

# Blends & Consonant Clusters

Consonant clusters or blends, are the names given to two or three consonants that appear together in a word. Each consonant retains its sound when blended. The term *cluster* refers to the written form and the term *blend* refers to the spoken form.

Consonant clusters consist of four major categories:

- r-clusters
- s-clusters
- l-clusters
- 3 letter clusters

You can teach beginning consonant clusters as soon as children have learnt the single consonant sound-spellings.

**r-blends:** br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, tr,

**s-blends:** sc, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw,

**l-blends:** bl, cl, fl, gl, pl.

**3 letter blends:** str, spr thr, chr, phr, shr. The consonant clusters thr, chr, phr, shr, are made up of a consonant digraph and a consonant.

**Ending blends:** ct, ft, ld, lp, lt, mp, nd, nk, nt, pt, rd, rk, sk, sp, st (teach these last)

**Consonant Digraphs:** consist of two consonants that when blended make one sound: sh, ch, th, wh, ph, gh, ng

**Exceptions:** The consonant blend *sc* can stand for the /sk/ sound as in *scare* or the /c/ can be silent as in *science*. Also, the consonant cluster *ck* represents one sound - /k/.

*Most* other consonant clusters will almost always stand for the blended sound of each consonant, which makes them very reliable and worthy of teaching to your child.