

WEBSITE RESOURCE W13.1

Onset and rime

Even at the early stages of reading development, a sizeable number of the words children encounter will not necessarily be phonically regular. This includes texts which have been written to accompany specific phonics programmes. Children will need, therefore, to draw on other forms of visual information. Graphic information comprises all other types of visual information that does not fall under the phonics umbrella. It is vital knowledge which children need in order to work out unfamiliar words. Graphic information allows children to read whole words (high frequency), chunks of words including simple prefixes such as *un*, *pre* and inflectional endings such as *ing*, *ed*. It also allows them to use their knowledge of parts of words to build other words (onset and rime) such as *ight* – *right*, *bright*, *tight* etc.

It is important in the early stages that children are taught simple graphic information particularly high frequency words. They need to learn a bank of words that arise frequently in texts and these should be learnt as graphic information so they can be read 'on the run'. Children should not be 'sounding out' these words whether they are phonically regular or not. By definition, as they are frequently encountered in texts, if children stop to blend them, the fluency of the reading will be affected and meaning may be lost . . .

. . . Alongside high frequency words, other types of graphic information are also important for the early reader. This is particularly so of onset and rime. This can be taught, again in the context of the book, by highlighting and learning the rimes and then building words by adding the onsets.

Simple onsets and rimes are:

rime *in* onsets *pin bin tin*

rime *at* onsets *cat sat bat*

Slightly more complex are:

rime *ain* onsets *train brain gain*

rime *ight* onsets *fight light bright*

Figure W12.1 gives examples of rimes that make nearly 500 words.

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-ack	-ain	-ake	-ale	-all	-ame	-an
-ap	-ash	-at	-ate	-aw	-ay	-eat
-est	-ice	-ick	-ide	-ite	-ill	-in
-ing	-ink	-ip	-ir	-ock	-oke	-op
-ore	-uck	-ug	-ump	-unk		

Figure W13.1.1 Rimes that make nearly 500 words

(From Elborn, S. (2015) *Handbook of Teaching Early Reading*. Leicester: United Kingdom Literacy Association. pp. 50–51.)