

Screen-free phonics activities

Some of our parents have asked for alternatives to Bug Club. Whilst we do encourage the children to use Bug Club to practice sounds, we are aware that this may not work for all families/children. Please find below some suggestions for alternative games/activities. This is not an exhaustive list and we have added links to a few websites with lots more ideas at the end.

Robot talk -

Words are made up from sounds and children need to be able to hear these sounds individually. Sometimes when you are playing you can say words as if you were a robot (saying the sounds separately) and see if your child can work out what you are saying. Stick to short simple words that only have a few sounds in them. Make sure you are saying the letter sounds (p-i-g) not the letter names (pee-eye-gee) and that we have learned the sounds that you're saying already.

E.g.

Pass that p-i-g to me.

Sit d-ow-n.

Point to your t-ee-th.

Hop like a f-r-o-g.

As your child becomes familiar with this robot talking, see if they can say words in robot talk themselves?

I spy – Say the rhyme 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with _____' allow your child plenty of opportunities to guess what you have chosen, for example, 'something beginning with t' could be a tree, toy, tent or train. Try using the sound instead of a letter.

Point out text everywhere - Talk about the written words you see in the world around you. Ask your child to find familiar words on each outing such as 'McDonalds', 'Coke' or 'Asda'.

Playing with words – Encourage your child to sound out the word as you change it from mat to fat to sat; from sat to sag to sap; and from sap to sip. Try using made up words too!

Letter sound Bingo/Noughts and Crosses

You will need:

3x3 grid for each player

counters or coins

Write some letters into the spaces on each card, making each card slightly different. The 'bingo caller' says each letter in turn and the players cover the letter up. The winner is first to fill their board. To make this game easier for new readers, show them the letter for them to match. You could make it more challenging by using tricky words from your child's reading book.

Matching pairs/Snap – Choose several tricky words your child is learning. Write each word twice on separate pieces of paper/card so you can search for a matching pair. Turn all the cards face down on the table and take turns to turn over two. When a matching pair is found that player can keep them. The winner is the person with the most pairs at the end of the game. You can use the same cards to play other games like snap.

Create a book together - Fold pieces of paper in half and staple them to make a book. Ask your child to write sentences on each page and add his or her own illustrations.

Make up stories on the go - Take turns adding to a story the two of you make up while in the car or bus. Try making the story funny or spooky.

Stop, Banana! – Write out tricky words onto separate cards. Draw a banana on another card. Shuffle the pack and ask your child to guess how many words they will be able to read before the banana comes out. Keep trying to beat the record!

Go Fish

This is one of the classic games that can be adapted to any skill or lesson. First, make cards with sounds that we have taught in school. One player asks another if they have a card to make a match. For example, they might say, “Do you have a card with the ‘s’?” If the answer is no, the player says “Go fish!” and the first person picks up a card from the pile in the middle. Students set down a match after getting one. The person with the most matches at the end wins.

Sound hunts

Write sounds or tricky words on conkers, leaves or acorns. Hide them in a sand tray, in the garden or around the house. Set a timer – how fast can you find all of the sounds? Children could also then use the sounds to try to make words.

Shooting sounds

Mix some mud and water until you get the consistency of thick paint. Using a paintbrush, write letters outside using the mud and water. Give your child a spray bottle or water pistol. Say a sound – can they find the sound and spray it to wash it off (get them to say the sound as they’re spraying).

Headbands

Each player wears a headband. Attach a simple word (using the sounds that we’ve learned in school) to the headband using tape or a peg. Player 1 says the sounds on player 2’s headband. Player 2 has to say what the word is. This encourages sound recognition and oral blending and segmenting.

These are just a few suggestions for activities. Feel free to use your imaginations to create others or have a look at these websites for more ideas, including outdoor activities:

[50 Fun Phonics Activities and Games for Early Readers](#)

[Phase 2 Phonics](#)

[Phase Two Phonics Planning | Outdoor Learning | MPT](#)