

Sound Waves is a whole-school program developed by Australian teachers for use in Australian classrooms.

Informed by research on the best practices for teaching reading and spelling, the program incorporates four key areas of teaching: phonemic awareness, synthetic phonics, morphology and etymology.

You will need to understand the following terms in order to effectively use Sound Waves resources.

Phoneme

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word, for example, the word *chat* has three phonemes: /ch/, /a/ and /t/.

Grapheme

A grapheme is a letter or letter combination used to represent a phoneme in writing, for example, the graphemes **ch** or **tch** can be used to represent the phoneme /ch/, as in **chat** or **catch**.

Graph/digraph/trigraph/quadgraph

A grapheme can be a single letter or a combination of letters. A single-letter grapheme is called a graph, as in **h**at; a two-letter grapheme is called a digraph, as in **ch**icken; a three-letter grapheme is called a trigraph, as in **bridg**e; and a four-letter grapheme is called a quadgraph, as in **ei**ght.

Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to work with phonemes, for example, segmenting a word into phonemes or blending phonemes to form a word.

Synthetic phonics

Synthetic phonics is an approach to phonics instruction that involves *explicitly* and *systematically* teaching the relationship between phonemes and graphemes.

Morphology

Morphology involves knowledge of the meaningful parts of words: prefixes, suffixes, and Greek and Latin roots.

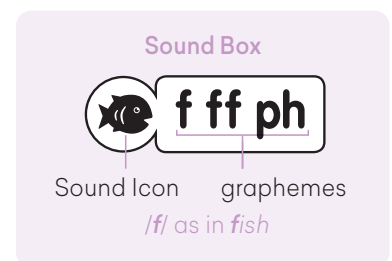
Etymology

Etymology involves an understanding of word origins and history.

Sound Box

In Sound Waves each phoneme is represented by a Sound Box. Each Sound Box contains a Sound Icon and the most common grapheme/s used to represent that phoneme.

Note: In Foundation Phase 1 each of the 43 phonemes is represented by a Sound Icon.



Want more?

For research and reports about the effectiveness of synthetic phonics, follow the QR code to read *Sound Waves and synthetic phonics: The facts*. It includes links to key studies from the US (National Reading Panel), the UK (seven-year longitudinal Clackmannanshire study), and Australia (National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy).

