

# Guide to letters and sounds for parents and carers

This information sheet summarises the letters and sounds that children learn in Cambridge Phonics and Handwriting Step 2.

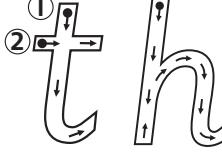
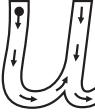
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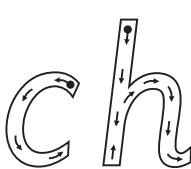
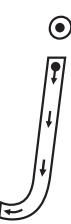
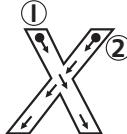
- Children start by learning the sounds that letters represent. For example, the letter 't' represents a sound like the start of the word 'tap'. We say 't' (a short sound), not 'tee' (the letter name). When you help your child at home, try to use the sounds, not the letter names. You can find videos and tips to help you say the sounds at our parent support site:  
<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-early-years/parent-support/>
- Your child might learn the sound of a letter before they learn how to write the letter.
- Some letters can represent multiple sounds. For example, the letter 'c' sounds different in 'cat' and 'circle'. The example word in the table demonstrates the sound that your child is learning at this time. 'Th' appears twice in the table. This is because 'th' can represent two different sounds, for example in the words 'this' and 'think'.
- Some sounds are represented by multiple letters. For example, 'c', 'k' and 'ck' all represent the same sound. In the table below the letters have been grouped by sound, but your child will not learn all letters at the same time.
- In the Learner's Book activities, you will often see marks placed under letters or groups of letters in words. These are sound buttons. They show the number of sounds in a word.
  - In Step 2, you'll see: A dot ● under a letter that represents a single sound. A dash — under two letters that work together to represent one sound (digraph).
  - Ask children to say each sound as they point to the buttons from left to right. Then help them blend the sounds together to read the full word. Sound buttons support children to see how to split up and read new words. Note that sound buttons are not shown under tricky words, because tricky words can't always be sounded out.
- Letter formation is taught in letter families. See the **Guide to letter families for parents and carers** for more information.

Letter	Example word	Song and action	Letter formation
<b>n</b>	net	Song: Ned's net Action: Dipping a net into water.	Start at the top, come down, bounce back up, go over, down and flick. 
<b>i</b>	ill	Song: Ig is ill Action: Clutching stomach with both hands.	Start at the top, come all the way down and flick. Lift and dot! 
<b>t</b>	tap	Song: Tom Teddy Action: Tapping a finger on the back of the other hand.	Start at the top, come all the way down, and curve. Lift and cross. 

Letter	Example word	Song and action	Letter formation
<b>a</b>	ant	Song: Ana Ant Action: Holding one hand in a fist and using the index finger and thumb from the other hand to 'bite' the fist (to show Ana Ant eating an apple).	Make a curve. Go up to the top, come back down and flick. 
<b>d</b>	duck	Song: Dot Duck Action: Flapping arms up and down.	Make a curve. Go up to the top. Come back down and flick. 
<b>s</b>	sad	Song: Sad Sam Action: Tracing tears down face.	Make a curve, slope, make a curve back again. 
<b>l</b>	legs	Song: Lala Long Legs Action: Brushing hands down legs.	Start at the top, come all the way down and flick! 
<b>m</b>	mouse	Song: Min Mouse Action: Both hands held to mouth like a mouse eating food.	Start at the top, come down, bounce back up and over. Down, bounce back up and over. Down and flick. 
<b>r</b>	rabbit	Song: Red Rabbit Action: Putting hands on head to represent rabbit ears.	Start at the top, come down, bounce back up and over. 
<b>e</b>	elephant	Song: Ed's elephants Action: Swinging an arm like an elephant's trunk.	Start with a loop, then make a curve. 
<b>h</b>	hen	Song: Han Han Action: Bending arms and bringing fists to waist, then moving elbows forwards and backwards.	Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up, go over; down and flick. 

Letter	Example word	Song and action	Letter formation
<b>c</b> <b>k</b> <b>ck</b>	cat kick sock	c Song: Cal Cat Action: Pretending to cough into a closed hand.  k Song: I can kick Action: Flicking a finger.	c – Make a curve. k – Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up. Loop. Slope and flick.  
<b>o</b>	ostrich	Song: Olive the ostrich Action: Bringing the fingertips of both hands together to create a large (ostrich) egg shape.	Make a curve, go all the way round.  
<b>p</b>	panda	Song: Pat Panda Action: Holding up one closed hand, fingers facing down, and quickly opening the hand.	Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce back up and go all the way round.  
<b>f</b>	fan	Song: Fin the fit cat Action: Fanning face with one hand.	Make a curve, come all the way down, curve to the left. Lift and cross.  
<b>z</b>	zebra	Song: Zan is at the zoo Action: Using fingers to trace stripes on one arm.	Go across, slope, go back across.  
<b>v</b>	van	Song: Vic the vet Action: Pretending to use a steering wheel.	Slope down, slope back up.  
<b>w</b>	wet	Song: Will is not well Action: Flicking hands forward.	Slope down, slope back up. Slope down again and slope back up.  

Letter	Example word	Song and action	Letter formation
<b>th</b>	this	Song: This or that? Action: Gesturing with a whole hand to one side then the other.	Start at the top, come all the way down, and curve. Lift and cross. Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up, go over; down and flick. 
<b>th</b>	think	Song: Thelma is thinking Action: Tapping head.	
<b>b</b>	bat	Song: Bella has a bat Action: Pretending to swing a bat.	Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up and go all the way round. 
<b>y</b>	yellow	Song: Yes Yan Action: Nodding head.	Start at the top, come down and curve. Go back up, come all the way down and curve to the left. 
<b>u</b>	umbrella	Song: Uncle's umbrella Action: Pretending to hold an umbrella that is rising upwards.	Start at the top, come down and curve. Go back up, come back down and flick. 
<b>g</b>	gorilla	Song: Gus Gorilla gets a gift Action: Beating chest like a gorilla.	Make a curve, go up to the top, come all the way down and curve to the left. 
<b>ng</b>	king	Song: The king can sing a song Action: Pretending to put on a crown.	Start at the top, come down, bounce back up, go over; down and flick. Make a curve, go up to the top, come all the way down and curve to the left. 

Letter	Example word	Song and action	Letter formation
ch	chick	Song: Chill Chick Action: Bringing the tips of the fingers and thumb together to create a 'chick'.	c – Make a curve Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up, go over, down and flick. 
sh	shell	Song: Shen has a shiny shell Action: Using the fingers of one hand to rub the palm of the other hand, as though polishing a shell.	Make a curve, slope, make a curve back again. Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up, go over, down and flick. 
j	jam	Song: Jim and Jaz Action: Pretending to spread jam with a knife.	Start at the top, come all the way down and curve to the left. Lift and dot. 
X	fox	Song: Dex Fox can fix it Action: Holding both hands in front like paws.	Slope. Lift and slope across. 
q	quack	Song: Quick Quack Action: Holding up one hand and opening and closing it like a duck's beak.	Make a curve, go up to the top, come all the way down and flick. 