

PhonoTrack: The Parent's Complete Guide to Phonogram Mastery

A Step-by-Step Manual for Assessing, Tracking, and Supporting Your Child's Reading Journey

Audience: Parents, Homeschoolers & Reading Tutors | **Curriculum:** Complete 70 Phonograms Across 18 Lessons | **Methodology:** Multi-Sensory Systematic Phonics

1. Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to **PhonoTrack**! Whether you are teaching your child to read for the very first time, supporting a struggling reader, or homeschooling with a classical or multi-sensory curriculum (such as Spalding, Orton-Gillingham, or Logic of English), this app was built to give you **complete clarity, confidence, and peace of mind**.

Teaching reading does not have to feel like guesswork. For decades, reading science has proven that children become fluent, confident readers when they are taught the **phonograms** (the building blocks of English sounds) in a systematic, direct way. PhonoTrack gives you a clean, simple digital dashboard to assess what your child knows, celebrate their hard work, and know exactly what to practice next.

What is a Phonogram?

A **phonogram** is a letter or group of letters that represents a specific sound or sounds in English:

- Some phonograms are single letters that make multiple sounds: for example, the letter **a** makes three sounds: /ă/ (*cat*), /ā/ (*paper*), /ah/ (*father*).
- Some phonograms are two, three, or four letters working together as a team: for example, **sh** makes one sound (/sh/ in *ship*), **igh** makes one sound (/i/ in *night*), and **ough** can make six sounds (*though, through, rough, cough, thought, bough*).

Why Memorizing Whole Words Often Fails

When children are taught to memorize words as visual pictures ("sight words" or flashcards like *said, they, what*), their memory banks overload around 3rd or 4th grade, leading to the well-documented "reading slump." By contrast, English is **97% regular** when taught through phonograms! Once your child masters all 70 phonograms to automaticity, they possess the keys to decode over 85% of all English vocabulary independently.

What is "Automaticity" and Why Does PhonoTrack Measure It?

Automaticity means instant recall without hesitation—usually in less than one second. When your child looks at a phonogram card and produces its sounds effortlessly, their brain doesn't have to waste mental energy decoding individual letters. That freed-up brain power can then be 100% focused on **reading comprehension and enjoyment**.

2. Getting Started in Under 3 Minutes

PhonoTrack is designed to be frictionless. There are no complicated logins, no advertisements, and no passwords to remember.

How to Access PhonoTrack on Any Device

Open your web browser (Chrome, Safari, Edge, or Firefox) and navigate to your PhonoTrack website URL. You can use PhonoTrack on a desktop computer, a laptop, an iPad, a Kindle Fire, or your smartphone.

Installing PhonoTrack as an App (Works 100% Offline)

PhonoTrack is a **Progressive Web App (PWA)**. Once installed on your device, it works just like a native app downloaded from the App Store or Google Play—and it works **completely offline** (even in airplane mode, in the car, or without Wi-Fi).

- **On iPhone or iPad (Safari):**

1. Open your PhonoTrack URL in Safari.
2. Tap the **Share** button (the square with an arrow pointing upward at the bottom of the screen).
3. Scroll down and tap **Add to Home Screen**.
4. Tap **Add** in the top right corner. PhonoTrack will appear on your home screen with its official icon.

- **On Android (Chrome):**

1. Open your PhonoTrack URL in Google Chrome.

2. Tap the three vertical dots menu in the top right.
 3. Tap **Install App** or **Add to Home screen**.
- **On Windows PC or Mac (Chrome / Edge):**
 1. Look at the right side of your browser address bar for the small **Install** icon (a computer monitor with a download arrow), or click the green **Install App** button in the PhonoTrack top bar.
 2. Click **Install**. PhonoTrack will launch in its own clean window without browser toolbars.

Adding Your Child's Profile

1. In the top header bar of PhonoTrack, click the **+ Student** button (or click **Manage Students**).
2. Type your child's name.
3. Select their starting lesson from the dropdown (default is **Lesson 1**).
4. Click **Create Profile**.

Teaching more than one child? You can add profiles for multiple children. Simply use the **Student Selector dropdown** in the top bar to switch between children instantly. Each child maintains their own separate history, progress charts, and lesson notes.

3. Running a 5-Minute Daily Assessment Session

Consistency is the secret to reading fluency. A short **5-to-10-minute daily flashcard session** is vastly more effective than a grueling 45-minute weekend marathon.

The Golden Rule for Parents: Keep It Joyful!

Never turn phonogram practice into an interrogation. Celebrate effort, keep your energy light and encouraging, and end every session on a high note before your child becomes fatigued.

The Step-by-Step Daily Workflow

1. **Select Your Child:** Choose your child's name in the top dropdown. Their current stats and snapshot immediately update.
2. **Set the Session Date:** The session date defaults to today. (You can change it if you are logging yesterday's work).
3. **Choose Your Active Lesson:** In the **Active Lesson** dropdown, select the lesson your child is currently studying (e.g., *Lesson 3*).

Note: PhonoTrack displays all phonograms introduced up through that lesson. For instance, if you select Lesson 3, you will see the cards from Lessons 1, 2, and 3 (12 cards total).

4. **Show the Flashcards:** Show your physical flashcards (or use the cards on the PhonoTrack screen):
 - Hold up the card.
 - Your child says **all sounds** of that phonogram in order from most common to least common.
 - *Example:* You hold up **o**. Your child says: "/ŏ/, /ō/, /oo/".
5. **Tap to Record Mastery:**
 - **✓ KNOWN (Mastered):** Tap the card once. It turns crisp green with a checkmark.
 - **○ PRACTICE:** If your child hesitates, misses a sound, or needs help, tap the card so it remains white/practice mode.
6. **Add Observations & Notes:** In the text box at the bottom of the assessment panel, type any quick notes (e.g., "*Hesitated on the 3rd sound of 'a'. Confused 'b' and 'd' once but self-corrected. Great energy today!*").
7. **Click "Save Assessment Session":** Click the prominent green **Save Assessment Session** button. A confirmation toast appears, and PhonoTrack instantly recalculates your child's mastery rate and updates the charts!

What Counts as "Mastered"? (The High Standard)

Parents often ask: "*My child remembered the sound after I gave them a tiny hint—should I mark it Known?*"

The answer is **No**—and that's a good thing! To be marked **✓ Known:**

- Your child must give the sounds **automatically (within 1 second)**.
- They must recite **all sounds** for that phonogram (not just the first sound).
- They must give the sounds **without parent prompting**.

Leaving a card as **Needs Practice** is not a failure; it simply tells PhonoTrack to keep that card in tomorrow's warm-up pile until it is truly permanent.

Pronunciation Hints on Every Card

Not sure what sounds a phonogram makes? Don't worry! Every card in PhonoTrack displays:

- The clean lowercase letterform in school-standard **Primer Print** font.
- The exact phonetic pronunciation guide (e.g., /k/, /s/).

Helpful Filter & Action Tools

Tool	What It Does
All Cards Tab	Displays all phonograms introduced up to your child's current lesson.
Needs Practice Tab	Filters the view to display <i>only</i> the phonograms your child still needs to review. Perfect for targeted 2-minute drills!
Mastered Tab	Shows only the cards your child has conquered. Great for boosting confidence!
Mark All Known	Sets all visible cards to Known with a single tap. Useful when reviewing an advanced student who already knows earlier lessons.
Reset All	Resets all cards in the current session draft to Practice mode.

4. Reading Analytics & Celebrating Milestones

Click on the **Analytics** tab in the navigation bar to see your child's learning journey visualized.

1. The Student Snapshot Bar

At the top of the screen, you will always see three key numbers:

- **Mastered Pill:** The exact count of mastered phonograms out of 70 (e.g., 24 / 70).
- **Mastery Rate Pill:** The overall percentage completed (e.g., 34%).
- **Level Pill:** The active lesson level your child is working in (e.g., Lesson 6).

2. The Mastery Growth Trend Chart

This interactive chart shows your child's progress over time. Every time you save an assessment session, a new data point is plotted. Seeing this line climb steadily upward is one of the most motivating visual rewards for both parents and kids!

3. Lesson-by-Lesson Mastery Matrix

This table breaks down your child's mastery percentage lesson by lesson. It helps you spot hidden gaps. For example, if your child is in Lesson 8, but Lesson 2 shows only 75% mastery (perhaps they still struggle with the 3 sounds of *o*), you can quickly circle back and review those specific cards.

4. The "Focus Areas" Action List

PhonoTrack automatically identifies which phonograms from past lessons still need practice and lists them under **Focus Areas**. Before introducing any new lesson, spend 2 minutes reviewing these focus cards.

The 5 Great Milestones to Celebrate with Your Child!

1. **Milestone 1: The 26 Alphabet Single-Letters (Lessons 1–7)** — Your child has mastered all 26 basic letters, including their multiple sounds (like the 4 sounds of *y* and 3 sounds of *a* and *o*).
2. **Milestone 2: The /er/ Family & Basic Digraphs (Lessons 8–9)** — Your child learns *er, ir, ur, wor, ear, sh, th, ee*.
3. **Milestone 3: The Halfway Mark (35 of 70 Phonograms)** — Celebrate with an ice cream or special reading outing!
4. **Milestone 4: Advanced Vowel Teams (Lessons 10–15)** — Conquering complex teams like *igh, igh, oa, ou, ow*.
5. **Milestone 5: Graduation! All 70 Phonograms Mastered (Lesson 18)** — Print their completion summary and celebrate! Your child possesses full phonemic decoding automaticity.

5. Reviewing & Editing History

Click the **History** tab to see a complete chronological log of every assessment session you have ever conducted with your child.

Viewing Historical Logs

Each session card displays:

- The date of the session.
- The lesson level being assessed.
- The mastery score achieved on that day (e.g., *18 of 20 Mastered - 90%*).
- Your saved parent observation notes.

How to Edit a Past Session (Retrospective Editor)

Did you accidentally tap the wrong card yesterday? Or did your child demonstrate mastery right after you hit save?

1. Go to the **History** tab.
2. Find the session you want to update and click **Edit Session**.
3. A modal window opens showing the exact card grid as it was on that day.
4. Click any card to toggle its status between Known and Practice. You can also update the session notes or date.
5. Click **Save Changes**. PhonoTrack updates the historical record and immediately recalculates your child's progress trends!

Deleting a Test Session

If you entered a practice session while testing the app and want to remove it, simply click the red **Delete** button next to that session. PhonoTrack will ask you to confirm before permanently removing it.

6. Printing Student Reports

PhonoTrack includes a built-in report printer designed specifically for parent-teacher conferences, homeschool annual review portfolios, or sharing with an educational therapist.

How to Print a Progress Summary

1. Make sure the desired child is selected in the student selector.
2. In the top right corner of the header, click the **Print Summary** button.
3. A clean, print-optimized document is formatted automatically (dark backgrounds, buttons, and menus are hidden).

4. Your browser's standard Print dialog opens:
 - To print on physical paper: choose your printer.
 - To save a digital PDF copy: choose **Save as PDF** in the Destination dropdown.
5. Click **Print** or **Save**.

7. Protecting Your Data: Backups & Multi-Device Sync

100% Privacy Guarantee

PhonoTrack does **not** send your child's name, scores, or notes to any external cloud server or third-party company. All data is stored locally in your browser's private storage (Local Storage). It is 100% private, secure, and COPPA compliant.

Why You Should Make Regular Backups

Because data is stored inside your browser on your device, clearing your browser history/cache or using "incognito" mode could wipe your data. For peace of mind, we recommend creating a quick backup once every couple of weeks.

How to Export a Backup

1. In the top bar, click the **Backup / Export** button.
2. Click **Download Backup (JSON)**.
3. A file named `phonotrack-backup-YYYY-MM-DD.json` will be saved directly into your computer or phone's Downloads folder.
4. Keep this file in a safe folder or email it to yourself.

How to Restore Data or Move to a New Device

Want to move your child's data from your laptop to your iPad?

1. Export the backup file from your laptop.
2. Send the `.json` file to your iPad (via AirDrop, email, or Google Drive).
3. Open PhonoTrack on your iPad and click **Backup / Export**.
4. Under "Restore Backup", click **Choose File** and select your `.json` backup.
5. PhonoTrack will verify the file and show a confirmation prompt detailing how many students and sessions are inside. Confirm, and all your records are instantly restored!

8. Parent FAQ & Expert Teaching Tips

Q: In what order should my child say the sounds of a letter?

A: Always from **most common to least common**. This is why the sounds in PhonoTrack are ordered deliberately:

- For **a**: /ă/ (most common, as in cat), then /ā/ (paper), then /ah/ (father).
- For **s**: /s/ (sun), then /z/ (has).
- For **c**: /k/ (cat), then /s/ (cent).

When a child encounters an unfamiliar word in a book, they are taught to try the first sound first. If the word doesn't make sense, they try the second sound, and then the third.

Q: How many new phonograms should I introduce at a time?

A: Introduce no more than **2 to 4 new phonograms per week**. The key is mastery of previously taught cards before adding new cognitive load. If your child is struggling with cards from Lesson 3, do not advance to Lesson 4 until Lesson 3 cards are solid.

Q: My child keeps confusing 'b' and 'd'. What can I do?

A: Reversals are very common up to age 7 or 8. Use these multi-sensory techniques:

- **The "Bat before Ball" rule:** When writing or looking at **b**, you see the tall stick (the bat) first, followed by the circle (the ball).
- **The "Bed" trick:** Have your child make two fists with thumbs up in front of their chest. Left hand is 'b', right hand is 'd'—together they spell the word **b-e-d**. The bed has a headboard ('b') and a footboard ('d').
- **Trace in sand or salt:** Have your child trace the letter in a sensory tray while saying: *"/b/ - bat before ball"*.

Q: What if my child gets discouraged?

A: Always start your flashcard review with 5 or 6 cards your child already knows perfectly! This triggers feelings of competence and success. Then slip in 1 or 2 practice cards. End the drill with an easy card and celebrate their effort.
