

Parent Quick Start Guide to Twinkl Phonics Minibooks

The Twinkl Phonics Minibooks can be found [here](#). They are designed to be used with the daily Twinkl Phonics PowerPoints, which can be found [here](#), but can also be used as stand-alone reading books. They follow the exciting adventures of Kit and Sam.



This quick [guide](#) shows you how to print and fold the minibooks.

What Are the Minibooks For?

For each week, there are two minibooks – one for reading and one for writing.

The reading minibooks give children the opportunity to develop their reading skills by applying the new sounds (phonemes/graphemes*) or spelling rules they have learnt from the PowerPoints that week. The minibooks contain decodable words that can be sounded out and tricky or common exception words*. In Levels 2-5, these are colour-coded so you can see which words to encourage your child to sound out and which words contain parts that cannot be sounded out and need to be learnt through active repetition.

The writing minibooks help children to develop their writing and spelling by using the new letters/graphemes or sounds/phonemes (e.g. 'sh' in ship, 'ee' in feet or 'air' in chair) they have learnt. Children progress from writing single words to writing sentences to retell the week's PowerPoint story.

For each week, there is an additional reading book available with a different storyline. This can be used for further reading practice of the sounds taught, if needed.

How Do I Help My Child to Use the Reading Minibooks?

You can help your child to read the minibooks as you would do if they were reading their book from school. Try to keep other distractions to a minimum and sit in a quiet space, if possible.

- Encourage them to follow the words with their finger and say the sounds that the letters make. In Levels 2, 3 and 4, the words that can be sounded out have sound buttons underneath them. You can support your child to read the words by asking them to press each sound button and say the sound the letter(s) makes. You can see a video for how to pronounce pure sounds by clicking [here](#) or Level 3 sounds by clicking [here](#).

- Once they have sounded out the letters/graphemes*, encourage your child to blend (put together) the sounds to say the whole word. You may need to help them to say the sounds quicker and quicker until they run or blend into each other. Watch this short [video](#) that explains how to blend.
- Depending on which level your child is reading, you may need to encourage them to look for the digraphs* or trigraphs*, which have sound bars underneath them, e.g. ss, ll, ee, ar, oa, igh, ure. Remind them that these graphemes make one sound and we say one sound when we press the sound button.
- The tricky words or common exception words* are highlighted in dark pink and cannot be fully sounded out. You may need to tell your child these words if they can't remember them from the PowerPoint. Tricky words or common exception words are words that contain parts that cannot be sounded out using the sounds the child has learnt. Lots of practice and revision are useful for helping children learn these words.
- If your child makes a mistake, you can encourage them to read it back and listen to themselves to see if what they have said makes sense. Encourage them to read it again and support them by sounding it out with them.
- Here is an example of one of the pages in the Level 2 book, 'Let's Go!'



common exception words

Kit and Sam go to the bell.

sound buttons

sound bars

How Can I Support My Child to Use the Writing Minibooks?

Before a child can write, they need to talk about what they are going to write. Depending on which level your child is using, this may vary from a single word to a caption (a label for the picture, without a capital letter or full stop) to a sentence.

Look at the pictures in the minibooks and talk about what happened in the story. This oral rehearsing helps a child keep track of what they want to write while their brain is busy thinking about what the letters look like and how to physically write. Encourage your child to write about what they can see in the picture and to read back what they have written. They do not have to write the story exactly as it appears in the reading book. The writing books give your child the opportunity to create their own writing on the same theme as the book.

Don't feel that you need to fill the entire book in one session. You may wish to do a page a day or just pick and choose the pages that interest your child.

Level 2 Writers

- Begin with the first word your child wants to write and say the whole word, for example hiss.
- Now, sound-talk the word. This means breaking it up into all of the sounds (phonemes*). Be careful to say the pure sounds so it sounds like this, h-i-sssssss.
- Encourage your child to listen for the first sound and write it down. They may need support to remember what it looks like so you could use this [Level 2 Sound Mat](#). Keep working your way through the sounds in the word. You may need to keep repeating the word as sound-talk and pause, for example "h, i" to help them to hear that 'i' comes after 'h', then say "h-i-sssssss" for them to identify the 's' sound.
- You may also wish to use this [Letter Formation Desk Mat](#) to see how to write the letters of the alphabet.

Level 3 Writers

- Look at the picture from the minibook and ask your child to say their sentence out loud.
- Begin with the first word and sound-talk that word. This means breaking it up into all of the sounds (phonemes*), e.g. qu-a-ck. Be careful to say the pure sounds so it sounds like this, qu-a-ck.
- Encourage your child to listen for the first sound and write it down. You could look at this [Level 2 and 3 Sound Mat](#) to remember what they look like. Keep working your way through the sounds in the word.
- You may need to keep repeating the word as sound-talk and pause emphasising the last sound, e.g. saying, "qu-a" to help them hear that 'a' comes after 'qu', then say "qu-a-ck" to hear the 'ck' sound.
- The Level 2 and 3 Sound Mat will be useful for remembering how to write down the sounds that are made up of two or three letters, e.g. sh, ng, oi, ar, igh, ure.
- Your child may want to write a tricky word in their caption or sentence. They may be able to remember how to write it, but if not you can help them by finding the word on this [Level 3 Tricky Word Mat](#). At this stage, children are not expected to spell these words, only read them.
- Encourage your child to use a finger space between words. You may also wish to encourage them to use a capital letter or full stop if they have been doing so at school.

Level 4 Writers

- As with Level 3, your child may need support to write down the sounds that are made up of two or three letters, e.g. sh, ng, oi, ar, igh, ure. You can use the [Level 2 and 3 Sound Mat](#) to help them.
- In Level 4, children learn how to spell words with adjacent consonants, which are two or more letters which each make their own individual sounds in a word, e.g. the 'f' and 'r' in frog or the 's' and 't' in toast. You can help by encouraging children to sound-talk these words slowly and clearly, counting the sounds as you say them, e.g. "Toast, t-oa-s-t, there are four sounds in toast. Did you write all four sounds down?"
- Children will also practise writing polysyllabic words, such as 'lunchbox' or 'thunder'. For these words, help your child to break them into their individual syllables first (also called 'beats') and then sound-talk to write each syllable in turn.
- This [Level 4 Tricky Word Mat](#) may be useful if your child wants to write some tricky words in their sentence.

Level 5 Writers

- In Level 5, children learn new graphemes (spellings) for the sounds they already know. For example, they learn that 'ay', 'a' and 'a_e' are other ways to spell the 'ai' sound, which they learnt in Level 3.
- By this stage, children will have more independence and strategies for writing and spelling. You can still support them by encouraging them to listen to all of the sounds in a word, sound them out and to think carefully about which grapheme (spelling) to use. This [Level 5 Sound Mat](#) pack contains the Sound Families so your child can see all of the graphemes (spellings) for each sound.
- You can use these [Level 5 Common Exception Words](#) to support your child when they are spelling tricky or common exception words.

Level 6 Writers

- By Level 6, the last stage in phonics teaching, your child will be much more independent at writing and spelling. This doesn't mean that you can't help your child, though! There are still new graphemes (spellings), grammatical rules and spelling rules that will be taught throughout the PowerPoints.
- This [Whole Scheme Sound Mat](#) will be useful in choosing the correct spelling of a sound when writing.
- You can use these [Level 6 Common Exception Words](#) to support your child when they are spelling tricky or common exception words.

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*Phonics Vocabulary Explained

Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that can be put together to make words. We use the word 'phoneme' if we are talking about a spoken sound. For example, 'at' has two phonemes, a-t; 'cup' has three phonemes, c-u-p; 'shark' has three phonemes, sh-ar-k; 'float' has four, f-l-oa-t.

Graphemes are a way of writing down phonemes. They may be single letters, two letters (digraph) or three letters (trigraphs) but they all represent one sound (phoneme), e.g. 'c' in cup is a grapheme, 'ee' in feet is a grapheme, 'igh' in night is a grapheme.

Tricky or Common Exception Words – In Levels 2, 3, and 4, we refer to words that cannot be fully sounded out as tricky words. These are words that cannot be sounded out using the phonemes that children have learnt in these levels. Children need to learn these words through active repetition. In Levels 5 and 6, these words are referred to as common exception words as they do not follow the most common spelling rules in the English language. The common exception words in Levels 5 and 6 meet the requirements of the 2014 English National Curriculum.