WORD LEARNING **SAMPLE LESSON**
Teaching Word Parts

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TERMS TO KNOW

Affix	Any part that is added to a word; a prefix or a suffix
Base word	A word that can stand alone and to which affixes can be added
Prefix	A word part that is attached to the beginning of a word
Root	A unit of meaning that cannot stand alone but that can be used to form words with related meanings
Suffix	A word part that is attached to the end of a word

(Encarta World English Dictionary; Moats, 2000)

INTRODUCTION

It is common for secondary teachers to assume that their older students already have a grasp on the parts that make up words, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes. All too often, this assumption is wrong for struggling readers. Content and vocabulary become more complex as students get older, and this may frustrate or overwhelm struggling readers. Even more advanced readers can benefit from knowledge of Greek and Latin roots. Therefore, it is important to teach students how to break complex words into smaller parts.

Teaching word parts can help struggling readers:

- Recognize words.

- Decode words quickly and accurately.

- Understand the meaning of words.

Teaching Prefixes

Prefixes may be the easiest word parts to teach because their definitions tend to be more consistent. Whereas suffixes usually indicate a word's part of speech, prefixes usually have a concrete definition. Just 20 prefixes make up approximately 97 percent of prefixed words used in school English (White, Sowell, & Yanagihara, 1989; see Figure 83). Even teaching the top 9 prefixes on this list (if not all 20) will improve students' vocabulary learning (Stahl, 1999; White et al., 1989). Prefix instruction should include abundant examples along with nonexamples and even silly words. It is important to provide nonexamples, or words that look like they have prefixes but that are not really prefixed words. Students must understand that identifying word parts is not always straightforward, and does not always "work" as they expect it to. Giving—and generating—examples of silly words can help students understand how **affixes** work to change the meanings of words.

For instance, instruction of the prefix *re-* (meaning *again*) might include:

- Examples: *Redo*, *rewrite*, *replay*, *reclaim*, *rewind*, *recycle*

- Nonexamples: *Ready*, *reason*, *really*, *regular* (words that begin with *re-* but are not prefixed words)

- Silly words: *Resleep* (to sleep again), *reswim* (to swim again), *redine* (to eat again) (Emphasize that these are not real words.)

Teaching Suffixes

Suffixes are often more difficult to teach because their definitions are not as consistent or concrete. Some suffixes contribute to meaning (*-s* in *books* = more than one book), and others show parts of speech (*-ly* in *patiently* = adverb). Therefore, Stahl (1999) suggests that it is better for students to have a lot of experience with suffixed words rather than learning definitions for specific suffixes. See Figure 84 for a list of common suffixes.

Teaching Roots and Base Words

Roots and base words contain the basic meaning of a word. It is important that students understand this so that they are able to isolate roots and base words. When students are able to recognize and recall the meanings of common roots and base words, they are more able to determine the meaning of complex words.

The most common roots in the English language are Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and Greek. About 60 percent of all English words have Latin and Greek roots (Ebbers, 2003). See Figure 85 for a list of common Latin and Greek roots.

If Latin and Greek roots are not directly taught to students, some struggling readers will look for familiar English words within a larger word and will not be able to isolate the root. For example, if a struggling reader with no knowledge of Latin roots is asked to find the root word of *incredible*, the student may conclude, "I see the word *red*. *Red* is the root." But if a student is familiar with the Latin root *cred*, he or she may be able to deduce: "I see the prefix *in-* and the suffix *-ible*. The root *cred* means *to believe*—and the prefix *in-* means *not*. So *incredible* may mean 'not able to believe.'" This is, of course, the type of logical

thinking we want to instill in our students, but they will not do it automatically.

Teaching How Word Parts Work

First, it is important that students understand the function of word parts. Explain to the students that many words are made of parts that carry meaning. These word parts work together to alter, or change, a word's meaning. As an overall introduction to word parts, define the parts simply. For example:

Prefix: A word part that is attached to the beginning of a word.

Suffix: A word part that is attached to the end of a word.

Root or base word: The basic part of a word that carries meaning. A **base word** can stand alone (example: *depend* in *independent*). A **root** is a word part that carries meaning but cannot stand alone (example: *cred* in *incredible*).

It is important that students understand how word parts function together and not just focus on the definition of the terms prefix, suffix, and root (Stahl, 1999). Explain and give multiple examples of affixes being attached to the beginning or end of words. Then, discuss how the affixes change, or alter, the meaning of the words. Give your students multiple opportunities to manipulate word parts. Activities may include:

- Using a pocket chart, demonstrate how to manipulate word parts to make real words. Discuss how adding or removing an affix changes the meaning of a word.

- Write word parts on index cards and have the students make real words with a partner or in small groups. Have students discuss how adding or removing an affix changes the meaning of each word.

- Give partners or small groups of students a stack of index cards containing prefixes, suffixes, and base words. Have partners or groups work together to make a complete list of real words with their stack of word parts.

- Have students use word part cards to generate silly words, or "words" that are not real words but that illustrate how prefixes and suffixes can change the meaning of words. This is most effective for prefixes, as suffixes often change a word's part of speech rather than clearly altering the word's meaning.

Directly Teaching Word Parts

Directly teaching two parts of the word part strategy will enable students to better understand words independently as they are reading:

- Directly teach the most commonly used affixes and roots.

- Give students strategies for chunking, or breaking words apart.

The following sample lesson illustrates direct instruction in the Latin root *port*, meaning "to carry".

OBJECTIVE

Students will recognize the Latin root *port* in words and will learn and apply the meaning of that root.

MATERIALS

- Chalkboard or overhead.

- Pictures illustrating the words *aware* and *unaware* (optional).

- Small poster board or chart paper.

- Pocket chart.

- Index cards.

- Pictures illustrating the words *port*, *transportation*, *portable*, *import*, *export*, and *porter*.

- Word Part Clue Evaluation Charts (see Appendix).

DAILY REVIEW

In this example, the teacher reviews the meaning of the prefix *un-*. The students will encounter the word *unaware* in their reading selection on this day.

Write the target word on the board or overhead. Have students copy the word into their notebooks.

Teacher:
This word is *unaware*. What word?

Students:
Unaware.

Teacher:
Raise your hand if you see a familiar word within this word. Remember, if there is a prefix, cover it and see whether you recognize a word. If not, look for a suffix. If there is one, cover it and look for a familiar word.

When a student responds that he or she sees the word "aware," ask the student to come up to the board or overhead and demonstrate how he or she found the word. The student should cover the prefix "un-," leaving the word "aware" exposed.

Teacher:
What does it mean to be aware?

Accept responses.

That's right, *aware* means to notice things and to know what is happening. Raise your hand if you remember what the prefix *un-* means? Correct, the prefix *un-* means "not". So who can

tell me what the word *unaware* means?

Accept responses. Students should be able to say that "unaware" means "not aware" or "not noticing what is going on".

Give the students scenarios and/or show pictures of people being aware and unaware of their surroundings. Have students reply "aware" or "unaware" to each situation.

Aware:

- A child looks both ways before crossing the street.

- A man carries an umbrella on a cloudy day.

- A student notices the words *pop quiz* on the board and takes out her notes to study.

Unaware:

- A mother talks on her cell phone while her child darts across a busy street.

- A man tells a joke about his boss while his boss is standing behind him.

- While a teacher helps a small group of students, another student throws a paper airplane while the principal is looking in the window. (The teacher is unaware of the paper airplane and the student is unaware of the principal.)

STATE OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE

Teacher:
You have learned that looking for word parts can help you read and understand the meaning of complicated words, and you know the meaning of several common prefixes. Today you will learn a common root. Most of the roots and base words in our language come from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, or Latin. When you can recognize some of these roots and know what they mean, it will unlock the meaning of many words you read. This should help you learn new vocabulary words more easily in all your subjects.

Today we'll learn a common Latin root—*port*.

Optional: If this is the first time you are introducing Latin or Greek roots, you may want to tell students the story about how the English language came to be built from parts of several other languages. This story is found in the Appendix.

MODEL AND TEACH

Grouping: Whole class or small group

Write "port" at the top of a small piece of poster board or chart paper.

Teacher:
The Latin root *port* means "to carry."

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Write the meaning "to carry" under the root "port" on the poster board or chart paper.

Teacher:
Do you know some English words that have the root word *port* in them?

Call on individuals. Students may recognize that "port" is an English word itself. Support them to understand that a port is a place where things are put on ships or taken off ships. Discuss the relationship between this idea and the meaning "to carry."

Teacher:
Yes, ships come to a port to unload the goods, or things, that are on them and to load up other things to take away to other places. We learned that the root *port* means "to carry." How is a port where ships come and go related to carrying something?

Accept responses.

Yes, ships carry things across the water, and things are carried off and onto the ships at ports.

If students cannot generate words, ask questions or give clues to help them think of the words "transport" or "transportation," "portable" or "porter". For example, you might prompt students by saying something like:

Teacher:
I have a big CD player at my house. It is not something I can carry around very easily, but I have a little CD player that I can put in my purse and listen to with headphones. When something is easy to carry around we say it is _____.

Simply tell students any words that they cannot easily generate themselves.

Model using word parts as clues to the meanings of words containing the root "port". Give brief, simple definitions of the example words, and write these words on the poster board or chart paper:

Write "transport" on the poster or paper.

Teacher:
The word part *trans* means "across". Since *port* means "to carry," *transport* means "to carry something across something" or "to carry things from one place to another". You can transport furniture in a truck, and you can transport people in your car.

Write "export" on the poster.

The word part *ex* can mean "out". *Export* means "to send out things that are made in one country to a different country". Many of the things we buy are made in China and exported to the United States.

Continue this process with the rest of the words on the list:

- Import: The prefix *im-* can mean "into". *Import* means "to bring (or carry) things into one country from a different country". We import many things from China.

- Portable: The suffix *-able* means "able to," so if something is portable, we are able to carry it.

- Porter: The ending *-er* can mean "someone who". A porter is someone who carries suitcases or other things. If you go to an airport, a porter may carry your suitcases.

Read the completed word list to the students and have them repeat each word after you. Then have the students read the list together. If necessary, have them read it again, starting from the last word and going to the first word. Then call on individuals to read the list.

Teacher:
So, what does the word part *port* mean?

Students:
To carry.

Note: Greek and Latin roots can be used to build a family of words with related meanings, but these words will not always have clear relationships with prefixes and suffixes. For example, the Latin root *aud* means "to hear". It is found in the words *auditorium*, *audience*, and *audiovisual*. When you teach Greek or Latin roots, be sure students understand that the roots may be found in long words, even if these long words do not have recognizable prefixes and suffixes.

GUIDED PRACTICE

Grouping: Whole class or small group

Use a pocket chart to provide students the opportunity to practice word parts they have previously learned along with the newly learned root *port*. Form words in the pocket chart using index cards with previously learned prefixes, suffixes, base words, and roots written on them. Include a card with the new Latin root *port* on it. Have students read the words and tell the class the meaning of the word parts and of the words.

FIGURE 80. SAMPLE WORD PART CARDS.

| pre | view | | re | view | | port | er |

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Grouping: Partners

Have students work with partners to complete Frayer Model graphic organizers for the words *portable* and *transport* or *transportation*. Assign one of these words to each pair of students. Have students use the definitions you provided for the words during the Model and Teach portion of the lesson, and generate examples and nonexamples of the words.

FIGURE 81. SAMPLE FRAYER MODEL USED IN LEARNING WORD PARTS.

Definition	Characteristics
Able to be carried easily	Lightweight Small

<center>portable</center>

Examples	Nonexamples
Pencil Laptop computer iPod	Wide-screen TV Desktop computer Big CD player

Adapted with permission from Frayer, D. A., Frederick, W. C., & Klausmeier, H. G. (1969). A schema for testing the level of concept mastery *(Technical report No. 16). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning.*

GENERALIZATION

Ask students for examples of situations in which using the word part strategy would be helpful when they come to unfamiliar words as they are reading. Emphasize the fact that they can use the strategy every time they read.

MONITOR STUDENT LEARNING

Check students' understanding of the concept by rotating among partners, asking questions, and checking their graphic organizers. Ask students to explain how the word parts contribute to the meaning of the words they form.

PERIODIC/MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE

Teachers should emphasize and model the word part strategy whenever the opportunity presents itself. Some examples are:

- **Within a vocabulary lesson**: If you are planning a larger vocabulary lesson such as Semantic Mapping or Possible Sentences, and one of the target words has a prefix or suffix, you can emphasize the word parts during the discussion of that specific word.

- **Discussion during reading**: You may come across a prefixed or suffixed word while preparing for a selection to be read with your class. If the students do not need to understand the word in order to comprehend the selection, this word does not necessarily need to be pretaught. However, you may use the word to review the word part strategy within the context of whole-class or small-group discussion.

- **Frequent modeling and use of word part strategy**: Students benefit when teachers frequently model the word part strategy through think alouds and give students ample opportunities to practice identifying roots, base words, and affixes.

Think aloud with your students. For example, say you encounter this sentence in your reading: "The librarian has asked us to transport our class set of research books to the library." In this case, you should begin by writing the word *transport* on the board.

> **Teacher**:
> I know that the Latin root *port* means "to carry" and that the prefix *trans-* means "across or from one to another," so *transport* must mean "to carry from one place to another". Sylvia, what does the librarian want us to do with our research books?

WORD PART ANALYSIS

Note: This would be taught in a separate lesson.

It is important to mention that the analysis of word parts may not always work as we expect it to work. Students need to be taught to recognize and think about word parts, not just plug them into a formula. One way to help students think about word parts in this way is to use a Word Part Clue Evaluation Chart (see Appendix for blank template). This type of chart is discussed in Core Literacy Library's *Vocabulary Handbook* (2006) and is an excellent tool to help students understand and think about word parts. Initially, find words in a reading text or content area text that are appropriate to illustrate each column in the chart. The following figure is an example of such a chart.

Figure 82. Sample Word Part Clue Evaluation Chart.

	No Prefix and Root Word	Prefix and Root Word	Prefix + Root = Meaning	Prefix + Root ≠ Meaning
Unhealthy		Un + healthy	Not healthy	
Interest	In + terest			
Depart		De + part		To leave or go away
Return		Re + turn	To turn again; to come back	
Distance	Dis + tance			

Adapted with permission from Diamond, L., & Gutlohn, L. (2006). Vocabulary handbook. *Berkeley, CA: Consortium on Reading Excellence. Reproduction of this material is prohibited without permission from the publisher.*

The key element of this chart is the discussion of each word with your students. Model the process of analyzing word parts through think alouds. For instance:

> **Teacher:**
> The first word is *unhealthy*. First, I see the prefix *un-* and the root word *health* with the suffix *-y*: *healthy*.

Demonstrate covering the prefix with your thumb to reveal the root word.

> So there is a prefix and a root word.

Fill in the second column.

> Now I know the prefix *un-* means "not," so does *unhealthy* mean "not healthy"? Yes, it does.

Fill in the third column.

> Now I am going to look at the next word, *interest*. I know that *in-* is a prefix. Is *terest* a word or a root? No, *terest* is not a real word or a root. So, *interest* does not have a prefix and root word.

Fill in the first column.

As students get older, they are expected to read more multisyllabic words. This can be overwhelming to a struggling reader. Teaching students to both recognize and analyze word parts is a powerful tool to help them unlock the meaning of the many multisyllabic words they are expected to understand.

Figure 83. Common Prefixes.

PREFIX	% of All Prefixed Words	MEANING	EXAMPLES
Un-	26	Not, opposite of	Unaware, unbelievable, unsure
Re-	14	Again	Redo, replay
Im-, in-, il-, ir-	11	Not	Impossible, incapable, illogical, irregular
Dis-	7	Not, opposite of	Dishonest, disgraceful, discover
En-, em-	4	Cause to	Enable, emblaze
Non-	4	Not	Nonstick, nonfiction, nonexistent
In-, im-	3	In, into	Inject
Over-	3	Too much	Overtime, overeat
Mis-	3	Wrongly	Misunderstand, misuse
Sub-	3	Under	Subsurface, subway
Pre-	3	Before	Prepay, preschool
Inter-	3	Between	International, interact
Fore-	3	Before	Forethought
De-	2	Opposite of	Decaffeinated, dehydrate
Trans-	2	Across	Transatlantic
Super-	1	Above	Superhero, supermodel
Semi-	1	Half	Semiannual, semicolon
Anti-	1	Against	Antiwar, antisocial
Mid-	1	Middle	Midyear, midnight
Under-	1	Too little	Underweight, underpaid
All others	3		

Top 20 prefixes from Carroll, J. B., Davies, P., & Richman, B. (1971). The American heritage world frequency book. *Boston: Houghten Mifflin; as cited in White, Sowell, & Yanagihara, 1989.*

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Figure 84. Common Suffixes.

SUFFIX	% OF ALL SUFFIXED WORDS	PART OF SPEECH	EXAMPLES
-s, -es	31	Plural of noun	Cats, boxes
-ed	20	Past tense of verb	Sailed
-ing	14	Progressive tense of verb	Jumping, racing
-ly	7	Usually an adverb; sometimes an adjective	Slowly, lovely
-er, -or (agent)	4	Noun (agent)	Runner, professor
-tion, -ation, -ition	4	Noun	Action, transition, vacation
-able, -ible	2	Adjective	Lovable, incredible
-al, -ial	1	Adjective	Global, logical, partial
-y	1	Adjective	Funny
-ness	1	Abstract noun	Kindness
-ity, -ty	1	Noun	Activity
-ment	1	Noun	Merriment
-ic	1	Adjective	Historic
-ous, -eous, -ious	1	Adjective	Hideous, spacious
-en	1	Verb	Quicken, thicken
-er (comparative)	1	Adjective	Bigger
-ive, -ative, -tive	1	Adjective	Alternative, pensive
-ful	1	Adjective	Wonderful
-less	1	Adjective	Effortless
-est	1	Adjective	Strongest
All others	7		

Top 20 suffixes from Carroll, J. B., Davies, P., & Richman, B. (1971). The American heritage world frequency book. *Boston: Houghten Mifflin; as cited in White, Sowell, & Yanagihara, 1989.*

Figure 85. Common Latin and Greek Roots.

ROOT	ORIGIN	MEANING	EXAMPLES
aud	Latin	Hear	Auditorium, audition, audience, audible, audiovisual
astro	Greek	Star	Astronaut, astronomy, asterisk, asteroid, astrology
bio	Greek	Life	Biology, biography, biochemistry
cept	Latin	Take	Intercept, accept, reception
dict	Latin	Speak or tell	Dictation, dictate, predict, contradict, dictator
duct	Latin	Lead	Conduct, induct
geo	Greek	Earth	Geography, geology, geometry, geophysics
graph	Greek	Write	Autograph, biography, photograph
ject	Latin	Throw	Eject, reject, projectile, inject
meter	Greek	Measure	Thermometer, barometer, centimeter, diameter
min	Latin	Little or small	Miniature, minimum, minimal
mit or mis	Latin	Send	Mission, transmit, missile, dismiss, submit
ped	Latin	Foot	Pedal, pedestal, pedestrian
phon	Greek	Sound	Telephone, symphony, microphone, phonics, phoneme
port	Latin	Carry	Transport, portable, import, export, porter
rupt	Latin	Break	Disrupt, erupt, rupture, interrupt, bankrupt
scrib or script	Latin	Write	Scribble, scribe, inscribe, describe, prescribe, manuscript, prescription, script, transcript, scripture
spect	Latin	See	Inspect, suspect, respect, spectacle, spectator
struct	Latin	Build or form	Construct, destruct, instruct, structure
tele	Greek	From afar	Telephone, telegraph, teleport
tract	Latin	Pull	Traction, tractor, attract, subtract, extract
vers	Latin	Turn	Reverse, inverse

Diamond, L., & Gutlohn, L. (2006). Vocabulary handbook. *Berkeley, CA: Consortium on Reading Excellence; Ebbers, S. (2005).* Language links to Latin, Greek, and Anglo-Saxon: Increasing spelling, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through roots and affixes. *Presented at The University of Texas, Austin, TX; and Stahl, S., & Kapinus, B. (2001).* Word power: What every educator needs to know about teaching vocabulary. *Washington, DC: National Education Association.*