How to set up and use your core and essential Phonics International resources

'In a nutshell...' https://phonicsinternational.com/Brief_overview_of_Phonics_International_in_a_nutshell.pdf

Alphabetic Code Charts:

The starting point for using the Phonics International programme is to read the document 'In a nutshell...' (link above) and then select your preferred Alphabetic Code Charts for teaching and learning.

There are many versions of the charts of various sizes for different purposes and for different interest groups which are free to download at the charts' website.

https://alphabeticcodecharts.com

Examples of the first section of the 'Giant' charts:

You need to decide on a version of the 'Giant' Alphabetic Code Charts for your main display walls – preferably display one in every classroom as the chart can support writing activities in other subjects in the wider curriculum – use routinely as a spelling reference chart.

You might decide on different charts in different classrooms or use a colour-coded one in a smaller size alongside a plainer version on the main display wall.

If possible, you may want to enlarge each of the ten A4 sheets of the Giant Alphabetic Code Chart to A3 and then you can display the chart in two parallel columns.

'The potential of Alphabetic Code Charts and the Two-Pronged Approach to Synthetic Phonics Teaching: Systematic and Incidental' https://phonicsinternational.com/Debbie_RRF_Two_pronged_handout.pdf

You can find plasticised ready-made giant 'pull-up' and 'hang down' portable charts in our online shop to purchase for classrooms if you prefer – or for special occasions like presenting information for a parents' event. A4 mini 'tabletop' charts are also available to buy.

About the pull-up chart: https://phonicsintervention.org/shop/

The Phonics Folder in the School's Book-bag Routine:

Set up each learner (from infants to adults) with an easy-to-use phonics folder and a phonics exercise book with lines.

Keep all the paper-based core resources that belong to the learner in his or her phonics folder which can then be used routinely for personal 'revisit and review'.

Use the phonics exercise book as a working notebook for any additional phonics work, spelling, dictation and handwriting activities as required. The exercise book can also be used for basic skills in the wider curriculum.

These are just examples – not Phonics International products.

'Setting-up, and use of, the essential Phonics Folder for every learner'
https://phonicsinternational.com/Setting_up_the_phonics_folder.pdf

Variations of Mini Alphabetic Code Charts:
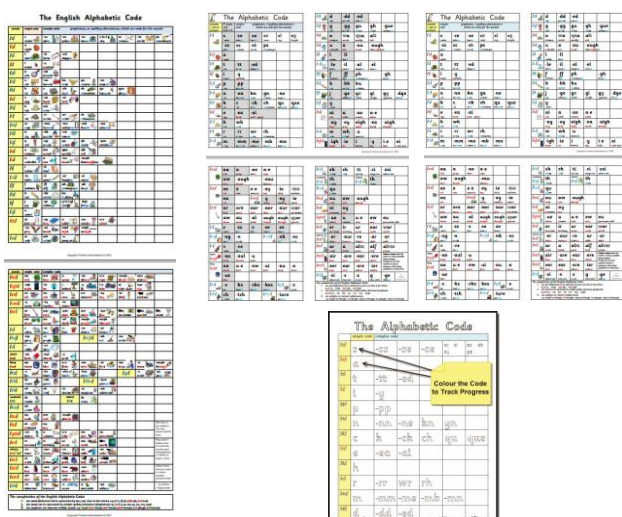
Select a mini Alphabetic Code Chart for each learner's phonics folder. You may want to include a tracking chart to show which letter/s-sound correspondences have been systematically introduced to date as well as an informative mini chart which includes word examples for all the spelling alternatives.

See the full guidance document for setting up the learners' phonics folders – link above.

You could also include a mini alphabetic code chart direct in your school's literacy policy and/or school's brochure to make it clear which letter/s-sound correspondences are formally introduced within your school's reading and spelling programme. Thus – it is both an information and accountability tool.

Hard copy A4 Tabletop Alphabetic Code Chart:
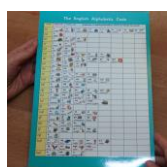
Ready-made mini Tabletop charts are available to buy in our online shop. You can use Tabletop charts in the class generally to support all lessons involving writing – not just the discrete phonics sessions. Constant accessibility to overview Alphabetic Code Charts also enable incidental phonics teaching and self-teaching.

Online shop: https://phonicsintervention.org/shop/
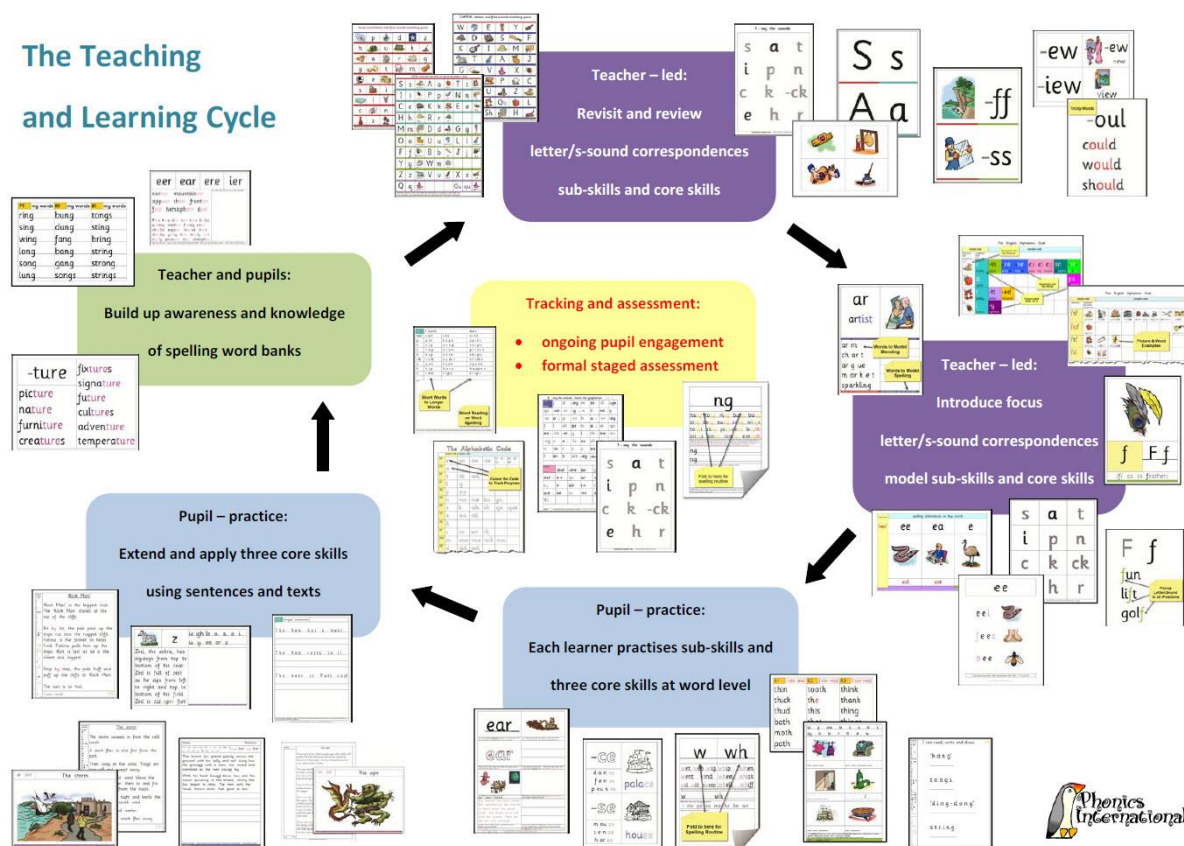
'Reflecting on the Teaching and Learning Cycle' - **Click HERE**
'Debbie Hepplewhite's suggestions for effective and supportive phonics provision and practice (audit/check list)'
https://phonicsinternational.com/Audit_Debbie%20Hepplewhite.pdf

Guidance for the phonics 'hand' routines:
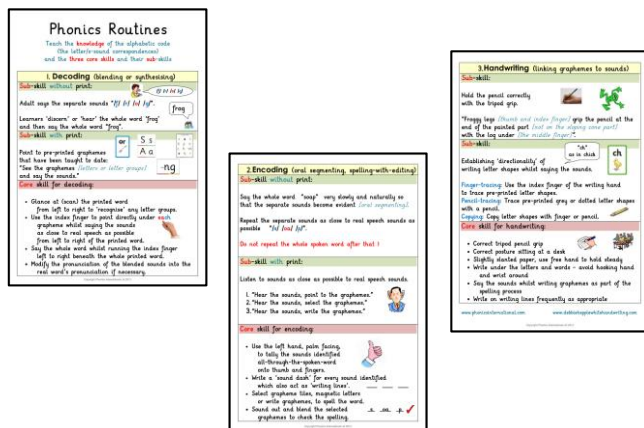
Easy-to-follow guidance for staff in schools and parents describes the phonics hand routines for the three core skills and their *sub*-skills – link above.

It is really important that learners are provided with the same phonics routines especially when more than one adult models for them and supports the learning. As well as providing *whole-school consistency and continuity*, it ensures that learners with challenges or learning difficulties receive consistent teaching.
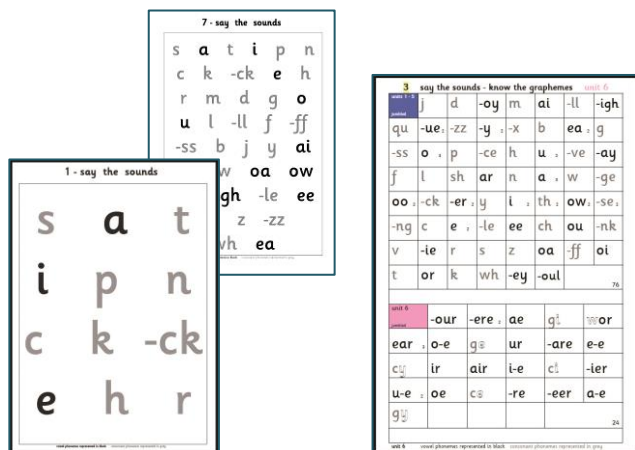
For further professional development, see the 'Guidance for Phonics Routines' – link below – which repeats the same phonics routines for the core skills and their *sub*-skills but with additional advice for the phonics routines.

Revisit and review:

Use flash cards for younger learners, and *Say the Sounds Posters* for both younger and older learners:

The 'Say the Sounds Posters' are invaluable in many ways – use for engaging learners in their own learning and assessment and use for periodic formal assessment. Guide learners to tick in pencil what they think they know well and to circle any graphemes they are not sure of. The teacher does the same but in a coloured pen. Also - enlarge to A3 to make wall display posters for supporting ad hoc (incidental) practice and early writing. Sometimes project large scale onto plain walls, screens or whiteboards for whole class 'revisit and review'.

The Phonics International programme is most effectively delivered in a routine 'teaching and learning cycle' (see flow diagram above).

This means that each lesson begins with a *quick-fire* revision session which is commonly referred to as 'revisit and review'.

With younger learners, flash cards showing letters and letter groups are used routinely for this part of the lesson (several different sets provided in Phonics International and in the Early Years Starter Package).

A really important activity for both younger and older learners is: *'See the graphemes, and say the sounds'* and *'Hear the sounds, select and/or write the graphemes'*.

Three 'Say the Sounds Posters' are provided in every unit (of 12 units of systematic resources) throughout the Phonics International programme. This is a very effective resource for constant revision of the alphabetic code.

'Revisit and review' can also include learners re-reading their previous word-level and text-level work, as required, to become familiar with new words and to build up fluency and automaticity when reading texts. The learners build up their personal body of work in their phonics folders which they can revisit *routinely*. This body of work can also provide very helpful cumulative material for extra little-and-often intervention purposes.

Posters which can support teacher-led introduction of the new or focus letter/s-sound correspondence:

For lesson introductions: project on a screen, or print, laminate, or display in plastic sleeves, enlarge, or reduce to 'multiples per sheet' for pupils' personal phonics folders. Build up a stock over time for year-on-year use.

Teacher-led lesson introduction: After 'revisit and review', the teacher introduces the new, or focus, sound and a corresponding grapheme (letter or letter group or 'spelling alternatives'). Use a few word examples which include the new or focus letter/s-sound correspondence to model the three core phonics skills and *sub*-skills.

These core skills consist of:

1. DECODING – recognising graphemes, sounding out and blending the sounds for reading
2. ENCODING – oral segmenting for spelling
3. HANDWRITING

- Simply *write* any information and word examples on the teacher's main board or flip chart

- and/or use supporting visual aids such as the Sounds Cards, the Alphabetic Code Frieze Posters, the Grouping the Spelling Alternatives Posters, the Mini Posters, the Picture Posters or the Core Teacher Modelling Cards.

'The Simple View of Reading Model and The Simple View of Writing Model'
https://phonicsinternational.com/The_Simple_View_of_Reading_model.pdf

Pace for introducing the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code:

Teachers often ask what kind of pace to introduce the letter/s-sound correspondences but this very much depends on the amount of time allocated to phonics for reading and/or spelling – and in secondary schools, this may depend on how great the need is to brush up on basic skills in literacy. What is possible for the pace may also vary according to age and stage of learning, and the learners' own capacity to embed the learning – the code knowledge and skills.
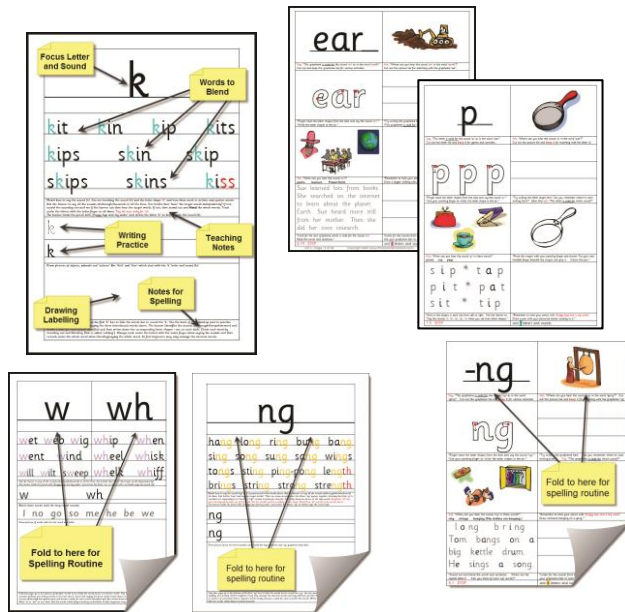
In international schools or schools where English is being taught as an additional language, the time allocated varies from school to school and how much the learning is prioritised in each school – or country. This simply means that it will take longer to introduce the alphabetic code and to practise the multi-skills activities. Of course additional time and opportunities are required to teach and practise the spoken side of the English language in these circumstances.

Generally speaking when English is the main language, a steady pace of introducing two new or focus letter/s-sound correspondences per week (but with a phonics sessions every day for four days) allowing for high-quality practice at code, word, sentence and text level, along with comprehension questions and recalling spelling word banks, still adds up to over sixty new or focus letter/s-sound correspondences – or spelling alternatives - per academic year!

This should be an ample pace when continued quite steadily with plenty of 'revisit and review' – and allowing for learners to *keep up* and not get left behind from the outset (slower learners need additional supervised practice *little-and-often* which could amount to multiple times per day and cooperation from home for more practice wherever possible – but avoid doing the work for the learners as they need to apply themselves to the practice). There may be times when teachers introduce more letter/s-sound correspondences per week, or times when no new material is introduced to allow revision and consolidation – or to focus on special events at school or home.

Teachers need to ensure that quicker learners routinely have plenty of extension activities which are sometimes open-ended and creative – for example, opportunities to write 'What happens next' for the sentence and text level resources and 'Write your own spelling story' with a given spelling word bank (e.g. 'Read the words, make up a story' resource in units 1 to 6), or 'Find further words with this spelling alternative', or dictionary work as appropriate.

Learner-practice at alphabetic code and word level with the essential Sounds Book Activity Sheets:

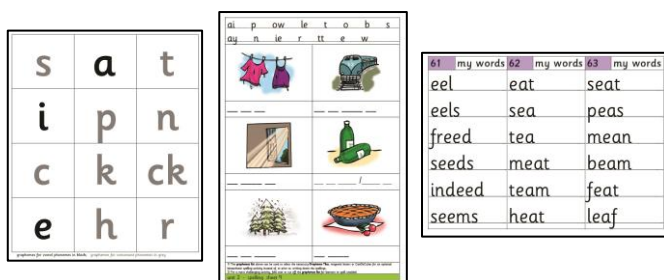It is essential that each learner applies him or her self as independently as possible to the code and word-level activities provided on the core multi-skills **Sounds Book Activity Sheets** (see also 'Alternative Style 2 Early Years Starter Activity Sheets' in the *Early Years Starter Package*). It only takes one or two explanatory sessions for learners to know how to do the multi-skills activities on the first side of the SBAS. After this, the teacher NEVER goes through the activities BEFORE the learners have completed the first side as this is a waste of time and reduces the learning potential of the activities.

Teachers can use either the Early Years Starter Package Activity Sheets or the Sounds Book Activity Sheets – or both styles as preferred – especially for younger learners or beginners of English as a second language.

At the same time as providing the Sounds Book Activity Sheets, also provide the extension sentence or text level resource with clear instructions for the follow-on activity required (see below for activities). The instructions for use may vary from learner to learner within the class dependent upon stage of learning and ability.

Full guidance and Alphabetic Code information is provided for the teacher or supporting adult on every 'Sounds Book Activity Sheet'. These very important resources enable all the *sub*-skills and core skills to be practised routinely and within one session. This guarantees that decoding, handwriting, drawing and labelling, spelling-with-editing and vocabulary development are all practised in one substantial session.

Each learner works at his or her own speed to complete the first side of the Sounds Book Activity Sheet and then immediately continues with the follow-on extension. In a whole class context, some learners will be much quicker than others so it essential that they are not held back and can progress quickly to the extension activity.

[See top of unit 2 webpage for 'Collated Alphabetic Code Information Plus Word Banks'. This might be useful printed in full and presented in plastic sleeves in the staffroom or literacy resources area.]

When the teacher decides the time is right, he or she draws the attention of the whole class together no matter what each learner has completed thus far, and *together* everyone re-reads the words in the cumulative word bank on the 'Sounds Book Activity Sheet' followed by discussing the meaning of the words.

For additional spelling practice:

After the learners have completed the first side of their SBAS, for younger learners, slower-to-learn pupils and learners for whom English is a new language, it is better to sound out and blend all the words in the cumulative word bank together *before* re-reading each word as a whole word collectively. Then follow this by time spent on discussing, acting out, and drawing the meanings of the words.

Spelling-with-editing routine on folded-up part:

Grapheme Tiles provide manipulative resources for beginners and intervention – and additional word level material is provided in units 1 to 6. Use any sentence or text level material for dictation or *self*-dictation.

Finally, all the learners fold up their SBAS so the bottom edge is just below the large-font focus letter or letter group for the 'spelling-with-editing' routine. See the link above of the **'Guidance for Phonics Routines'**. Support learners heavily at first to establish a strong, structured routine. Provide longer words and additional words for differentiation as appropriate. Only allow learners to 'tick' their words when a supporting adult has checked the spelling – this is not 'invented spelling'. Check also for correct letter formation – display an Alphabet Poster with letter formation to support learners as required.

Learner-practice - apply and extend to sentences/texts:
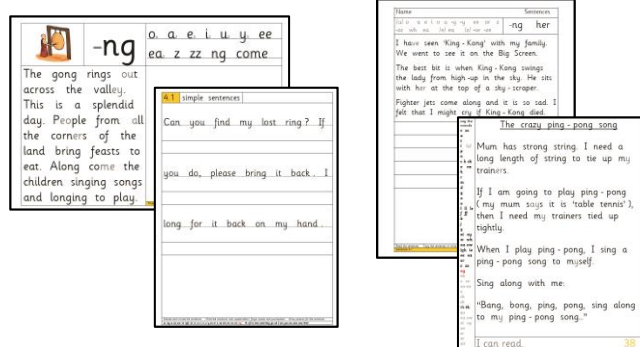
'Simple Sentences' in units 1 to 6 in the *Early Years Starter Package*

'Booklets' in units 2 to 6 of the *Early Years Starter Package*

'Sentences' in units 1 to 5 of the full PI programme

'I can read' texts in units 1 to 12 of the full programme (these have associated resources such as comprehension *'Questions'*, *'Full Colour Illustrations'* and *'Black and White Pictures with Word Banks'*)
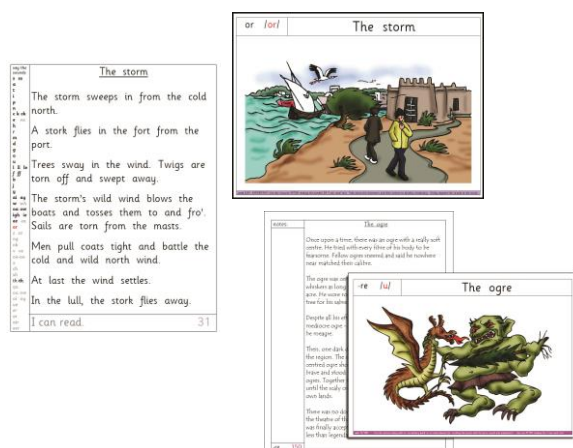
Phonics Spelling Dictionary:

See the *'Phonics Spelling Dictionary'* resource for building-up the spelling word banks over time – systematically when words are provided and incidentally as words are discovered – via the *'Extras'* webpage *'Resources which are non-unit specific'*.

Teachers can choose which of these resources are the most suitable for providing *at the same time* as the 'Sounds Book Activity Sheets' (above) for immediate use when the first side of the activity sheet has been completed by each learner at his or her own speed.

These plain, cumulative sentences or texts can be used in different ways but there is a range of similar activities to practise and embed the three core phonics skills and their *sub*-skills. The learner undertakes these activities (as instructed) as independently as possible.

Routine activities for the cumulative sentences and texts:

1. *grapheme search* (underline the focus grapheme, count and note how many found)
2. *decode* the words, read and re-read the text
3. *circle* any words causing difficulties in pencil (either decoding or comprehension)
4. *re-read* to understand as thoroughly as possible (with a supporting adult if, and as, necessary)
5. *copy-write* in print (particularly young beginners and learners with special needs) or joined handwriting for older learners
6. *self-dictation*: re-read sentence by sentence, hold in memory, *write* from memory in phonics exercise book (in print, or joined handwriting for older learners)
7. *illustrate* when meaning is discovered (*label* focus words with focus grapheme/s as part of the illustration)
8. *pull out the words* with the focus grapheme and make a list to build-up spelling word banks
9. *answer* comprehension questions ('Questions' resource available) – literal, inference, reflection points – as oral activities and/or written exercises
10. *extension writing* 'what happens next' (with any additional words spelt with the focus letter/s-correspondence if possible)
11. *teacher-led dictation* with matched groups for periodic formal assessment

The 'Sounds Book Activity Sheets' alternating with the parallel 'I can read' texts and associated materials provide the core and main structure of the Phonics International programme.
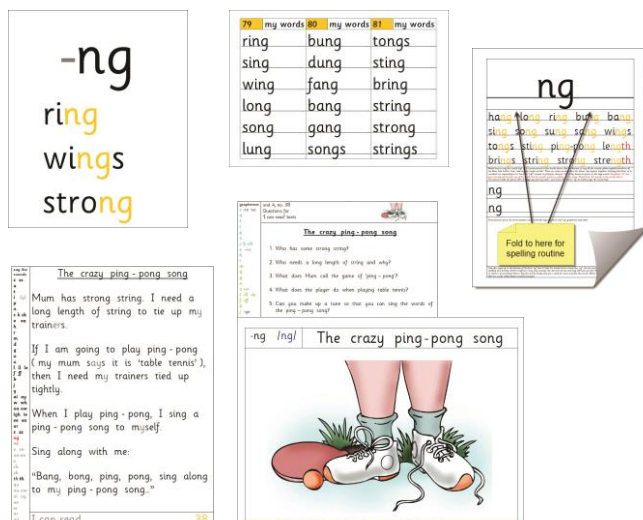
The Phonics Folder in the School's Book-bag Routine is very important to engage learners fully with their own learning and progress and to share this 'with home'. Please mark work well within lessons and quickly after lessons. High-profile the learners' paper-based activities.

Build-up spelling word banks and ways to recall them:

-ng
ri**ng**
wi**ng**s
stro**ng**

Make it very explicit that, ultimately, the learners are *building-up knowledge of spelling word banks where words are spelt with the same sounds and patterns*.

This means that additional activities, assessment and 'revisit and review' can include *revision of specific word banks*.

Quantify in any activity *'how many'* words are in the day's focus word bank to try and recall. Use the illustrations, meanings, sentences and texts, discussions, acting out, drawing and labelling, recalling words to partners, to help in recalling the specific words in the word banks. Focus heavily only on *one* spelling word bank in any one session as more than one may cause confusion. [This is not 'onset and rime word families'.]

Free posters available to support incidental teaching:

straight

Decoding for reading is a print-to-sound process.

Encoding for spelling is a sound-to-print process.

The particular approach to phonics teaching which is recommended is 'two-pronged' – that means delivery of a systematic synthetic phonics programme alongside any incidental phonics teaching as required within the phonics lessons, within the wider curriculum, for wider reading and writing and for differentiation.

The strong use of Alphabetic Code Charts will really support this two-pronged systematic and incidental teaching approach.

When teaching incidentally, however, there is no need to use the core resources of the systematic body of work, simply model the code in a few example words, build up an instant spelling word bank for display if appropriate, and refer to the main Alphabetic Code Chart.

https://phonicsinternational.com/FR_PI_straight.pdf
https://phonicsinternational.com/Let_me_help_you_to_spell_that.pdf

Additional resources in the Phonics International programme:

In units 1 to 6, there are many resources provided additionally at code and word level which may be particularly useful for young beginners or learners who would benefit from additional practice as well as the core resources.

Five pages showing range of PI resources: https://phonicsinternational.com/pi_catalogue_deb_combined.pdf

Assessments:
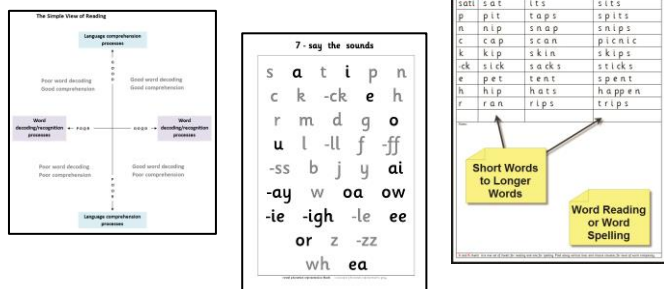
There is a package of assessment material available via the Free Resources page of Phonics International.

In addition, use any 'Say the Sounds Posters' or any of the words, sentences or text level resources to conduct more formal assessments for teachers' records as required.

Informal assessments by both learners and teachers are a feature of the routine use of the core resources.

Assessment package: https://phonicsinternational.com/assessment.html

Series of 8 eBooks:

Provided as downloadable pdfs with bonus word bank and manipulative grapheme tiles plus email support

Additional products available to buy and download:

In response to many requests over the years, we have developed a series of 8 pick-up-and-go teaching and learning eBooks with selected resources from the Early Years Starter Package and the full Phonics International programme – plus some new resources that have been designed especially for the eBooks. These may be of interest to use as a 'stand-alone' programme or the Phonics International online resources can complement or supplement these books as preferred. As the eBooks are a specific resource which can 'stand alone', they are bought separately as a one-off cost, not a licence system.

It is the same alphabetic code knowledge and phonics skills that everyone needs, therefore these eBooks can be used with juniors as required. They include all of the 44+ sounds of English speech and systematically introduce 117+ letter/s-sound correspondences, or spelling alternatives, and incidentally introduce further spelling alternatives and common words with tricky spellings in the sentences and texts.
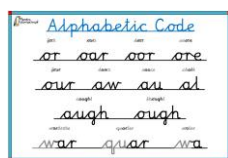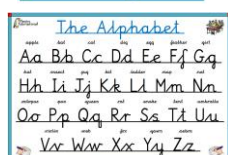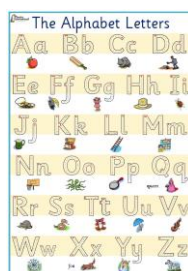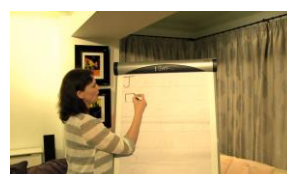

Handwriting and Alphabet Resources:
Free guidance and instructions for 'patter' for print and Debbie Hepplewhite's fully joined handwriting style

Additional resources and in-service training available
https://debbiehepplewhitehandwriting.com

Teach our infant pupils print first. Then teach joined handwriting quickly in days – not years! It's never too late to teach joined handwriting well if you know how!
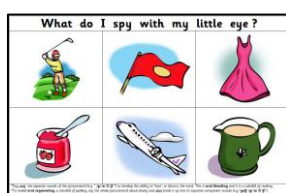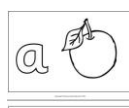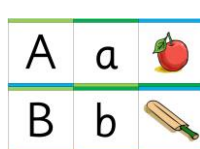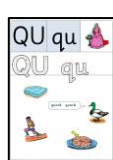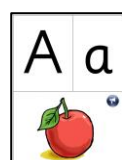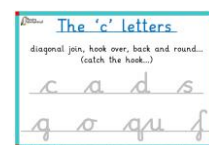
Teeny Reading Seeds & 'Phonics and Talk Time' books:

Resources provided as downloadable pdfs (or view online) for the youngest learners (e.g. from three years of age) to introduce links between alphabet letters and sounds prior to a systematic programme of work.
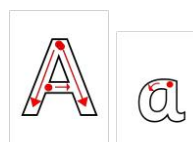
Find full information about pre-school resources here:
https://phonicsinternationalpreschool.com/