



## **Chesterfield Primary School**

Chesterfield Road

Enfield

EN3 6BG

01992 760 678

**Headteacher: Sarah Roberts**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Helping your child develop strong phonics skills is one of the most important steps in their journey toward becoming a fluent reader. As part of our homework, your child will be practicing both "Real Words" and "Alien Words."

Alien words (sometimes called "pseudo-words" or "nonsense words") are strings of letters that follow phonics rules but do not have a meaning in the English language. We often represent them with a small picture of an alien next to the word to help children identify them.

While it might seem strange to practice words that aren't "real," they serve a very important purpose. Alien words ensure that children are actually decoding (sounding out) the letters, rather than just recognising a word from memory or using picture clues. As children grow, they will encounter long, complex real words they've never seen before. Being able to decode an "alien" string of letters gives them the confidence to tackle any new word.

How to Practice at Home

When you sit down with your child, you can use the following routine:

1. Spot the Special Friends: Look for digraphs or trigraphs (two or three letters that make one sound, like "sh," "th," or "igh").
2. Sound it Out: Point to each sound individually (e.g. sh -i - p)
3. Blend: Slide the sounds together to say the whole word (ship)

Examples

Real Words: ship, light, may

Alien Words: shup, dight, tay

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Thank you for your continued support in your child's learning. If you have any questions about how to sound out specific words, please don't hesitate to ask!

Warm regards,

The Year 1 Team

**Telephone:** 01992 760 678

**Enquiries:** [contactus@connectededucationtrust.org](mailto:contactus@connectededucationtrust.org)

**Registered office:** Chesterfield Primary School, Chesterfield Road, Enfield, EN3 6BG, England

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