



SPELLING • LISTENING • SPEAKING • READING • WRITING

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a red pencil, pointing towards the center of the text. The background is a blue, abstract, scribbled pattern.



Welcome to LEM Phonics

Since 1997 LEM Phonics has enjoyed excellent success as a superior method of teaching literacy to early primary children.

Through phonograms, sounds and the rules that govern the relationships between them, LEM Phonics makes sense of the English language. Rather than memorising lists of words by sight (which is effectively reducing the alphabetic language of English to a pictorial language), students are taught how to break a word into its component parts and analyse them. This analysis helps them to discover either what sounds the letters make (reading), or what letters they can use to represent those sounds on paper (spelling) — all before they have finished their first year of school!

Educators all across the planet are recognising (again) that phonics is the only method of teaching English that is consistent with the brain's pattern of learning. LEM Phonics is Australia's own 'home grown' synthetic phonics program, created in Australia, especially for the Australian accent, to suit Australian classrooms. I believe Australia can climb aboard this new wave of phonics instruction through LEM Phonics, making future generations of children *Literate for Life*.

John Garrard, LEM Phonics Coordinator

At a glance

- Developed specifically for Australian English
- Integrated handwriting instruction (eliminating the need for a separate handwriting curriculum)
- Resources available in all state-based handwriting scripts
- Emphasis on the development of phonological awareness skills
- Phonograms which cover the full spectrum of sounds and their written representations
- Rapid teaching of all phonograms as essential tools for reading and writing
- Strong emphasis on how to blend sounds in words
- Multi-sensory strategies to benefit all learning styles
- Emphasis on accuracy and fluency
- Ordered, structured framework
- Early introduction of interesting text
- Focus on meaning and purpose for learning
- Metacognitive approach to spelling which combines word building, rules and analytical thinking
- Word list covering all usual patterns in spelling as well as exceptions and anomalies
- Teachers use fingers for graphic clues in 'signing' words
- Teaching awareness of word parts (morphology) and origins (etymology)
- Early training in comprehension
- Emphasis on accountability and review

LEM Phonics Manual

- Presents the overview and philosophy of LEM Phonics
- Introduces teaching methods and techniques
- Includes reference sections for phonograms, sounds and rules

Phonogram cards

- Contains sounds and rule information for each of the 77 phonograms — an indispensable aid for teaching, testing, games and reference
- Available in all state-based handwriting fonts
- Durable plastic case

Teacher books

- *Teacher Book A* instructs in handwriting and phonograms, along with vocabulary building (the word list) in terms 3 and 4
- *Teacher Books B–E* continue with word analysis, rules and grammar instruction
- *Teacher Book A* available in all state-based handwriting fonts

Student and test books

- Consolidates handwriting practice, sentence dictation, homophones and the word list into a single easy-to-manage volume
- Keyed to teacher books to easily chart student progress
- Test books provide a record for phonogram and word list testing, keyed to teacher books
- Available in all state-based handwriting fonts

Workbooks

- Exercises, practice and consolidation for all levels of LEM Phonics
- Available in all state-based handwriting fonts
- Fun Australian animal themes

Phonogram charts

- Three sizes: A4, A3 and A2
- Available in state-based handwriting fonts

Phonogram readers

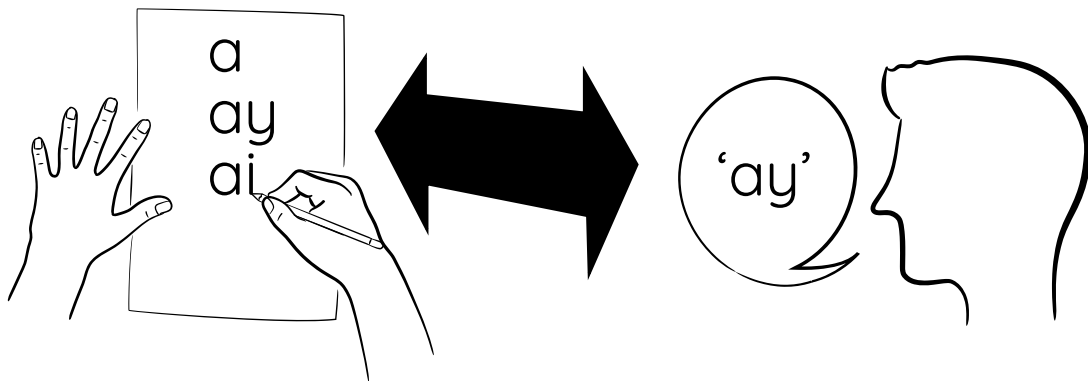
- Accurately keyed to word list instruction
- Vibrant colour illustrated covers
- Text is plain with no pictures (to discourage guessing)
- 20 readers each for single and multiple phonograms



Phonics and English

Language is one of the most important tools to communicate and share information. We do this through speaking, reading, listening and writing. Whilst speaking and listening are **naturally acquired** activities that children achieve some mastery with before school age, the skills of reading, spelling and writing are **learned** skills. These skills come through understanding how the spoken language is recorded or written down – the graphic representation of the sounds and words.

Regardless of its origins and fragmentation, the English language is built on the **alphabetic principle**. This principle simply states that written symbols (that we *see* or *write*) represent spoken sounds (that we *say* or *hear*), and there are systematic and predictable relationships between the two.



It seems logical, then, that a language built on the alphabetic principle should be taught using the same principle. The goal of phonics instruction is to gain the ability to interpret the written symbols of English intelligently (decoding/reading), and also to create those same symbols meaningfully (encoding/spelling).

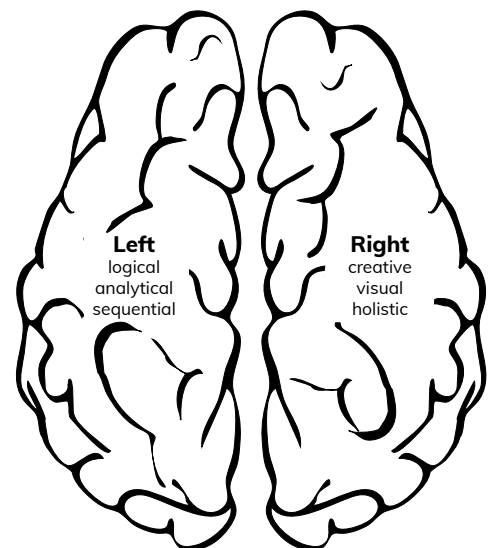
Effective literacy instruction not only teaches the phonetic patterns of English, but simultaneously links the patterns of spelling rules in a coherent 'package'. This allows the skills of reading, spelling and writing to reinforce and complement each other.

How the brain processes language

Each hemisphere of the brain has the capability of processing language, but each has a totally different way of doing it. The right hemisphere predominantly processes visual stimuli, and does it holistically, while the left hemisphere processes information sequentially. A sequential, alphabetic language such as English is most effectively processed sequentially using the left hemisphere, to increase the ability to process words and understand grammatical concepts.

The 'whole language' (or 'whole word method' or 'sight method') of teaching English has the student remember words through the pictorial configuration of the symbols or through guessing from cues given by pictures or context. The student remembers some words as a whole (like a picture) and guesses other words using textual or pictorial clues. This stimulates the right hemisphere of the brain and encourages students to recall words as holistic pictures rather than a phonetic sequence of recognised phonograms.

Imposing a pictorial method of learning upon an alphabetically designed system causes neural confusion in a large percentage of children, and a child who has developed early right brain dominance is likely to have difficulty learning the finer skills of the English language.



Intensive phonics

LEM Phonics is an intensive phonics program, based largely on the foundational research and practice of Romalda Spalding and the neurologist Dr Samuel Orton in the 1950s. Intensive phonics has discovered common patterns in words, where over 70% of common words are structured according to certain rules.

The strength of intensive phonics is that it takes us back to the alphabetic principle – the graphic representation of sounds (phonograms). The phonograms are the building blocks of words, which follow structured rules. As many students of intensive phonics have remarked, 'English finally makes sense!'

The National Reading Panel in the USA concluded that an intensive phonics program which gives attention to five prime areas yields superior results:

- 1. Phonological awareness** awareness of sounds in words and the ability to manipulate them
- 2. Phonics instruction** learning to use the symbols which represent the sounds (graphemes or phonograms) in the processes of reading and spelling
- 3. Fluency instruction** learning to read a text accurately and quickly
- 4. Vocabulary instruction** specific word instruction
- 5. Text comprehension** understanding text with increasing levels of complexity

LEM Phonics places strong emphasis on all these areas and clearly reflects the structures and patterns built into the English language. LEM Phonics correlates with scientific research that examines how the human brain processes the various elements of language and its implications for teaching reading, spelling and writing.

The evidence

In her 2016 research report *Read About It: Scientific Evidence for Effective Teaching of Reading*, Dr Karen Hempenstall advocates explicit, direct phonics instruction as the most effective way to teach reading:

There is also mounting evidence that explicit or direct instruction is the most effective teaching method, especially for the fundamental code-based components – phonemic awareness and phonics – and especially for children at-risk of reading failure. ...There is an extensive and rigorous body of evidence about how children learn to read and the most effective ways to teach them.

Hempenstall's report quotes the Australian 2005 *National Enquiry into the Teaching of Literacy*:

In sum, the incontrovertible finding from the extensive body of local and international evidence-based literacy research is that for children during the early years of schooling (and subsequently if needed), to be able to link their knowledge of spoken language to their knowledge of written language, they must first master the alphabetic code – the system of grapheme-phoneme correspondences that link written words to their pronunciations. Because these are both foundational and essential skills for the development of competence in reading, writing and spelling, they must be taught explicitly, systematically, early and well.

Further, she also highlights the unrealised benefit of a reduced remedial workload for teachers and support staff when students are taught appropriately through systematic phonics instruction:

The impact of reducing the number of struggling students through more effective initial class teaching should not be underestimated. School resources and teacher time can be deployed more effectively, learning support can be targeted to children with serious learning problems, and benefits for students extend from improved educational achievement through to a lower likelihood of the mental health and behavioural problems that frequently arise following reading difficulties.

LEM Phonics teaches the English language in a manner that matches both the structure of English and the nature of our brains – this is why it is so effective.

LEM Phonics overview

LEM Phonics aims to teach students the skills of communication—listening, speaking, reading, writing and spelling—which are basic to experiencing satisfaction and well-being in life. LEM Phonics is an intensive phonics method which differs significantly from traditional phonics. LEM Phonics teaches writing, reading and spelling simultaneously to enhance learning through as many of the five senses as possible. Whether students are visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners, they are given a wide range of opportunities to retain what has been learned.

Phonograms and sounds

The program begins by teaching students to recognise the written symbols for the *sounds* of the English language, rather than teaching the *names* of the letters of the alphabet (e.g. the sound ‘b’ rather than the letter ‘bee’). The letter symbols representing these sounds are called **phonograms**. Phonograms may consist of a single letter (**b**, **t**), called **single phonograms**, or a group of letters (**ee**, **igh**), called **multiple phonograms**. Despite having more than one letter, multiple phonograms still represent only one unit of sound.

A sound may be represented by more than one phonogram. For example, the sound ‘ay’ can be represented by **ai**, **a**, **eigh**, **ey** or **ei**, depending on the word in which it is used. In the same way, a phonogram may represent more than one sound. For example, **c** represents the sound ‘k’ in **cat** and the sound ‘s’ in **city**.

Throughout the program phonograms are shown in **bold** and sounds are shown in quotes (e.g. the phonogram **a** can represent the sound ‘ay’).

Students first learn to read and write the phonograms representing the 26 letters of the alphabet (single phonograms). They then proceed to master the multiple phonograms. Workbooks provide students with reinforcement and practice in writing the phonograms and blending the sounds.

Handwriting

Writing the phonograms at the same time as learning to hear them and pronounce them is a fundamental principle of the method. The kinesthetic ‘feel’ of the shape of the letters as students form them uses the sense of touch and movement to consolidate the message to the brain. This early writing training helps to develop neat, legible handwriting and forms a good foundation for future cursive writing.

As an Australian-based program built specifically for Australian English, LEM Phonics integrates the official handwriting scripts from all Australian states. This includes handwriting instruction in *Teacher Book A*, the workbooks, phonogram cards and charts.

Precise speaking of sounds also uses the sense of touch, as students feel the positions of tongue, lips and teeth for each different sound. This can offer valuable help to students with speech difficulties.

Phonogram grapheme written seen in bold	Sound phoneme spoken heard in quotes
a	‘ah’
c	‘k’
ai	‘ay’
sh	‘sh’

Reading

Students will begin to read as they learn to blend the sounds of the phonograms. As they progress through the word list their reading ability will expand quickly. Reading 'real' books allows students to experience excellent written prose right from an early stage, and will enhance their oral and written expression. Continually reading excellent stories, novels and informative books to children will encourage a love for good literature and develop expressive ability with words.

LEM Phonics includes **readers** for the single and multiple phonogram stages, carefully constructed to use only the known phonogram range so that students have no need to use sight words or guessing. These readers do not contain pictures (other than the cover), encouraging students to figure out the words and read using the tools they have been given.

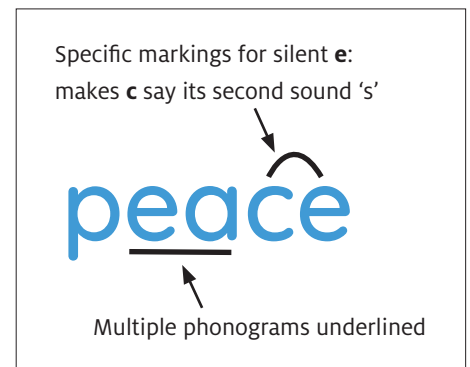
Word list and rules

After the first 60 phonograms are learned, students extend their vocabulary by working through the **word list**, beginning with frequently used words. Each word is analysed as the **rules** of LEM Phonics are introduced. These rules guide students in reading the word (which sounds do I say?), spelling the word (which phonograms do I write?) and also in the addition of prefixes and suffixes (beginnings and endings). As the rules are introduced for one word, students are able to apply them to many subsequent words.

Continually motivating students to use the rules to select correct phonograms develops their analytical ability. These analytical skills developed through spelling and reading will transfer easily to other areas of learning. Word analysis continues throughout the LEM Phonics program, aiding fluency and building awareness of the relationships between base words, roots, affixes, etymology and grammar.

A set of **explanation marks** is used to assist with reinforcing word structure and giving visual clues for reading.

Sentence writing begins with the commencement of the word list. Students will write both dictated sentences and also their own original sentences.



Transitioning to grammar and written expression

The basic principles of grammar are introduced in the first and second years of the program, however we recommend that students begin a separate grammar program by the end of the third year of formal education.

The fourth year focuses on the use of vocabulary and word building using prefixes and suffixes.

LEM Phonics can be tailored as a four, five or six-year program depending on class size, lesson frequency and student ability. Scope and sequence charts are provided for various situations.

Training and support

LEM Phonics is supported by a team of Registered Instructors across Australia, who can provide sales, training and support in all aspects of the program. Training options are flexible and can be tailored to specific needs and timetables.

**Contact an instructor today to discuss getting started
with LEM Phonics – the best synthetic phonics program
designed specifically for Australia.**



www.lemphonics.com.au