



Cheeky Tomato Learning

Free Starter Pack



Units 1–3 Sound & Word Cards

Structured Phonics Aligned to the Science of Reading

Hello and welcome.

Cheeky Tomato Learning was created by a classroom teacher with over 20 years of experience and one clear goal:

To provide structured, explicit instruction – delivered through stories children genuinely enjoy.

While teaching in the classroom – and later supporting my own children as they began learning to read – I noticed something important:

Many decodable books were carefully structured... but not always enjoyable to read.

Children were practising sounds, but not always experiencing real stories.

Cheeky Tomato Learning was created to bring both together.

Every reader follows a carefully sequenced phonics progression aligned with the Science of Reading, so children build skills in the right order, with confidence.

Our decodable texts are deliberately crafted with clear narrative structure, playful humour, and memorable characters – while remaining precisely phonemically mapped to the sounds taught. Children experience genuine reading success, while still feeling like they are reading “real books.”

To support this progression, our Etsy resource bundles mirror the exact same sound sequence as the readers. They are designed to:

- ✓ Reinforce the sounds taught in each unit
- ✓ Provide structured practice through games and activities
- ✓ Support fluency and confidence
- ✓ Be used alongside the readers or as stand-alone phonics resources

This free starter pack includes the core sounds used in Units 1–3 and is designed to help children develop:

- ✓ Automatic letter–sound recognition
- ✓ Confident blending
- ✓ Strong orthographic mapping
- ✓ Early reading fluency

Short, focused practice. Clear progression. Stories that feel worth reading.

We’re so glad you’re here, and we hope these resources bring as much confidence and enjoyment to your learners as they have to mine.

Cheeky Tomato Learning



Free Starter Pack

Getting Started with this pack

This starter pack helps children build confidence with the earliest sounds in reading through simple, short activities.

Children practise:

- ✓ Matching letters to sounds
- ✓ Saying sounds clearly
- ✓ Blending sounds to read words
- ✓ Hearing all the sounds in a word

These skills form the foundation of early reading and grow best through short, regular practice.

Connected to the Cheeky Tomato Learning System

This pack follows the same sound sequence used across both the decodable readers and the supporting activity resources, creating a connected learning pathway.

Children encounter the same sounds, skills, and familiar characters across stories and activities, helping reading feel meaningful and engaging. This continuity builds confidence while strengthening their connection to the texts.

The readers and resources are designed to complement one another, but can also be used independently to support early reading development.

These activities are informed by established reading research on orthographic mapping, phonemic awareness, and explicit instruction, including work by Ehri (2019), Castles, Rastle & Nation (2018), Kilpatrick (2020), and Scarborough (2020).

If you continue with the program, each unit builds gently on the last, allowing skills to grow step by step.

FLASH CARDS

Purpose

Build quick and confident recognition of sounds and words.

How to Play

Show a card and say,

“What sound/word is this?”

Practise reading the words aloud. Keep sessions short and fun.

Essential Elements

- Short bursts of practice
- Clear pronunciation
- Consistent repetition of the same cards with a focus on errors.

Educational Rationale

Flash card practice strengthens phoneme-grapheme mapping, helping children remember sounds quickly and apply them in reading. (Castles, Rastle & Nation, 2018; Sweller, 2019) show that removing writing reduces cognitive load, improving rapid recall.



SNAP

Purpose

Build automatic recognition of decodable words.

How to Play

Deal cards evenly.

Take turns putting a card into the centre pile saying the sound or word as placed.

If two cards match, call “Snap!” The fastest player wins the deck.

Continue until one player runs out of cards.

Essential Elements

- Quick visual matching
- Saying the word aloud when placing the card.
- Fast, repeated exposure to the same words
- Light, playful competition

Educational Rationale

Snap supports orthographic mapping, helping children store words in long-term memory. (Ehri, 2019; Agarwal & Bain, 2019) shows that fast retrieval tasks increase reading fluency.





GO FISH

Purpose

Practise reading words aloud in a meaningful, social context.

How to Play

Players ask each other for specific words ("Do you have an a?").

If yes, they take the card; if no, they "Go Fish" and draw from the pile.

Essential Elements

Saying the target word aloud

Listening for the correct word

Repetition of decodable patterns

Low-pressure reading practice

Challenge

Instead of collecting letter sound pairs building word by asking the other players for specific sounds.

Educational Rationale

Go Fish strengthens phonological awareness + decoding by requiring children to hear, say, and identify words repeatedly. (Scarborough's Rope, 2020; Guthrie & Klauda, 2020).



WORD BUILDER

Purpose

- Develop strong blending,
- segmenting
- sound-manipulation skills.

How to Play

Lay out a few cards.

Ask the child to build new words by swapping one sound:

"Change pat to pit."

"Change pit to pin."

Essential Elements

One sound change at a time

Clear articulation of each sound

Practise both reading and oral segmentation

No writing required (keeps focus on hearing sounds)

Educational Rationale

Word building is one of the strongest predictors of future reading fluency. (Kilpatrick, 2020; Ehri, 2019; NRP updates 2020–2023) show that phoneme manipulation directly improves decoding and spelling.



Explore the Full Cheeky Tomato Learning Collection

These cards practise the exact sounds used across our decodable readers and supporting activity resources, making them a natural match.

Using the cards alongside the books and resources creates a clear, step-by-step pathway that helps young learners build confidence, fluency, and a genuine connection to the stories and characters.

After practising these cards, children are ready to begin reading simple decodable stories with confidence in Unit 1.

Explore the Unit 1 readers and matching resources:

Decodable Readers (Print & Kindle)

Available through Amazon, these story collections feature familiar characters and follow the same structured phonics progression.

https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B0GR8K1G1Y?binding=paperback&ref=dbs_dp_rwt_sb_pc_tpbk



Supporting Resources & Activity Packs

Available in the Etsy shop, these matching materials provide games, practice activities, and structured reinforcement for each unit.

Together, the readers and resources form a connected learning pathway.

Each can be used independently, but they work best when used together.

<https://cheekytomatolearning.etsy.com>



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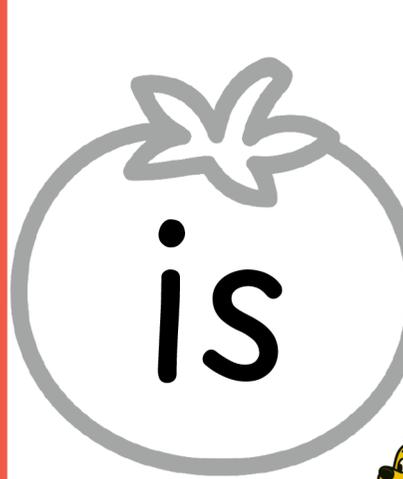
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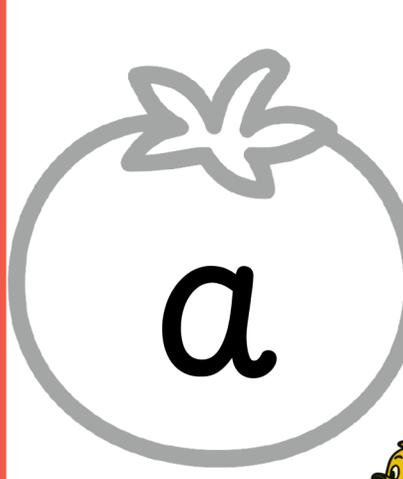
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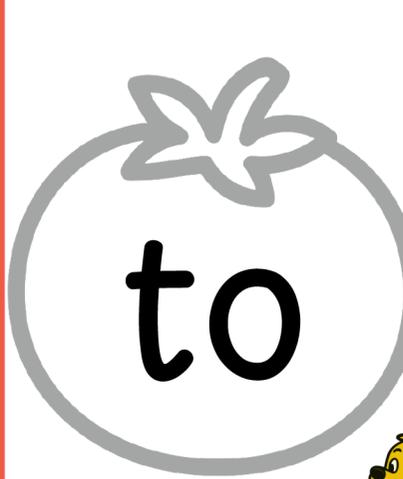
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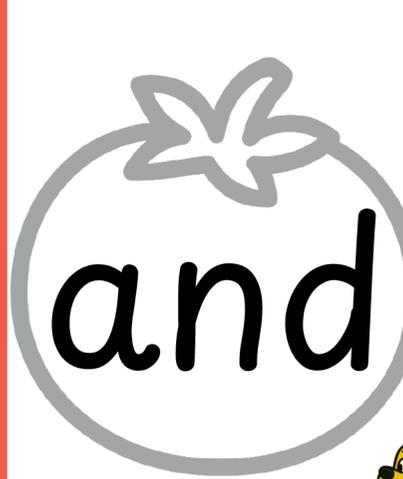
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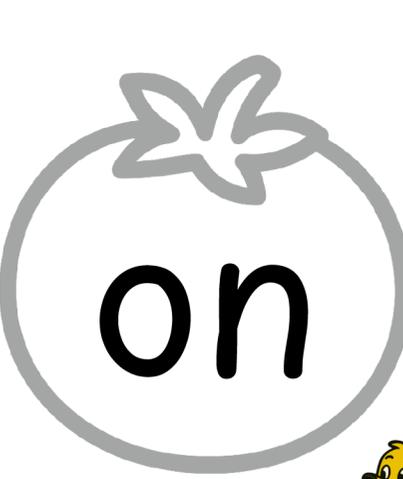
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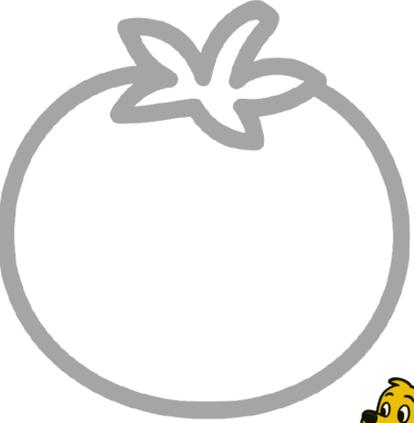
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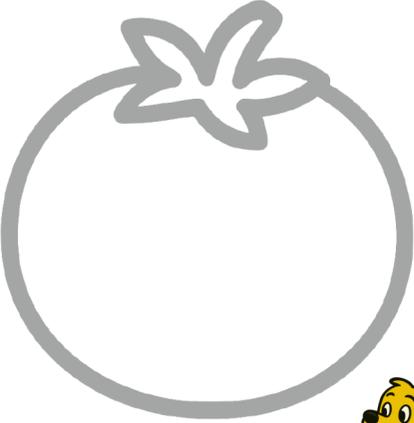
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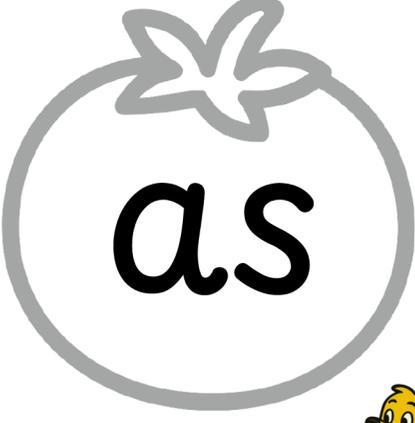
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