

## Australian Curriculum: Content Descriptions related to *Phonics*

Some points for discussion. David Hornsby

### Kinder

Spoken sounds can be written down using the letters of the alphabet.	Yes. Start with <i>sound</i> first. (Why?)
Regular vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words are made up of letters that correspond to the sounds heard.	go so no <b>to</b> cat hen bit <b>was put</b>
Phonemic awareness including how to recognise rhymes, syllables and single sounds (phonemes) ( <i>sic</i> ) in short spoken words	'sounds' and 'phonemes' are not the same thing.

### Year 1

How to manipulate sounds in spoken words (including phoneme deletion and substitution)	This is <i>oral</i> work - word play (include phoneme addition)
Recognise and write sound-letter correspondences including some less common sound-letter matches, consonant and vowel digraphs and consonant blends	Note: sound-to-letter ✓ some? why digraphs and blends before rimes? (rimes, not rhymes)
Regular one-syllable words are made up of letters and letters clusters that correspond to the sounds heard	So often not true! of the their want a some
Recognise morphemes in word families	Overlaps with grammar. (How?)

### Year 2

Spelling and pronunciation rules including silent letters, vowel-consonant digraphs and many less common sound-matches ( <i>sic</i> )	Rules? The whole document talks about learning in context. Teach for understanding first ... let rules emerge before formalising them.
Use morphemes and syllabification to break up and read some simple multisyllabic words.	Teachers very capable of helping kids with sound and visual patterns, but not confident with morphemic patterns.

When you take out what the document calls “key elements” for one aspect of the curriculum (in this case, phonics K-2) there are three obvious problems:

- (1) some are descriptions starting with a NG; some are instructions starting with a VG
- (2) there is very little information and lots of gaps (current NSW syllabus much stronger)
- (3) there is no meaningful sequence; the “glimpses of sequence” we do see are not based on the most up-to-date knowledge about how children learn graphophonic connections.

However, on page 4 of the draft document, it says: “The content descriptions have been developed to ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and that unnecessary repetition is avoided.” This has clearly NOT been achieved when we look at the descriptions related to phonics.