

# Parent Guide



@twinklparents

We are excited to share this content with you. If you are interested in finding more resources made especially for Parents, then check out these links to different areas of the **Twinkl Parents** hub.

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**Subject Guides**

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**Supporting Learning**



## What is this resource and how do I use it?

In phonics lessons, your child might be taught to use sound buttons and bars to help them to read unfamiliar words. Use our guidance to find out what they are and how they work to help your child. You might like to chat with your child's teacher to find out how they represent their sound buttons so that you can be consistent at home.

## What is the focus of this resource?

Empowering Parents

Phonics

Supporting Learning

## Further Ideas and Suggestions

Head to our **phonics category** for more resources to support at home. Our **Phonics Screening Check resources** will help to prepare your child: try some of our **weeks of workouts**, **word searches** or **mazes** to make learning fun.

Parents Blog



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# Parent Top Tips: Sound Buttons

If your child is learning to read, the chances are, you might have heard them talk about sound buttons or sound bars. But what are they and how do they help your child to read words? Here, we explain everything you need to know.

## What are sound buttons?

Sound buttons and sound bars are a series of dots and dashes used underneath words to show children individual phonemes within words. For example, in the word 'cat', the sound buttons would look like this:

**c a t**  
• • •

This shows that there are three phonemes in the word 'cat'. Children can count the sound buttons to see how many phonemes there are.

## What are sound bars?

When a phoneme is represented by more than one letter, a bar is drawn underneath the letters to show children that those letters represent one sound. Some schools then place a sound button beneath the bar.

**f i s h**  
• • •

For example, in the word 'fish', the sound buttons and bars will look like this in some schools:

**f i s h**  
• •

In other schools, it will look like this:

This shows that there are three phonemes in the word 'fish'. The bar under the letters 's' and 'h' tells us that these two letters make one sound.

Many schools use sound buttons and bars to help children recognise how many phonemes are within one word and to see when they need to look at more than one letter for some phonemes. Children also become familiar with putting their own dots and dashes underneath their spelling attempts to check that they have represented all of the sounds they can hear in a word within their writing.

## Some Examples of Sound Buttons and Bars

Here are some words with sound buttons and bars. Your child will use them to help them to read the words. We have included examples from both methods of sound buttons and sound bars. Whichever method your child's school uses, your child will get used to using it and will learn to use sound buttons to read unfamiliar words.

**stamp** | **pluck** | **crash**  
• • • • • | • • • • • | • • • • •

**chair** | **throw**  
• • • • • | • • • • •

**chopping**  
• • • • •

## What about split digraphs?

A split digraph is a digraph (two letters to represent one sound) which has been split by another letter. For example, in the word 'bone', the digraph 'oe' has been split but it still makes the same sound. To show this using sound buttons and bars, we used a curved line.

**b o n e**  
•      •  
          └───┘

Some schools show it like this:

**b o n e**  
•   •   •  
          └───┘

Other schools show it like this:

Here are some examples of words with split digraphs using both methods:

**c r a n e** | **c o m p l e t e**  
• • • •      • • • • • • • •  
          └───┘      └───┘

**c r i m e** | **h o p e**  
• • • •      • • • •  
          └───┘      └───┘

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.