> <p>Non-fiction texts are placed in a broader context and include more detailed information. An increased amount of technical vocabulary may be included.</p>

# Top tips to support your child's reading at home

## 1. Read as regularly as you can at home

- Reading at home is just as important as reading at school. It gives children a chance for extra practice (which is always a good thing!) and the opportunity to develop a language-rich environment at home.
- Read to your child. This may sound obvious but showcasing your love of reading and giving your child the opportunity to listen to *you* read is just as valuable as them reading to you. Some parents may think that reading at home is all about hearing your child read, which *is* a **very** important part of developing their reading skills, however allowing them into your world of reading creates a new, exciting experience that will boost their love of books.

### Did you know?

Children who read outside of school every day are five times as likely to read above the expected level compared with those who don't.

**Let's get reading!**

## 2. Build reading into your child's daily routine

- Find a regular time for reading in your child's day, so that they can start to expect it as part of their regular routine. It can be any time: before bed, after dinner, or in the morning after breakfast when they have more energy.
- Don't get caught up with *how much* time your child spends reading – if they need a break that is completely fine! Reading can require a lot of mental effort and stamina, especially during the early stages and we don't want to 'put children off' by forcing them to continue reading when they need a rest.
- Your child doesn't need to read an entire book in one go. Taking regular breaks will give your child a chance to gradually build their reading stamina and soon they will be able to read for longer.

## 3. Encourage reading a variety of materials

- Don't feel like your child only has to read books. They can read anything and everything – get creative! Magazines, newspapers, recipes, game instructions – the list is endless!
- When you are out and about there are so many things that we read automatically and successfully using our reading skills without even realising! Encourage your child to read things like road names and signs, shop names, bus and train timetables, posters and leaflets. This will support your child's application of the sounds that they know to real life.





## 4. Develop your child's love of reading

- Give books as presents
- Encourage your child to organise book swaps with friends
- Visit the local library or book shop together regularly
- Have a family bookshelf and start a family book club
- Alternate between print books and eBooks
- Watch the film version once your child has read the print version
- Mix it up: read non-fiction books as well as fiction books



## 5. Dos and Don'ts when your child is learning to read...

### Do

- Give them a chance to sound out the word in their head.
- Encourage your child to sound the word out aloud.
- Ask them to read the word again if they read it wrong.
- Ask your child questions about what is happening in the story: predict, describe characters, explain the plot and order the events.
- Be patient – reading is a tricky skill; your child will get there in the end.
- Give lots of support, praise and encouragement to boost their confidence.

### Don't

- Immediately correct them if they read a word incorrectly.
- Read the words for them.
- Ask your child to guess what the word might be.
- Ask your child to look at the pictures for clues to guess what the word might be.
- Ask your child to re-read the sentence and think what the word could be.



# Simple phonics glossary

The phonics glossary below includes the main key terms that are useful to know when supporting your child to read using phonics.

<b>blending</b>	The process of using phonics for reading. Children identify and blend the individual sounds together to hear and say the whole word.
<b>cvc, ccvc, cvcc</b>	These represent how words are structured. The 'c' = consonant and the 'v' = vowel. E.g. <b>cat</b> = <b>cvc</b> <b>drip</b> = <b>ccvc</b> <b>milk</b> = <b>cvcc</b>
<b>common exception word (CEW)</b>	Sometimes called a tricky word, these words have an unusual or tricky spelling, e.g. said, one, their. They are not spelt as they sound.
<b>grapheme</b>	A letter or group of letters representing one sound. A grapheme is what the sound looks like when written down; the letter shape.
<b>phoneme</b>	The sound that a letter or group of letters makes. This may also be referred to as a letter-sound.
<b>segmenting</b>	Using phonics skills to support spelling and writing. Children listen to the whole word and break it up into the letter-sounds. E.g. 'lunch' can be segmented as l-u-n-ch.
<b>sound out</b>	Encouraging children to say each individual sound in a word before saying the whole word aloud.





# About Reading Planet

Reading Planet is a reading scheme used in schools with children aged 4–11. It includes hundreds of fiction and non-fiction reading books to help children develop essential reading skills and build a lifelong love of reading. There are several strands within the scheme including:

**Lift-off** **Lift-off**  
First Words

Wordless and first words books

**Rocket Phonics**

Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme

**COMET STREET KIDS**

Action-packed character stories

**Galaxy**

Topic-linked fiction and non-fiction

## Reading Planet Online

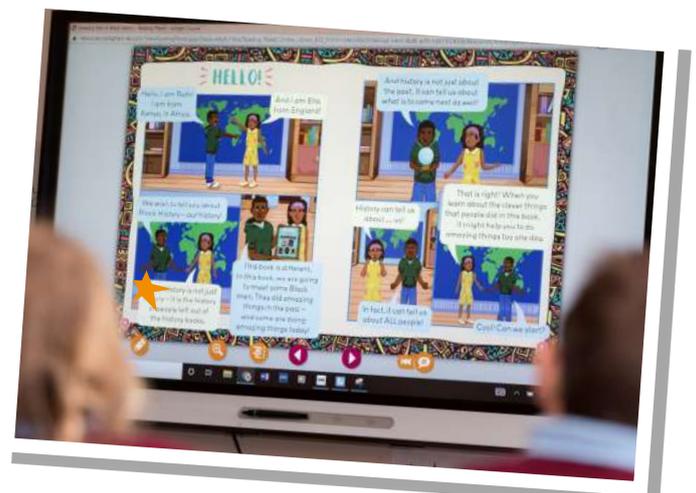
Every Reading Planet book is available as an interactive eBook via a school subscription to Reading Planet Online.\* The available subscriptions are:

- Reading Planet Online: Lilac – White (for ages 4–7)
- Reading Planet Online: Stars – Supernova (for ages 7–11)
- Reading Planet Rocket Phonics Online (for ages 4–6)
- Reading Planet Rocket Phonics Online: Next Steps (for ages 6–7)

As part of their subscription, schools can allocate eBooks for children to read at home, on any device. Children can also take online quizzes designed to develop comprehension and vocabulary skills.



Visit the [Reading Planet YouTube playlist](#) to see the scheme in action



\*Please note that Reading Planet Online and Rocket Phonics can only be purchased by schools.