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Knowledge, Skills & Progress

Through a carefully crafted sequence, Sounds-Write starts by introducing students to one-to-one sound-letter correspondences through the Initial Code.

It then moves on to teach the complexities of the English alphabetic code through the Extended Code and, at the same time, students are taught how to read polysyllabic words.

New learning is introduced within each unit but the programme is cumulative, so all of the previously taught content continues to be practised as the student progresses.

Throughout this, students are trained to be proficient in the skills needed to read and spell effectively, namely, segmenting, blending and phoneme manipulation, and are also taught explicitly the conceptual knowledge that is essential to make sense of the English alphabetic code:

- Letters are symbols (spellings) that represent sounds.

- A sound may be spelled by 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters.

- The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.

- Many spellings can represent more than one sound.

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The following sections include overviews offering a basic example of the progression in each year group through the Initial and Extended Code units in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3.

The Initial Code

Reception overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Review	Content from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Initial Code Units 1-7	Initial Code Units 8-11	Bridging Unit
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from at least one unit behind the current unit Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

The Sounds-Write programme starts by building on what children can already do: they can speak! They are taught to read and spell using a reversible code that is anchored in the spoken sounds of the English language.

The Initial Code begins as a transparent introduction to the English alphabetic code (Units 1 to 6), where sounds are represented by one-letter spellings. It is designed to build students' trust in the decoding and encoding system within CVC and VC words before moving on to words with more complex structures that include adjacent consonant sounds (CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, etc) in later units (Units 8-10).

The Initial Code then moves on to the more complex concepts that sounds may be spelled by more than one letter (1, 2 or 3 letter spellings introduced in the Initial Code Units 7 and 11) and that the same sound can be spelled in more than one way (Initial Code Unit 11).

The Bridging Unit serves as a gentle introduction to what students will encounter in the Extended Code. It introduces formally the concept that the same sound can be spelled in more than one way, using simple examples like the spellings of the sound /k/ with the spellings < c >, < k > or < ck >, or the sound /ch/ with the letters < ch > and < tch >, which they have already encountered informally in Unit 11.

Whilst working on the Initial Code, students will develop these key skills:

- Segmenting — the ability to pull apart the individual sounds in words.

- Blending – the ability to push sounds together to build words.

- Phoneme manipulation – the ability to insert sounds into and delete sounds out of words.

They will be able to perform these skills proficiently in simple 3-, 4- and 5-sound words with the structures CVC, VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCCVC and CCVCC.

They will learn that:

- We spell sounds one at a time from left to right across the page.

- Letters are symbols (spellings) that represent sounds.

- A sound may be spelled by 1, 2 or 3 letters.

And they will begin to have an understanding that:

- The same sound can be spelled in more than one way.

- Many spellings can represent more than one sound.

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The Extended Code & Polysyllabic Words

Year 1 overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Review	Content (inc. polysyllabic words) from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Review of Initial Code Extended Code Units 1-9 Introduction of polysyllabic words*	Extended Code Units 10-18	Extended Code Units 19-26
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from at least one unit behind the current unit and begin introducing other carefully selected texts Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

*Polysyllabic Words are introduced from the second week of Unit 4 /oe/.

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Year 2 overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Review	Content (inc. polysyllabic words) from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current unit	Extended Code Units 27-34	Extended Code Units 35-42	Extended Code Units 43-49
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from previously taught units and other carefully selected texts Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit		

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Year 3 overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Review	Content from previously taught units based on formative assessment		
Current Unit	Extended Code Units 1-17 (plus 'More spellings' 27, 29, 32, 34, 36 with their 'First spellings' unit*) using more challenging Polysyllabic Words	Extended Code Units 18-37 (plus 'More spellings' 43 with its 'First spellings' unit*) using Polysyllabic Words	Extended Code Units 38-49 using Polysyllabic Words
Reading and writing in connected text	Reading: decodable texts from previously taught units for children who still need this, otherwise, from a wider selection of texts. Dictation: content from at least two units behind the current unit for children who still need this, otherwise, from a wider selection of texts		

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Year 4

Using three-, four- and five-syllable words, Year 4 students should systematically review the Extended Code (combining 'First spellings' and 'More spellings' as in Year 3). This is important as it allows students to review previously taught content and further develop their knowledge of sound-spelling correspondences, whilst extending their skills in reading and spelling polysyllabic words, and meeting the National Curriculum statutory spelling objectives. This will ensure that they have mastered the knowledge and skills needed to have efficient and effective strategies for reading and spelling unfamiliar words in the wider curriculum and in their everyday lives.

Years 5, 6 and beyond

At this stage, planning for discrete teaching of reading and spelling will depend on the needs of the cohort. Sounds-Write lessons should be used to teach the reading and spelling of domain-specific vocabulary as it is encountered in the wider curriculum and to meet the National Curriculum statutory spelling objectives. For example, Lesson 15 can be used to analyse words in subjects such as science, history and so on.