



CHAPTER 2

CONSONANT DIGRAPHS

sh ch th wh qu ph (initial)
sh ch th ck ng (final)

BEFORE BEGINNING INSTRUCTION

To continue to build students' phoneme–grapheme knowledge, this chapter will focus on the consonant speech sounds /sh/, /ch/, voiced and unvoiced (or 'voiceless') /th/, /w/, /kw/, /f/, /k/ and /ng/ and the eight corresponding consonant digraphs **sh**, **ch**, **th**, **wh**, **qu**, **ph**, **ck** and **ng** used to represent them. This is also a good opportunity to review the 26 letters of the alphabet and their corresponding common sounds from *Nelson Phonics-in-a-Box 1* and the double consonants **ff**, **ll**, **ss** and **zz** and the corresponding consonant speech sounds they represent from Chapter 1 (page 14). Students will then use the 26 one-letter graphemes, two-letter double consonants and two-letter consonant digraphs to make new words.

As the *Nelson Phonics-in-a-Box* series is designed to follow a sequential, scaffolded phonics approach that gradually builds from base phonics elements to more subtle and complex structures, the consonant digraphs are introduced in the following order:

- Consonant digraphs that represent their own unique sound/s, including **sh** as in /sh/ in 'ship', **ch** as in /ch/ in 'chip' and **th** as in voiced /th/ in 'this' and unvoiced /th/ in 'thin'.
- Common consonant speech sounds that are represented by alternative spellings, including **wh** as in 'when' and **ck** as in 'duck'.
- More complex consonant speech sounds and alternative spellings, such as **qu** as in /kw/ in 'quick', **ph** as in /f/ in 'phone' and **ng** as in /ng/ in 'sing'.

Put simply, the consonant digraphs are ordered by how often they are used in one-syllable decodable words.

Note that the final **ck** digraph is explored first in this chapter before the initial **qu** digraph. The rationale for this is that students will have encountered the **ck** digraph as it appears in many common, one-syllable words and they need to be familiar with this digraph before encountering the less common **qu** digraph. The two-letter **qu** grapheme mostly represents the combined consonant speech sounds /k/ and /w/, as in /kw/ – and some students may need additional guidance to understand this phoneme–grapheme relationship.

Learning intentions:

We are learning about the consonant speech sounds /sh/, /ch/, voiced and unvoiced /th/, /w/, /kw/, /f/, /k/ and /ng/ and their corresponding consonant digraphs when read and written.

We are learning that the:

- /sh/ consonant speech sound is represented by the two-letter **sh** grapheme
- /ch/ consonant speech sound is represented by the two-letter **ch** grapheme
- voiced and unvoiced /th/ consonant speech sounds are represented by the two-letter **th** grapheme
- /w/ consonant speech sound is represented by the two-letter **wh** grapheme
- /kw/ consonant speech sound is represented by the two-letter **qu** grapheme
- /f/ consonant speech sound is represented by the two-letter **ph** grapheme
- /k/ consonant speech sound is represented by the two-letter **ck** grapheme
- /ng/ consonant speech sound is represented by the two-letter **ng** grapheme.

We are learning that the two-letter **sh, ch, th, wh, qu, ph, ck** and **ng** graphemes are called consonant digraphs. We are learning that the **sh, ch, th, wh, qu, ph, ck** and **ng** consonant digraphs are each made up of two letters. We are learning that the letters in each digraph need to stand together to spell the phoneme they represent in words we read and write.

Success criteria:

- I can *make* the consonant speech sounds /sh/, /ch/, voiced and unvoiced /th/, /wh/, /kw/, /f/, /k/ and /ng/ to represent the two-letter *graphemes*.
- I can *hear* the /sh/, /ch/, voiced and unvoiced /th/, /wh/, /kw/, /f/, /k/ and /ng/ consonant speech sounds in spoken words.
- I can *find* the two-letter **sh, ch, th, wh, qu, ph, ck** and **ng** graphemes in words.
- I can *write* the two-letter **sh, ch, th, wh, qu, ph, ck** and **ng** graphemes.
- I can *blend* three and four phonemes together to read and write words that have the two-letter **sh, ch, th, wh, qu, ph, ck** and **ng** graphemes.

You will need:

- Consonant Digraph Flashcards
- BLM 6: Alliteration Picture Cards – With Words
- BLM 7: Alliteration Picture Cards
- BLM 8: Sound Boxes – Three Phonemes
- BLM 9: Sound Boxes – Four Phonemes
- BLM 10: Sound Boxes – Five Phonemes
- Double-Consonant One-Word Readers: *ff, ll, ss* and *zz*
- Consonant Digraphs One-Word Readers
- Decodable Story Books (consonant digraphs): *Beth’s Shell Shop; Chad and the Little Chick; Flin’s Big Grin; Fresh Fish for Lunch; Jack, the Black Cat; and Sing, King!*

Remember:

- Speech sounds are made up of consonant and vowel sounds.
- A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in words.
- A grapheme is one, two or three letters that represent, or ‘spell’, each sound (phoneme) in words.

Making the Consonant Digraph Sounds

Below are the consonant digraph sounds that will be explored in this chapter, with a brief description of each.

Refer to the **QR** code on page 6 to hear the pronunciation of the phonemes that are represented by these two-letter graphemes.

- The /sh/ phoneme is represented by the two-letter **sh** grapheme at the beginning of the word ‘**ship**’ and at the end of the word ‘**fish**’.
- The /ch/ phoneme is represented by the two-letter **ch** grapheme at the beginning of the word ‘**chop**’ and at the end of the word ‘**rich**’.
- The (unvoiced) /th/ phoneme is represented by the two-letter **th** grapheme at the beginning of the word ‘**thin**’ and at the end of the word ‘**moth**’.
- The (voiced) /th/ phoneme is represented by the two-letter **th** grapheme at the beginning of the word ‘**them**’ and at the end of the word ‘**with**’.
- The /w/ phoneme is represented by the two-letter **wh** grapheme at the beginning of the word ‘**whip**’.
- The /k/ phoneme is represented by the two-letter **ck** grapheme at the end of the word ‘**rock**’.
- The /kw/ phoneme is represented by the two-letter **qu** grapheme at the beginning of the word ‘**quiz**’ and as a beginning consonant blend in the word ‘**squid**’.

You can access the **QR** code on page 6 to listen to the articulation of the /sh/ and /ch/ consonant speech sounds.

Alliteration Activity: Focusing on the Initial Sounds

Introduce the /sh/ picture card from BLM 6: Alliteration Picture Cards – With Words to reinforce students' understanding of /sh/ as an initial consonant speech sound and its matching two-letter grapheme.

This is a picture of a shy shark. The first sound I hear when I say the words 'shy' and 'shark' is /sh/.

Then introduce the two-letter **sh** grapheme as a consonant digraph by showing the **sh** flashcard.

Introduce the /ch/ picture card from BLM 6: Alliteration Picture Cards – With Words to reinforce students' understanding of /ch/ as an initial consonant speech sound and its matching two-letter grapheme.

This is a picture of a cheeky cheetah. The first sound I hear when I say the words 'cheeky' and 'cheetah' is /ch/.

Then introduce the two-letter **ch** grapheme as a consonant digraph by showing the **ch** flashcard.

Phonemic Awareness Activity: Focusing on the Initial and Final /sh/ and /ch/ Sounds in Three- and Four-Phoneme Words

Conduct a phonemic awareness activity to reinforce students' understanding of the placement of the smallest unit of speech sound that makes up a complete word. For this activity, focus on the /sh/ and /ch/ phonemes. Follow the Gradual Release of Responsibility model by demonstrating the activity first, then doing it together with students. Once students are familiar with the activity, they can do it independently.

We are going to begin exploring the consonant speech sounds /sh/ and /ch/ as an initial and as a final sound in the following words.

'I Do'

When I say the words 'ship' and 'fish', I can clearly hear the /sh/ phoneme at the beginning of the word 'ship' and at the end of the word 'fish'.

Reinforce that both of these words have three phonemes by sounding them out.

When I sound out the word 'ship' – sh-i-p – I can hear three sounds. (Demonstrate by holding up a finger for each sound.) The first sound I can hear in the word 'ship' is /sh/.

When I sound out the word 'fish' – f-i-sh – I can also hear three sounds. (Demonstrate by holding up a finger for each sound.) The final sound I can hear in the word 'fish' is /sh/.

When I say the words 'chip' and 'rich', I can clearly hear the /ch/ phoneme at the beginning of the word 'chip' and at the end of the word 'rich'.

Reinforce that both of these words have three phonemes by sounding them out.

When I sound out the word ‘chip’ – ch-i-p – I can hear three sounds. (Demonstrate by holding up a finger for each sound.) The first sound I can hear in the word ‘chip’ is /ch/.

When I sound out the word ‘rich’ – r-i-ch – I can also hear three sounds. (Demonstrate by holding up a finger for each sound.) The final sound I can hear in the word ‘rich’ is /ch/.

‘We Do’

Ask students to stand up. Tell them:

I am going to say some words that have the /sh/ sound.

When you hear /sh/ as the initial sound in a word, put your hands on your head.

When you hear /sh/ as the final sound in a word, touch your toes.

Let’s practise together. Listen carefully to the following words.

Model the correct actions for students as you say the following words: ‘shed’, ‘wish’, ‘shop’, ‘fish’, ‘ship’, ‘dish’.

Now I am going to say some words that have the /ch/ sound.

When you hear /ch/ as the initial sound in a word, put your hands on your head.

When you hear /ch/ as the final sound in a word, touch your toes.

Let’s practise together. Listen carefully to the following words.

Model the correct actions for students as you say the following words: ‘chop’, ‘much’, ‘chin’, ‘finch’, ‘chat’, ‘lunch’.

‘You Do’

Now it’s your turn, so make sure you listen carefully. Pay close attention to where you hear the /sh/ sound.

Say the following words, giving students time to identify where they hear the /sh/ sound in each one: ‘rush’, ‘shell’, ‘mash’, ‘posh’, ‘shin’, ‘rash’, ‘mesh’, ‘shot’, ‘dash’.

This time, pay close attention to where you hear the /ch/ sound.

Say the following words, giving students time to identify where they hear the /ch/ sound in each one: ‘bunch’, ‘chill’, ‘crunch’, ‘pinch’, ‘check’, ‘bench’, ‘ranch’, ‘chest’, ‘lunch’.

Phoneme–Grapheme Correspondences: Connection to Print

Introduce the two-letter **sh** grapheme. Remind students that the letters **s** and **h** each represent their own speech sound, /s/ as in ‘sun’ and /h/ as in ‘hat’. However, when they stand together, they represent the /sh/ consonant speech sound, such as at the beginning of the word ‘ship’ and at the end of the word ‘wish’.

Now hold up the **s** and **h** Alphabet Flashcards and say their corresponding sounds: /s/ and /h/. (The letters could also be written on a board.)

Demonstrate how these two letters come together to represent the two-letter **sh** grapheme by first holding the letters apart, to reinforce that they are each representing their own phoneme–grapheme

connections. Next, bring them close together, reinforcing that these two letters need to stand together side by side to represent the /sh/ consonant speech sound.

Now swap the individual **s** and **h** Alphabet Flashcards for the **sh** Consonant Digraph Flashcard. Hold up the flashcard and say its corresponding sound: /sh/.

Explain that the two-letter **sh** grapheme is called a 'consonant digraph'. A consonant digraph is when two consonants stand together in a word to represent the one consonant speech sound.

Explain that we have just listened to words that have the /sh/ phoneme at the beginning and at the end. Hold up the two-letter **sh** Consonant Digraph Flashcard to reinforce the new learning.

Now introduce the two-letter **ch** grapheme. Remind students that the two letters **c** and **h** represent their own speech sounds. However, when they stand together, they represent the /ch/ consonant speech sound, such as at the beginning of the word '**chip**' and at the end of the word '**rich**'.

Now hold up the **c** and **h** Alphabet Flashcards and say their corresponding sounds: /k/ and /h/. (The letters could also be written on a board.) Now show students the **ch** Consonant Digraph Flashcard. Reinforce that these two letters need to stand together side-by-side to represent the /ch/ consonant speech sound.

Explain that, just like the two-letter **sh** grapheme, the two-letter **ch** grapheme is also called a 'consonant digraph'. A consonant digraph is when two consonants stand together in a word to represent the one consonant speech sound.

Explain that we have just listened to words that have the /sh/ and /ch/ phonemes at the beginning and at the end. Hold up the two-letter **sh** and **ch** Consonant Digraph Flashcards to reinforce the new learning.

Introduction to the Two-Letter 'sh' Grapheme

'I Do'

Display the two-letter **sh** grapheme on the interactive whiteboard, or write it on the board.

Draw students' attention to the **s** and the **h**.

Explain that, although the **s** and the **h** are separate letters, when we read and spell different speech sounds, we need to be familiar with the most common phoneme-grapheme connections. Remind students that graphemes can be made up of one or more letters from the alphabet, and are used to represent consonant and vowel speech sounds when read and written.

These are the crucial elements to becoming confident and proficient spellers.

Explicitly model how to write the letters **s** and **h** correctly.

'We Do'

Provide each student with a small whiteboard or device that can be repeatedly written on.

*Let's have a go at writing the two-letter **sh** grapheme together.*

*First, watch again as I write the letters **s** and **h** next to each other. Remember, the two-letter **sh** grapheme represents the /sh/ sound. What speech sound does the two-letter **sh** grapheme represent?*

*Now it is time for you to have a go. Can you write the two-letter **sh** grapheme three times across the top of your boards?*

Observe students' handwriting as they have a go at writing the two-letter **sh** grapheme. If you notice any letter reversals, upside-down letters, different sizing of letters, etc., gently remind students to check their letter formation. Always encourage neat, accurate and easy-to-read letter work.