#### 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

Debbie Hepplewhite Synthetic Phonics

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 apple /ai/ as in angel

/ar/ as in father /o/ as in want

/e/ as in any schwa /u/ as in about

### **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



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-spokenword:

/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
- 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!

