

# What Is a Digraph?

Understanding this Phonics building block is crucial for teaching phonological awareness or reading! Phonics is literacy skill that give any young reader a solid foundation for reading, comprehension, spelling, and critical thinking.

The word digraph dates back to the 1700s, and it's built from the roots di- (meaning twice) and -graph (meaning something written). By definition, a digraph is the term used to describe two consecutive letters that work together to make one sound. Understanding this is crucial for students because these two-letter pairs show up in most words in the English language. If kids do not know how these digraphs and sounds correspond, they'll struggle to read and make sense of new words.

Lesson: Page 1 of 3 (plus a practice sheet)

# Digraphs are...

...a kind of grapheme – a word that refers to any unit (such as a letter or group of letters) in a writing system. In this case, graphemes are letters or groups of letters in English. The English language is made up of about 44 phonemes, the word for the individual speech sounds that make up words. Phonemes can be written in more than 200 letter combinations known as – you guessed it – graphemes and digraphs!

The most common digraphs students will encounter are:

ch (as in chin),  
ch (as in school),  
ng (as in sing),  
ph (as in phone),  
sh (as in ship),  
th (as in think),  
wh (as in wheel)

Lesson: Page 2 of 3 (plus a practice sheet)

Now let's go to the next page for a practice activity!

# Consonant Digraph

Consonant digraphs will be the most common digraph that students will encounter, so let's familiarize ourselves with those first.

A consonant digraph is a combination of two consonants that represent one sound. For example, the "wr" digraph represents the sound /r/ in words like write, wriggle, and wrong.

While some consonant digraphs will represent the sound made by a letter of the alphabet — such as the /f/ sound created by the digraph "ph" in the words phone or phonics — others create new sounds such as "sh" or "ch."

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Lesson: Page 3 of 3 (plus practice sheets)  
Now let's go to the next page for practice activities!

# Wh

## Digraph /wh/ sound

● Read and trace.



whale

wheat

whiskers

wheel

white

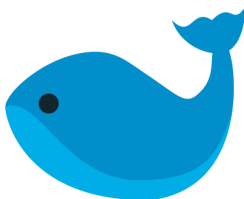
whistle

which

what

when

● Read and circle the "wh" words.



whale



wet floor



weather



whiskers



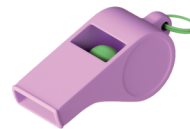
wheat



whisk



wash



whistle

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