

# LESSON PLAN GUIDE

PictureBook English Reading Series — Phonics

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<b>Category</b>	Phonics	<b>Title</b>	Phonics Book 17 – A Chain of Charms
<b>Ages</b>	4-7	<b>Theme</b>	Digraphs — ch, sh, th, gh, ph, ng, nk

## INTRODUCTION OF THE BOOK

In this book, children explore digraphs — consonant + h combinations that make a single new sound. Through a fun cumulative story linking 15 unique animals and their personalities, children encounter ch, sh, th, gh, ph, ng, and nk in a rich, memorable context.

Many young ESL learners find digraphs tricky — especially the two different th sounds. Please spend extra time on this book and encourage repeated reading. The cumulative story format means each page builds on the last, giving children many natural opportunities to revisit and practise each digraph sound.

## DIGRAPH SOUNDS REFERENCE

Digraph	Sound	Animal examples	Note
<b>ch</b>	/ch/	cheetah, chimpanzee, chick	
<b>sh</b>	/sh/	shark, sheep	
<b>th (voiceless)</b>	/θ/	sloth	<i>tongue between teeth, no voice</i>
<b>th (voiced)</b>	/ð/		<i>tongue between teeth, with voice</i>
<b>gh</b>	silent or /f/	—	<i>often silent (e.g. night)</i>
<b>ph</b>	/f/	elephant, dolphin	<i>sounds like f</i>
<b>ng</b>	/ŋ/	penguin, hummingbird	<i>nasal ending sound</i>
<b>nk</b>	/nk/	skunk	<i>n + k together</i>

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Children will be able to:

- Recognise and produce the eight digraph sounds — ch, sh, th (voiceless), th (voiced), gh, ph, ng, nk
- Understand that two letters together can make one new sound
- Decode digraph words by identifying the digraph part first
- Read key animal digraph words — sloth, ostrich, cheetah, jellyfish, shark, elephant, chimpanzee, dolphin, hummingbird, penguin, duck, chick, sheep, skunk
- Complete a Ladder Game matching quiz and a word search activity

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### 1. Introduce digraphs with flashcards

Before reading, introduce each digraph using a card. Explain: 'When these two letters are together, they make one brand new sound!' Say each digraph sound clearly and ask your child to repeat it. Make two separate cards for the two different th sounds — the voiceless /θ/ as in sloth (tongue between teeth, no voice) and the voiced /ð/ as in that (tongue between teeth, with voice). Practise both before reading.

### 2. Mark digraph words before reading

Before your child reads each page, ask them to look through the text and mark all the digraph words first. Ask: 'Which two letters are making one sound here?' This pre-reading activity trains children to identify digraph patterns actively and reduces the chance of being caught off guard mid-sentence.

### 3. Decode words without the digraph first

Help your child decode each digraph word by reading the non-digraph part first. For example: read 'slo' first, then add 'th' to make 'sloth'. Read 'osteri' first, then add 'ch' to make 'ostrich'. This step-by-step approach makes digraph words feel manageable and builds decoding confidence.

### 4. Make flashcards and play the Speed Game

Create word cards for all 14 animal digraph words: sloth, ostrich, cheetah, jellyfish, shark, elephant, chimpanzee, dolphin, hummingbird, penguin, duck, chick, sheep, and skunk. Play a flashcard game, then time how fast your child can read through all the cards. Cheer for every improvement in speed!

### 5. Complete the word search

At the back of the book, find all the digraph words in the word search and practise saying each one aloud. Then do the Speed Game with the full word list to build automatic recognition and fluency.

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Play a Digraph Animal Quiz. Describe an animal from the book without saying its name and ask your child to guess it — for example: 'This animal is very slow and has a th sound at the end of its name.' (sloth) or 'This bird hums and has ng in the middle of its name.' (hummingbird). Then swap roles and let your child create the clues. This playful activity reinforces both digraph recognition and animal vocabulary simultaneously.

Try the fun online learning activities for this book on our website!

[Click here to try the online learning activities](#)

## TEACHER'S NOTES AND TIPS

The two th sounds are the most challenging digraphs for ESL learners because the tongue-between-teeth articulation does not exist in most other languages. Model the physical mouth position clearly and repeatedly — hold up a mirror so children can see their own tongues. The distinction between voiceless th (sloth, think) and voiced th (that, them) is subtle but important; start with voiceless th as it is more common in early reading texts. The cumulative story format is a brilliant memory device — by the end of the book, children have encountered the same animals and their digraph names many times, which builds both recognition and recall naturally.

