

What is phonological awareness?



Phonological awareness is the awareness of the sound structure of language. It is the ability to recognise that words are made up from different sounds, and that words have different parts.

Why is phonological awareness important?



Phonological awareness covers a set of skills a person needs to be able to develop literacy – the ability to read and write. To be successful at reading, you need to understand and hear the difference between the sounds that appear in words and understand how words and sentences are built and how the sounds fit together. You need to be able to map sounds you hear to the written letters.

When are these activities useful?



- When your child is having difficulty with using speech sounds accurately.
- When your child is having difficulty with learning phonics and the skills needed to read.

What does it mean?



These are some of the words you may see when you are working on phonological awareness skills and what they mean:

- **Syllable** – A syllable is a part of a word containing one vowel sound – it may also have a consonant sound attached, e.g. ‘eye’ is a syllable, as is ‘bye’. A word can have one syllable, e.g. ‘cat’, or more syllables, ‘ta ble’ (two), ‘ca ter pi llar’ (four).
- **Syllable awareness** is having the following skills:
 - Knowing how many syllables are in a word and being able to tap them out.
 - Being able to split a word into syllables, e.g. Say ‘postman’ without ‘man’ - ‘post’.
 - Being able to put a word together from the syllables, e.g. What word does ‘um’ ‘bre’ ‘lla’ make?
- **Rhyming words** – Words that rhyme have the same sound or set of sounds at the end of the word, e.g. ‘sun’ and ‘fun’, ‘mop’ and ‘top’.
- **Rhyme awareness** – The skill of being able to identify words that rhyme, e.g. ‘cat’ and ‘sat’ rhyme, ‘cat and ‘top’ do not rhyme.
- **Rhyme production** – The skill of being able to produce and say words that rhyme, e.g. being able to say words that rhyme with ‘dog’, e.g. ‘log’ ‘bog’ ‘fog’.
- **Alliteration** – The skill of being able to sort words that start or end with the same sound as other words, e.g. ‘boat’ and ‘bow’ both start with a ‘b’ sound, ‘pot’ and ‘cat’ both end with a ‘t’ sound. This is about listening to the sound, not how it is written, e.g. ‘sugar’ starts with a ‘sh’ sound, not a ‘s’ as it is written.