

Cued Speech, THRASS and Phonics for deaf and hearing impaired children

What is Cued Speech?

Cued Speech, which uses 8 different handshapes at 4 positions near the mouth, together with the lip-patterns of normal speech, is a visual representation of spoken English and gives deaf and hearing impaired children full access to all speech sounds both individually and at a whole language level.

The basics (for phonics work) can be learnt in a day, although around 20 hours study are needed to learn to accurately cue words and phrases.

Reading involves two separate skills: 1. decoding, and 2. comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Cued Speech is the **ONLY** system which gives visual access to both whole language **and** phonics. It can be used with any phonics programme.

Deaf children brought up with Cued Speech use phonics strategies when they learn to read just as hearing children do, so that they can 'sound out' words they do not know, and can also work out how to spell new words that they have seen cued.

What is THRASS?

THRASS (Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills), which was pioneered by British Educational Psychologist, Alan Davies, is a synthetic phonics program with a visual approach to teaching phonics to **all** children.

Children who cannot fully access phonics through listening alone (either through

deafness or because of a specific language impairment) find THRASS materials especially valuable. For example sounds 'p' and 'b' may sound very different to a hearing person, but look identical on the lips to anyone relying on lipreading. Using the 'THRASS chart', children can be given a memory 'hook' to help them visualise that the sound 'p' can be represented by one letter 'p' as in **p**anda or two letters as in **hippo**, and the sound 'b' can be represented by one letter as in **b**ird or two letters as in **rabbit**. Used in conjunction with Cued Speech, this becomes immediately accessible for deaf children.

THRASS is also a visual tool which can help emerging writers to make spelling choices by embedding visual images in their memory. Sounds are grouped together in a visual way so that the child can be prompted with spelling choices, for example, the 'c' sound like at the beginning of **cat** can be represented by the letter 'c' in **cat**, 'q' in **queen**, ck in **duck**, 'k' in **kitten** and 'ch' in **school**. By presenting these images visually it is much clearer and serves as a memory aid.



THRASS has a full range of materials for hearing children, and working with the Cued Speech Association UK, has created additional materials to support deaf children's' literacy and understanding of phonics.

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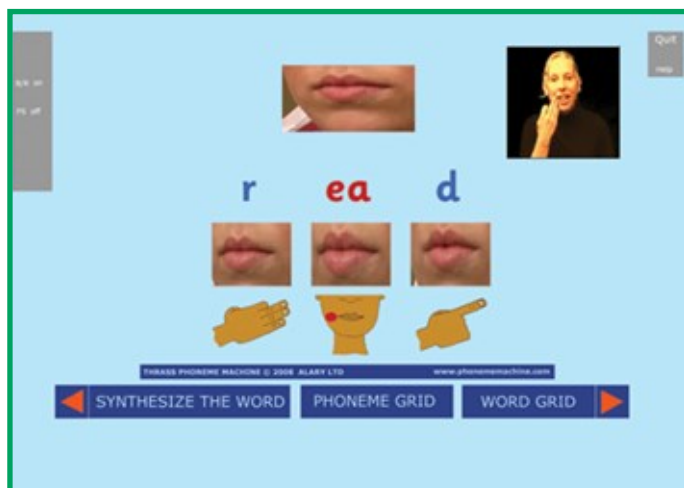
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>> Custom-made THRASS / Cued Speech resources:

The **Phoneme Machine** is a free-to-download program for all children **which** uses moving human lips to pronounce the sounds (phonemes), both individually and in hundreds of frequently used English words. It is an excellent resource for parents and teachers for learning about, and also teaching, the fundamental building blocks of English in an entertaining and educational way.

In the Cued Speech version of the Phoneme Machine the shapes, positions and movements of Cued Speech are displayed alongside moving lip patterns, with the cueing for each of the 500 base words of English demonstrated in a video box. Using it, deaf children can work independently, both in school and at home, on the sounds and spelling choices in English words.



The Cued Speech version of the THRASS Phoneme Machine gives full and easy visual access to the phonics.

A **Cued Speech version of the basic THRASS chart** of the 44 sounds and their spelling choices is invaluable for deaf children to use independently or alongside the materials designed for hearing children.



Cued Speech and THRASS are a perfect combination for literacy where visual access is needed; this includes hearing children with speech processing difficulties as well as deaf children.

Do you know of any children who are not making adequate progress in literacy and / or phonics skills?

Find out more about how THRASS and Cued Speech combined can help.

The Cued Speech Association can offer courses or workshops in your area. Simply contact us for more information about setting up a workshop, and we will be happy to help.

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CSAUK is a national charity run by users of Cued Speech (both professionals and parents).