

Year 1 Phonics Check Practice: Real and Alien Words

Read real words and alien words aloud to a grown-up, then count and sort the sounds.

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

Learning objective: I can blend sounds to read real words and alien words.

✓ I say each sound, then blend ✓ I spot digraphs like sh and oa ✓ I can read words I have never seen before

How it works: the child reads each word aloud to an adult. Words with an alien  are **alien words** – made-up words that can be sounded out but have no meaning, so children cannot read them from memory. The adult ticks the small box for each word read correctly. This is independent practice, not the official check.

1 Section 1 Read each word aloud. Some are real words and some are alien words.

chip ☐	 yed ☐	shed ☐	 shom ☐	rain ☐
 chag ☐	moon ☐	 zort ☐	fork ☐	 thooob ☐

2 Section 2 These words have more sounds next to each other. Take your time.

frost ☐	 blim ☐	stamp ☐	 trelk ☐	shine ☐
 grint ☐	cloud ☐	 spoan ☐	garden ☐	 brone ☐

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- 3 Count the sounds** Say each word. Draw a dot under each single-letter sound and a dash under each digraph. How many sounds?

shop

sounds

train

sounds

night

sounds

stamp

sounds

thorn

sounds

cloud

sounds

- 4 Real or alien?** Read each word. Write it in the correct box.

Words:

fling

jask

crisp

plunt

nurch

smoke

Real words

Alien words 

- 5 Make your own alien word**

Make up an alien word, write it below and draw the alien it belongs to. Can a friend read it?

Answer Key

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Question	Answers
1 Section 1	chip – ch-i-p yed (alien) – y-e-d shed – sh-e-d shom (alien) – sh-o-m rain – r-ai-n chag (alien) – ch-a-g moon – m-oo-n zort (alien) – z-or-t fork – f-or-k thoob (alien) – th-oo-b
2 Section 2	frost – f-r-o-s-t blim (alien) – b-l-i-m stamp – s-t-a-m-p trek (alien) – t-r-e-l-k shine – sh-i-n-e (split digraph i-e) grint (alien) – g-r-i-n-t cloud – c-l-ou-d spoon (alien) – s-p-oa-n garden – g-ar-d-e-n brone (alien) – b-r-o-n-e (split digraph o-e)
3 Count the sounds	sh-o-p (3 sounds); t-r-ai-n (4 sounds); n-igh-t (3 sounds); s-t-a-m-p (5 sounds); th-or-n (3 sounds); c-l-ou-d (4 sounds)
4 Real or alien?	Real: fling, crisp, smoke ; alien: jask, plunt, nurch
5 Make your own alien word	Look for: A made-up word that can be sounded out using sounds the child knows, e.g. ‘glip’ or ‘zarn’

Teaching note: every word here is original; the alien words were checked against a British English dictionary so none is a real word. Accept any pronunciation of an alien word that a correct grapheme–phoneme reading would give (for example, ‘thoob’ may be read with the long oo of ‘moon’ or the short oo of ‘book’). The real Phonics Screening Check has 40 words, is taken one-to-one in June of Year 1, and is retaken in Year 2 if needed.