**Phoneme:** any of the perceptually distinct units of sound in a specified language that distinguish one word from another, for example p, b, d, and t in the English words pad, pat, bad, and bat. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in speech. When we teach reading we teach children which letters represent those sounds. For example – the word 'hat' has 3 phonemes – 'h' 'a' and 't'.English has about 20 vowel phonemes and 24 consonant phonemes.

**Grapheme:** the name grapheme is given to the letter or combination of letters that represents a phoneme. For example, the word 'ghost' contains five letters and four graphemes ('gh,' 'o,' 's,' and 't'), representing four phonemes. A grapheme is a letter or group of letters that usually represents a single phoneme.

A grapheme can consist of:

• one letter, for example, ‘b’ – in big

• two letters (a digraph or a split digraph), for example, ‘sh’ in ship, ‘a-e’ in make

• three letters (a trigraph), for example, ‘igh’ in light

• four letters, for example, ‘ough’ in bough, ‘eigh’ in weight.

In a few cases, one grapheme represents two phonemes, for example in the word

‘uniform’, the first grapheme ‘u’ represents /y/ and /oo/.

**Digraph:** a digraph is a 2 letter grapheme (the clue is in ‘di’) e.g. ‘ch’ in ‘chip’

**Trigraph:** a trigraph is a 3 letter grapheme (the clue is in ‘tri’) e.g. ‘igh’ in ‘high’

**Special Friends:** sounds which have 2 or 3 letters representing them, e.g. /ch/, /ng/, /th/, /sh/, /igh/, /air/. Chatty friends—when 2 letters are separated by another letter, e.g. /i-e/, /o-e/ in words such as time, home.

**Split diagraph:** a split digraph is a Digraph that is split by a consonant. Usually a long vowel sound, e.g. 'a-e' (cake), 'i-e' (five), 'o-e' (code), 'e-e' (sphere) and 'u-e' (rule).

**Blending:** is the process of pushing sounds together in a word. Children are taught to sound out words and then push the sounds together into a recognisable word.

**Segmenting:** segmenting is the process of separating sounds in words. Children a taught to listen and isolate sounds in words. Then they are taught to represent those sounds in letters. This is the process of spelling.

**GPC (Grapheme-phoneme correspondence):** this is the process of matching both the grapheme e.g. seeing the qu and phonemes e.g. saying the qu, together and vice versa. GPC fits into the phonics framework and allows children to blend words both written and orally.

**Decode:** Phonic decoding allows a student to identify unfamiliar words, also termed “word identification.” During phonic decoding a student is identifying the individual letters and relating the correct phoneme to each letter. Successful blending of those phonemes or sounds allows the student to identify the word.

**Encode:** to be able to write words and spelling them correctly spelling when you hear them. Encoding is the process of hearing a sound and being and to write the symbol that makes that sound. Students use encoding when they begin learning to write. During this process, they learn the sounds that each letter of the alphabet makes, as well as each of the 44 phonemes.