

Vowels

a

e

i

o

u

Bb

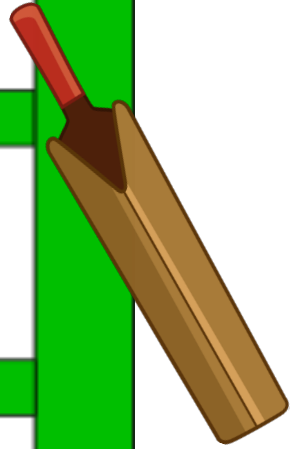
ba

be

bi

bo

bu



Cc

ca

ke

ki

co

cu



Dd

da

de

di

do

du

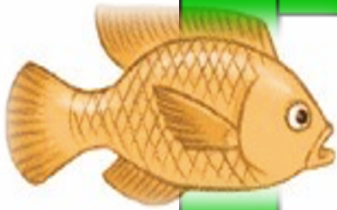


Ff

fa



fe



fi

fo

fu

Gg

ga

ge

gi

go

gu



Hh

ha

he

hi

ho

hu



Jj



ja

je

ji

jo

ju



Ll

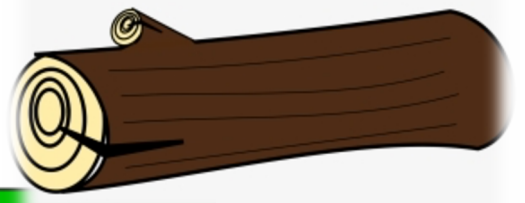


la

le

li

lo



lu

Mm



ma

me

mi

mo

mu



Nn

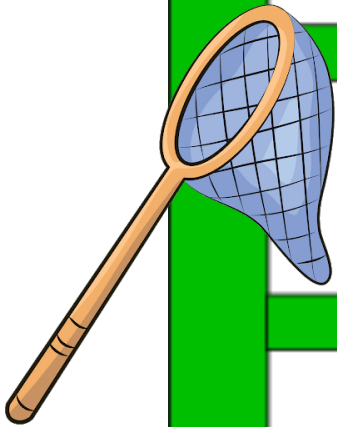
na

ne

ni

no

nu



Pp



pa

pe

pi

po

pu



Qq

qua

que

qui

quo

qu



Rr



ra

re

ri

ro

ru



Ss

sa

se

si

so

su



Tt

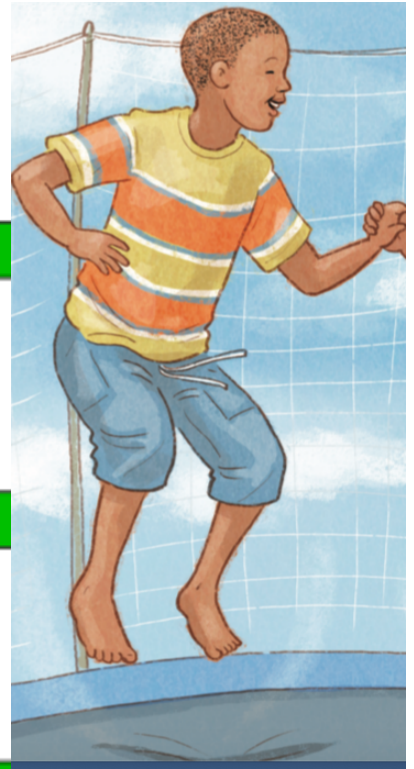
ta

te

ti

to

tu



Vv

va

ve

vi

vo

vu



Ww

wa

we

wi

wo

wu



Xx

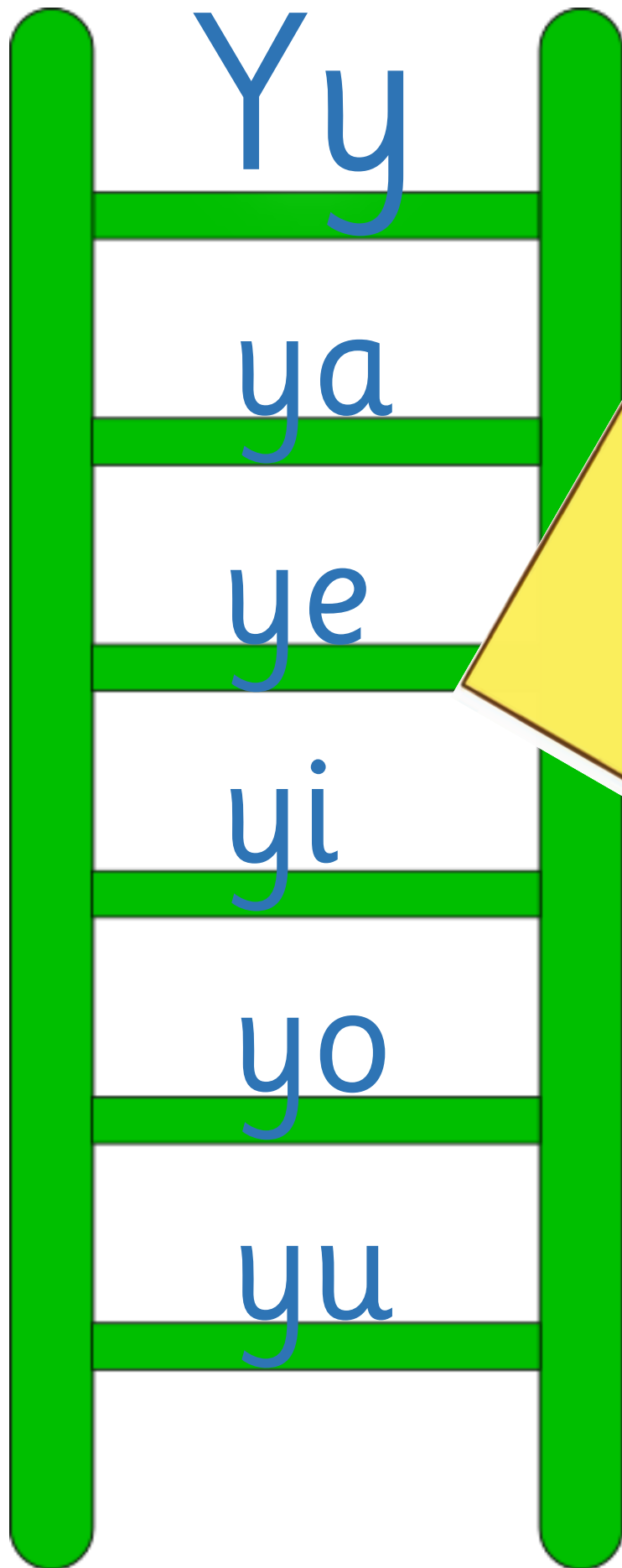
ax

ex

ix

ox

ux



Yy

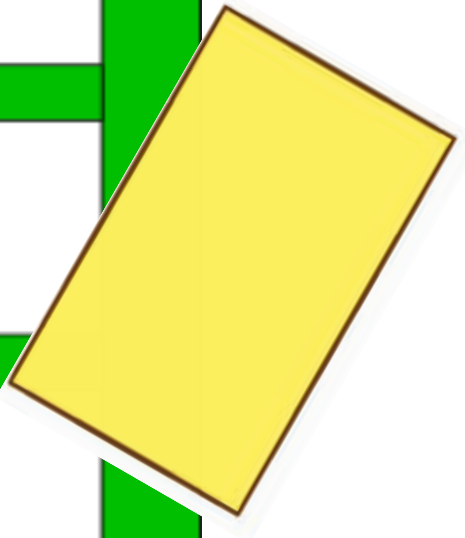
ya

ye

yi

yo

yu



Zz

za

ze

zi

zo

zu



How to use the phonics blend ladders

Initially, children learn to recognise and say the names of the letters of the alphabet. (Ay, Bee, Cee) More importantly, they learn to associate the visual shape of the letters with the **sounds** those letters represent. (/a/ in apple – say it with its clue word because /a/ in ape is not the same!)

Once they have learned to recognize and say the letter sounds, they learn to put them together to make words. For example:



c – a – t cat



Once the children know the letters and can sound out words, it is time to teach them phonic blends.

What is a phonic blend?

- A phonic blend is when two or more letters are next to each other and you can hear the sound each letter makes. e.g. **ba**-g; **mu**-g; **ze**-bra, **cl**-ap.
- Some blends are consonant + vowel → **ta** - p;
- Other blends are two or more consonants → **dr** op. → **str** eet
- Phonic blends may occur at the **beginning** or at the **end** of words:

e.g. la+mp = **lamp** tr+ap = **trap** bl+end = **blend**

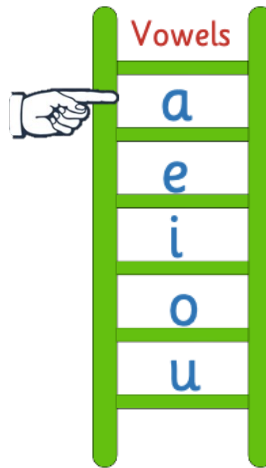
Why are phonic blends useful in learning to read?

When children recognize and use phonic blends, it makes their reading quicker and easier. Instead of having to sound out each letter one by one, they will see and say the phonic blend as one sound:

ba+t = bat mu+g = mug etc.

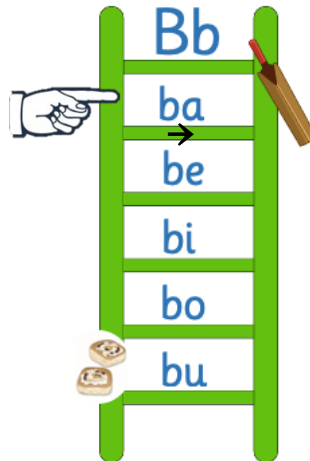
Introducing blend ladders:

Introducing the blend ladders, teachers first remind learners of the vowel sounds, pointing at the letters and reading them together – saying their SOUNDS - from top to bottom - a e i o u.



Then, pointing out the consonant in front of each vowel, and moving your finger under the two letters to say the blend, the children will read and say their sounds:

b→a	ba
b→e	be
b→i	bi
b→o	bo
b→u	bu

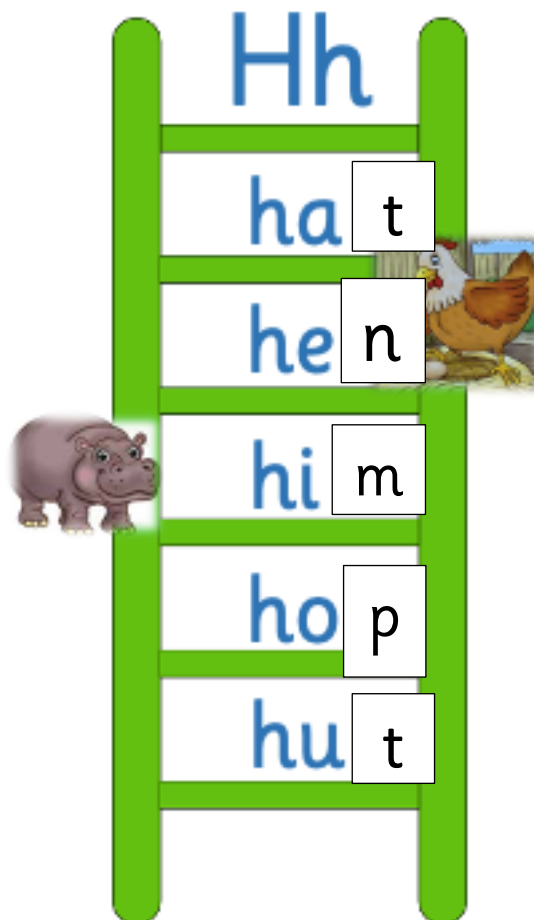


Once introduced as explained above, the blend ladders may be practised daily as rote learning – with the children chanting as the teacher points at each blend. Blank blend ladders may be copied and the children write the blends in as above, further consolidating their learning.

TWO POINTS TO NOTICE:

1. The letters 'c' and 'k' share one ladder. The letter 'k' always says the sound of /k/ like in /k/itten. However, when the letter 'c' is followed by the letters 'i' or 'e', this usually changes the sound the letter 'c' makes. It no longer says /k/ but now says the sound /s/ - as in city, circle; celebrate or cent.
2. The letter 'x' is a **diphone**, which is when one letter makes 2 sounds. In this case, 'x' says /k/s/ - as in box, fix, coax and exit. When found at the start of a word, the letter 'x' usually says the sound of /z/ - as in xylophone, xerox, or a name such as Xavier. As young children will most likely meet the letter 'x' at the end of words, this blend ladder features 'x' blending *after* the vowel: ax, ex, ix, ox, ux.

Some simple word work may follow – the teacher places an appropriate letter card beside the blend on the steps of the ladder. e.g.



- As the children become more familiar with the routine of using blend ladders, add an element of fun by using them to make 'nonsense words', by adding a random consonant at the end – haz, hez, hiz, hoz, huz.

- Again, once the routine is established, the children will be able to rattle off the ladder from top to bottom. So change things around and ask them to say the blends from the bottom of the ladder to the top. It's great to engage their thinking brains again!
- Ask the children to whisper, clap, write the blend on their hand or the floor, close their eyes whilst saying them – the more senses engaged, the better!

Find the free downloadable alphabet letter cards at the link below:

<https://sunrisereaders.wordpress.com/2020/07/20/alphabet-letter-cards-are-useful-for-building-words/>

<https://sunrisereaders.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/alphabet-letter-cards-for-word-building.pdf>

Find free downloadable blend ladder template worksheets for children to write on: