Phase 5 tricky words: Year 1

Information for parents and carers

'Tricky words' are words that cannot easily be decoded ('sounded out' and read). This is because some of the sounds in the words are spelled in an unusual way. It is important for children to be able to read these words as they are among the most common words in English.

The table shows the tricky words that your child will learn in Phase 5 in Year 1 and explains why each word is tricky. Tricky words taught in Reception that remain tricky in Year 1 are also shown. Children will practise the tricky words in school until they can read them automatically. They will also practise reading the tricky words in the decodable books that they bring home.

Taught in Year 1 Autumn term		
Tricky word	**Tricky part**	**Why is it tricky?**
their	eir	The 'eir' makes the sound **air**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.
people	eo le	The 'eo' makes the sound **ee***. Your child has not yet learned the digraph 'le'. *This is a rare spelling for this sound.
oh	oh	The 'oh' makes the sound **oa**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.
your	our	Your child has not yet learned the trigraph 'our'. Here, it makes the sound **or**.
Mr Mrs Ms	whole word	These are abbreviations in common use as words.
ask*	a	The 'a' makes the sound **ar**. **Learning so far:** For 'a', your child has learned the sound **a** as in 'cat'.
could would should	oul	Your child has not yet learned the trigraph 'oul', which makes the sound **oo** (as in 'book').
our	our	The trigraph 'our' makes the sound **ow** followed by the schwa sound. This is a rare spelling for this sound.
house mouse	se	Your child has not yet learned the digraph 'se'. Here, it makes the sound **s**.
water	a	The 'a' makes the sound **or**. **Learning so far:** For 'a', your child has learned the sound **a** as in 'cat'.
want	a	The 'a' makes the sound **o**. **Learning so far:** For 'a', your child has learned the sound **a** as in 'cat'.

*Depending on regional pronunciations, not all children will be taught the word 'ask' as a tricky word.

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Taught in Year 1 Spring term		
Tricky word	**Tricky part(s)**	**Why is it tricky?**
any many	a	The 'a' makes the sound **e**. This is a rare spelling for this sound. **Learning so far:** For the grapheme 'a', your child has learned the sounds **a** as in 'cat' and **ai** as in 'paper'.
again*	ai	The digraph 'ai' makes the sound **e**. This is a rare spelling for this sound. **Learning so far:** For 'ai', your child has learned the sound **ai** as in 'rain'.
who	wh o	The digraph 'wh' makes the sound **h** and the 'o' makes the sound oo (as in 'food'). These are rare spellings for these sounds. **Learning so far:** For 'wh', your child has learned the sound **w** as in 'when'.
whole	wh o–e	The digraph 'wh' makes the sound **h***. Your child has not yet learned the split digraph 'o–e', which makes the sound **oa**. This is a rare spelling for this sound. **Learning so far:** For 'wh', your child has learned the sound **w** as in 'when'.
where	ere	Your child has not yet learned the trigraph 'ere'. Here, it makes the sound **air**.
two	wo	The digraph 'wo' makes the sound oo (as in 'food'). This is a rare spelling for this sound.
school	ch	The digraph 'ch' makes the sound **c**. **Learning so far:** For the grapheme 'ch', your child has learned the sound **ch** as in 'chip'.
call	a	The 'a' makes the sound **or**. **Learning so far:** For the grapheme 'a', your child has learned the sounds **a** as in 'cat' and **ai** as in 'paper'. Your child will learn that 'a' can make the sound **or** later in the Spring term.
different*	er	The digraph 'er' makes the sound **r** (with no schwa sound before it). **Learning so far:** For the digraph 'er', your child has learned the sound **ur** as in 'bigger'.
thought	ough	The 'ough' makes the sound **or**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.
through	ough	The 'ough' makes the sound oo (as in 'food'). This is a rare spelling for this sound.
friend	ie	The digraph 'ie' makes the sound **e**. This is a rare spelling for this sound. **Learning so far:** For the digraph 'ie', your child has learned the sounds **igh** as in 'pie' and **ee** as in 'shield'.
work	or	The digraph 'or' makes the sound **ur**. **Learning so far:** For 'or', your child has learned the sound **or** as in 'sort'.
once	o	The 'o' makes the sounds **w-u**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.
laugh	au gh	The word 'laugh' has two tricky parts: the digraph 'au' makes the sound **ar*** (depending on regional pronunciation) and the digraph 'gh' makes the sound **f**. These are rare spellings for these sounds.
because	au	The digraph 'au' makes the sound **o**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.
eye	eye	The trigraph 'eye' makes the sound **igh**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.

*Depending on regional pronunciations, not all children will be taught the words 'again' and 'different' as tricky words.

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Taught in Year 1 Summer term		
Tricky word	**Tricky part**	**Why is it tricky?**
busy	u	The 'u' makes the sound **i**. **Learning so far:** For 'u', your child has learned the sounds **u** as in 'cup', **oo** as in 'put' and **yoo** as in 'unicorn'.
beautiful	eau	The trigraph 'eau' makes the sound **yoo**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.
pretty	e	The 'e' makes the sound **i**. This is a rare spelling for this sound in the middle of a word. **Learning so far:** For 'e', your child has learned the sound **e** as in 'egg' and **ee** as in 'be'.
hour	h our	The word 'hour' has two tricky parts: the 'h' is not pronounced and the trigraph 'our' makes the sound **ow** followed by the schwa sound. These are rare spellings for these sounds.
move improve	o	The grapheme 'o' makes the sound oo (as in 'food'). This is a rare spelling for this sound. **Learning so far:** For 'o', your child has learned the sound **o** as in 'dog' and **oa** as in 'go'.
parents	a	The 'a' makes the sound **air**. This is a rare spelling for this sound. **Learning so far:** For the grapheme 'a', your child has learned the sounds **a** as in 'cat', **ai** as in 'paper' and **ar** as in 'father'.
shoe	oe	The digraph 'oe' makes the sound oo (as in 'food'). This is a rare spelling for this sound.

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Tricky words taught in Reception

In Year 1, your child will develop the phonic knowledge they need to decode many of the tricky words taught in Reception. However, the words below need to be reviewed and practised as tricky words until your child can read them automatically.

Taught in Phase 4 (Reception Summer term)		
Phase 4 tricky word	**Tricky part(s)**	**Why is it tricky?**
said	ai	The 'ai' makes the sound **e.** This is a rare spelling for this sound.
do	o	The 'o' makes the sound oo (as in 'food'). This is a rare spelling for this sound.
were	ere	The trigraph 'ere' makes the sound **ur**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.
says	ay	The 'ay' makes the sound **e.** This is a rare spelling for this sound.
one	whole word	The 'o' makes the sounds **w-u.** This is a rare spelling.
today	o	The 'o' makes the sound oo (as in 'food') This is a rare spelling for this sound.

Taught in Phase 3 (Reception Spring term)		
Phase 3 tricky word	**Tricky part(s)**	**Why is it tricky?**
are	whole word	This is a rare spelling of the sound **ar**.
sure	whole word	The 's' makes the sound **sh**. The 'ure' makes two sounds (**yoo** plus the schwa sound). These are rare spellings for these sounds.
pure	ure	The 'ure' makes two sounds (**yoo** plus the schwa sound). This is a rare spelling for these sounds.

Taught in Phase 2 (Reception Autumn term)		
Phase 2 tricky word	**Tricky part(s)**	**Why is it tricky?**
the	e	It is rare for 'e' to make the schwa sound at the end of a word.
to into	o	The 'o' makes the sound oo (as in 'food') This is a rare spelling for this sound.
of	f	The 'f' makes the sound **v**. This is a rare spelling for this sound.

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Terminology

Phoneme: The smallest unit of sound that can be identified in words. We also use the term 'sound' but your child may use the word 'phoneme'. There are 44 phonemes or sounds in the English language.

Grapheme: A letter or group of letters used to represent a phoneme in writing. The way graphemes are used to represent phonemes in our written language is known as the alphabetic code.

Decode: To break down ('sound out') a written word into sounds then blend the sounds together to read the word.

Digraph: A grapheme made of two letters that represent one sound. An example is the 'sh' in 'shop'. Your child may use the mantra 'two letters, one sound' when they spot a digraph.

Schwa: This is the name for the most common sound in English. It is the unstressed sound that we find in many words and can be spelled in many ways. It makes an 'uh' sound, which varies according to accent. Examples include: th*e*, bett*er*, carr*o*t, b*a*lloon.

Split digraph: A vowel digraph that is split by a consonant. Examples include 'a–*e*' as in 'c*a*k*e*' (**ai** sound); 'e–*e*' as in 'athl*e*t*e*' (**ee** sound), 'i–*e*' as in 't*i*m*e*' (**igh** sound), 'o–*e*' as in 'b*o*n*e*' (**oa** sound) and 'u–*e*' as in 't*u*b*e*' (**yoo** sound).

Trigraph: A grapheme made of three letters to represent one sound. An example is the 'igh' in 'sight'. Your child may use the mantra 'three letters, one sound' when they spot a trigraph.

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