

LESSON PLAN GUIDE

PictureBook English Reading Series — Phonics

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Category	Phonics	Title	Phonics Book 18 – The Little Witch's Spells
Ages	4-7	Theme	Digraphs in Context — th, ch, sh + Chant-Style Reading

INTRODUCTION OF THE BOOK

Building on Book 17, this book dives deeper into digraphs through a wonderfully funny story. A little witch tries to cast spells on her black cat — but things keep getting worse and worse! The story is full of fun digraph chants that give children plenty of opportunities to mimic and practise the sounds as they read along.

This book focuses particularly on the three most common digraph sounds — th, ch, and sh — with a rich vocabulary of words grouped by sound. The chant format makes this book especially enjoyable to read aloud, and repeated reading will significantly improve pronunciation, confidence, and fluency.

DIGRAPH WORD GROUPS

Sound	Word Cards	Decoding tip
th	mother, together, both, them, clothes, Thursday, tenth, birthday, bath, moth, think, that, other	<i>Read 'mo' + 'ther' = mother</i>
ch	witch, stretch, change, bunch, cherries, chocolate, chant, peach, chunk, cheese, each, much	<i>Read 'wi' + 'tch' = witch</i>
sh	shopping, fresh, fish, shame, brush, dash, wash	<i>Read 'fi' + 'sh' = fish</i>

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Children will be able to:

- Confidently recognise and produce th, ch, and sh digraph sounds
- Decode digraph words by identifying the digraph part and building outward
- Read chant-style digraph sentences with rhythm and expression
- Read and recognise a wide range of th, ch, and sh vocabulary words
- Complete a word search and speed game using digraph words

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Review all digraph sounds first

Before reading, review the digraph sounds from Book 17 using flashcards: ch, sh, th (voiceless), th (voiced), gh, ph, ng, nk. Make two separate cards for the two different th sounds. This warm-

up ensures children are confident with the sounds before encountering them in a richer story context.

2. Read words without the digraph first

Help your child decode each digraph word by reading the non-digraph part first, then adding the digraph. For example: read 'mo' first, then add 'ther' to make 'mother'. Read 'wi' first, then add 'tch' to make 'witch'. Read 'fi' first, then add 'sh' to make 'fish'. Use the word groups table above as a reference. This decoding strategy builds confidence with longer digraph words.

3. Group words by sound for flashcards

Make flashcards for all the digraph words, grouping them by sound — th words together, ch words together, sh words together. Play the flashcard game with one group at a time first, then mix all the groups together for a greater challenge. Time how fast your child can read through each group and celebrate every improvement!

4. Read the chants with expression

The story is full of fun, chant-like sentences designed to be read aloud with energy and expression. Encourage your child to use a big, dramatic witch voice as they read! The rhythmic pattern makes pronunciation practice feel like performance rather than drilling, which makes it far more effective and enjoyable.

5. Complete the word search

Find all the digraph words in the word search at the back of the book and practise saying each one aloud. Then do the Speed Game with the full word list — cheer for every personal best!

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Ask your child to invent their own silly witch spell using as many digraph words as possible! For example: 'Cheetah cheese and chocolate chunks, shark fish and shuffling skunks!' Write the spell together and then perform it out loud with dramatic expression. Count how many digraph sounds you can find in your spell. This creative activity reinforces digraph recognition while making phonics genuinely fun.

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

Book 18 provides a second, deeper immersion in digraphs after the introduction in Book 17 — the vocabulary is richer and the story more complex. The three sounds focused on here (th, ch, sh) are among the most frequently occurring digraphs in everyday English, so mastery is genuinely valuable. The witch story format is particularly effective because the humour motivates children to keep reading — they want to find out what goes wrong next! For classroom settings, performing the chants as a group with dramatic expression is a wonderful activity that builds both phonics and oral language skills simultaneously.