

Key terms we use when teaching RWI

- Special friends

Special friends are a combination of two or three letters representing one sound, e.g. ay, ee, igh, air.



- Fred talking



Each RWI group has a frog called Fred that helps the children to read and spell.

Fred can say the sounds in words but he cannot blend them together to say the whole word, so children have to help him.

So Fred (the teacher) says the sounds, and the children say the word.

Example - Fred says h-a-t, children say hat. Fred says m-o-p, children say mop. Fred says l-igh-t, children say light.

Teachers in EYFS and Y1 especially use Fred talk games throughout the day so that children learn to blend sounds together.

For example:

- Play Simon Says: Put your hands on your h-ea-d/ f-oo-t/ kn-ee.
- Put on your c-oa-t/ h-a-t/ s-c-ar-f.
- Set the table with a b-ow-l/ f-or-k/ s-p-oo-n.

Children use 'Fred talking' when they are reading words too. They say the sounds in the word first (Fred talk) and then blend them together to read the word.

- Fred in your head

Once children can read words using Fred talk out loud we ask them to 'Fred in their head'. We encourage them to say the sounds silently to themselves in their head before reading a word. We want this to get quicker and quicker so that eventually they can read the word straight away!

- Green words

play

Children practise reading words containing the sounds that they have learnt.

play

We ask children to:

1. Spot the special friends
2. Fred talk
3. Read the word

So for play children would say: ay, p - l - ay, play

Ship - sh, sh - i - p, ship

Thick - th and ck, th-i-ck, thick

Hand - (if there are no special friends children shake their head)

h-a-n-d, hand

- Red words

I the
you your
said was

Red Words are also known as common exception or tricky words. They occur in stories regularly (e.g. said, what, where) but have unusual letter combinations ('ai' in the word 'said' makes the sound 'e').


Remind your child not to use Fred Talk to read Red Words but instead to 'stop and spot the tricky sound first'.

Tell them the word if you need to.

- Nonsense words

 kib

 lan

 sheb

Nonsense words, also named Alien words, are used to check that your child can read any word. They are introduced to children when they are coming to the end of Set 1 Speed Sounds. Children are able to use their sound recognition skills to read these words that do not make sense. We say they are taken from an 'alien language'

- Fred Fingers



- Encourage your child to use 'Fred Fingers' when spelling words
- Ask your child to say the word they want to spell and count how many sounds they hear on their fingers.
- As they spell they then press the sounds onto their fingers to help them.
- Ask your child to write the letters - if they get stuck, say the sounds again
- So if your child is trying to write 'play' they would count the sounds on their fingers (3), hold up 3 fingers and then press them - p - l - ay.
- Praise your child for spelling using the sounds they know, even if their handwriting is not perfect.

- Fluency

We are aiming for all our children to become fluent readers. We practise reading words using special friends, fred talk, read the word, then fred in your head and then speedy. We want to be able to read words quickly. We read the same book more than once to build fluency skills. The more we read the more fluent we become!

- Comprehension

As we read with our children we need to also check that they are understanding what they read. We ask them questions about the text to check their understanding. We think out loud about the story to help them think about what is happening in the story. We want our children to love reading and love the stories that they read.