Module Nine: Part 4

d) Pronunciation alternatives and 'Incidental Top Tips'

To be fully aware of the complexity of *pronunciation alternatives* in the English language and the challenges this presents from the perspective of the learner

To be aware of some general *top tips* for incidental phonics teaching from an early stage

Pronunciation alternatives

Many graphemes need to be decoded with *different sounds* dependent on the actual word. Thus graphemes may have pronunciation alternatives:

e.g. Letter '**a**' can be pronounced as:

/**a**/ as in **a**pple   /**ai**/ as in **a**ngel

/**ar**/ as in f**a**ther   /**o**/ as in w**a**nt

/**e**/ as in **a**ny   s*chwa* /**u**/ as in **a**bout

Pronunciation alternatives

Now consider the very wide range of graphemes which start with the letter 'a':

ai, ay, ae, a-e, ar, au, aw, al, augh, air, are, aigh

... or include the letter 'a' as part of the grapheme:

ea, oa, oar, ear

...or include the letter 'a' in a common letter pattern:

alt, alf, alves, wa, qua, war, quar

Pronunciation alternatives

Now consider how woefully inadequate teaching is when limited to:

a as in apple

Pronunciation alternatives

Pronunciation Guide for English pdf   PI Free Resources page

Pronunciation Guide for English

graphemes and spelling patterns	example words including common and rare spellings	sounds phonemes and multiple phonemes
a	apple	/a/
	table apricot	/ai/
	watch qualify salt	/o/
	father drama	/ar/
	any many	/e/
	water also always	/or/
	banana	schwa /u/
	village manage	/i/
ai	first aid	/ai/
	said again against	/e/
	bargain mountain	schwa /u/
al	palace	/a/+/l/
	hospital capital	/ul/
	salt alternative	/o/+/l/
	chalk walk talk	/or/
	palm half calves	/ar/
	also almost altogether	/or/+/l/
ar	artist start	/ar/
	wardrobe quarter	/or/
	collar sugar	schwa /er/ or /u/
are	hare care dare	/air/
	You are funny.	/ar/
aw	awkward awful	/or/
	aware	/a/+/w/

A table, or chart, from **print-to-sound** which starts with the **letter/s** placed down the left column is much more **complicated both to organise and understand** than a **sound-to-print** chart which starts with the **sounds** down the left column and then lists the spelling alternatives across the rows.

A **sound-to-print** *Alphabetic Code Chart* is really a *spelling* reference chart which organises the English code very neatly.

The **Pronunciation Guide** is a resource for *reading* to support the *teacher*.

Pronunciation alternatives

The context of the sentence helps the reader to *modify the pronunciation* of a word as needed, but the reader is able to decode 'wind' with either pronunciation in the first place:

The north wind blew the leaves from the tree.

I wind up the clock every night without fail.

Modifying the pronunciation

Pronunciation of blended sounds often needs to be 'tweaked' or 'modified' to reach the real word – this is common at the end of words:

See the printed word...	**cheese**
Recognise the graphemes...	**ch ee se**
At first, utter...	**/ch/ /ee/ /s/**
which leads to...	**"chees"**
Modify the pronunciation to...	**"cheez"**

More challenging for spelling…

Say the word slowly …   "s..n..ee..ze"

Identify the sounds all-through-the-spoken-word:

/s/ /n/ /ee/ /z/

"Which spelling alternative do I need to spell the word?"

Look for the /z/ sound on your Alphabetic Code Chart…   It's this one as in ….

INCIDENTAL TOP TIPS !

1. **No need to sound out the end letter 'e' in words**

2. **When single vowel letters a, e, i, o, u are introduced, teach that they can also be code for sounds /ai/ /ee/ /igh/ /oa/ /yoo/ in *some* words**

3. **Tweaking sounds is fine – and may be frequent**

4. **Sound out double consonant letters once (dd, gg)**

5. **Teach these common endings asap: -ed -er -y -s -es**

OUP **video**: *Five top tips to support incidental phonics teaching*

PI Free Resources page **pdf**:

Debbie's Phonics Teaching Tips!

Printable Posters!

straight

"In *this* word, *these* letters are code for the /ai/ sound."

Teach the alphabetic code (the letter/s-sound correspondences) in any word incidentally.

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Jo**sh**   **Ch**arlotte

"In *your names*, *these* letters are code for the /sh/ sound."

Teach the alphabetic code (the letter/s-sound correspondences) in any word *incidentally*.

You can take *any* word and simply say, "In *this* word, *these* letters are code for the ... sound".

Let me help you to spell *that*

tricky / unusual / interesting word ...

What sounds can we hear all through the word ?

Let's find the /ee/ sound on our Alphabetic Code Chart.

Look, you need *this* spelling alternative – as in ' chief '.

Other examples of words with *this code* are brief and shield.

Quickly, let's make a poster of the /ee/ ie word bank.

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