

# Investigating Alternative Spellings



There are a number of Alternative Spelling resources, each one based on a different phoneme. These ideas use /ai/ as an example.

## Phonics learning opportunities

To know alternative spellings for the /ai/ phoneme.

To know the 'best bet' for spelling words containing the /ai/ phoneme.

To use knowledge about the /ai/ phoneme when spelling words

## Organisation

Whole class, small group, 1:1 (The Word Sort part of the game could be played independently)

## Teaching ideas

There are three main elements to each resource.

- 1) **Phoneme Spotter** - based on particular non-fiction text types
- 2) **Word Sort** - sorting words by the grapheme used
- 3) **Best Bet** - the best bets for spelling words containing the /ai/ phoneme

One suggestion is to tackle one long vowel phoneme (e.g. /ai/) each week. Learn the alternative spellings of /ai/ for three days. Practise spelling /ai/ words on the fourth day. On the fifth day, tackle consonant phonemes or HFW. See Phase 5c Planning for more information.

**Day 1** - Choose **Phoneme Spotter**. Read the text aloud, asking the children to listen carefully for the /ai/ phoneme. Reread the first sentence or two and ask children to put their thumbs up when they hear that phoneme (they may find this easier with their eyes closed). In pairs, give children a printed copy of the phoneme spotter. Ask them to underline all words they can find containing the phoneme and ask them to see how many ways of spelling the phoneme there are. They can jot these down on the side of the page.

Click on the **Reveal Graphemes** button. The /ai/ phonemes will be revealed as well as a list of all the graphemes included in the phoneme spotter. Get children to tick all the ones they found.

**Day 2** - Choose **Word Sort**. Recap all the graphemes along the top of the screen and remind children that they discovered yesterday that they can all represent the same phoneme. Click the red button to reveal a word card. Ask a child to sound talk the word. Ask all children to decide which column this word belongs in. Drag the word to the column most children choose.

Continue with the rest of the words. Keep moving at a quick pace. Encourage the child to watch carefully where words end up on the chart and to look for patterns. Can they identify the best bet (which is the most commonly used grapheme for the /ai/ phoneme)? Can they find any other rules (e.g. graphemes that only occur at the start/end of words or before certain letters)?

Go to **Best Bet**. Ask the children to discuss in pairs which graphemes are hidden behind the yellow boxes. Ask them to write them on whiteboards. Click on the yellow boxes to reveal the best guesses.

**Day 3** - Play **Word Sort** again but, this time, children to play independently, in pairs or small groups. They could play this on computers or you could use the paper based versions on the site.

**Day 4** - Play a spelling game of your choice e.g. Quickwrite Words (p117 Letters and Sounds) to practise spelling a selection of words containing the /ai/ phoneme.

**Day 5** - Tackle alternative spellings of consonant phonemes or spelling HFW (high frequency words).

**N.B. The phonemes /or/, /ur/, /ure/ and /er/ do not have a best bet.**