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Word Analysis to Expand Vocabulary Development

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Word Analysis to Expand Vocabulary Development

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INTRODUCTION

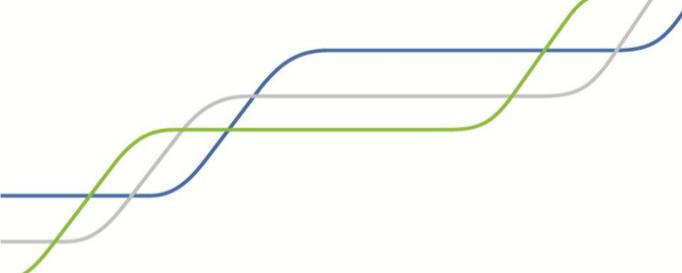
When students engage in “word analysis” or “word study,” they break words down into their smallest units of meaning—morphemes. Each morpheme has a meaning that contributes to our understanding of the whole word. As such, students’ knowledge of morphemes helps them to identify the meaning of words and build their vocabulary. The [Institute for Educational Science \(IES\) Practice Guide](#) strongly recommends providing explicit vocabulary instruction, which includes providing students with strategies for acquiring new vocabulary. The ability to analyze words is a critical foundational reading skill and is essential for vocabulary development as students become college and career ready.

Teaching word analysis skills satisfies several of the Common Core State Standards for literacy, including:

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10](#) Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.4](#) Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5](#) Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

TEACHING WORD ANALYSIS

As you create your plan for teaching word analysis strategies, think about the tools and methods that can support students’ understanding, and provide students with opportunities to practice using these tools and methods. Think, too, about how you could differentiate instruction and take advantage of technology tools to engage the diverse students in your classroom.



You can effectively differentiate word analysis techniques by providing clear and varied models, keeping in mind the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Model how to analyze a new word by breaking it down into its sub-parts, studying each part separately, and then putting the parts back together in order to understand the whole word (see [UDL Checkpoint 3.3: Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation](#)).

It also helps to demonstrate that when you are studying vocabulary in a specific content area (e.g., science), you can find patterns in the prefixes that will help you understand what the words mean in that context. For example:

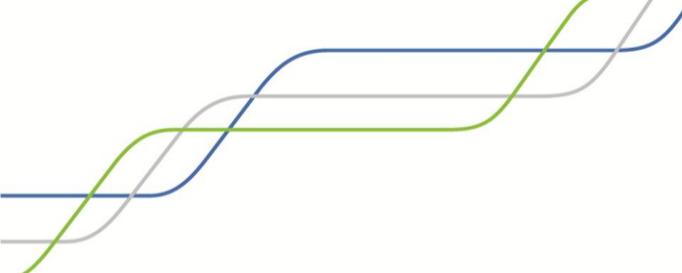
- **Science:** biology, biodegradable, biome, biosphere
- **Mathematics:** quadruple, quadrant, quadrilateral, quadratic
- **Geography:** disassemble, disarmament, disband, disadvantage

Students should also learn to track both the words and the word parts they learn through these strategies. Show students how to use offline and online visual diagrams, worksheets, and graphic organizers to visualize the relationship between words and store new vocabulary.

WORD ANALYSIS IN PRACTICE

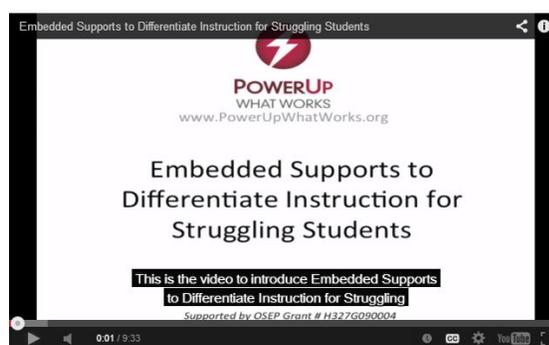
If you provide students with opportunities to repeatedly practice analyzing unfamiliar vocabulary, their word analysis skills will continue to develop. Engage students individually, in pairs, or in small groups in a variety of games and activities, based on their individual abilities and needs. Consider ways in which you could modify the following games and activities to benefit struggling students:

- The mix-and-match game using roots, prefixes, and suffixes
 - A word search in social studies, science, and mathematics texts to find words with prefixes and suffixes
 - Using Scrabble or Boggle tiles to form and re-form words
 - Movement activities that involve students holding up cards with root words, prefixes, and suffixes and reordering themselves to make words
 - Inventing a word by creating and defining nonsense words with prefixes and suffixes
- 



Build word study into your classroom reading routine by pre-teaching words, introducing new vocabulary words weekly, and reviewing new words. Motivate students to practice using their word analysis skills by having them create glossaries of words with prefixes and suffixes from self-selected, high-interest texts.

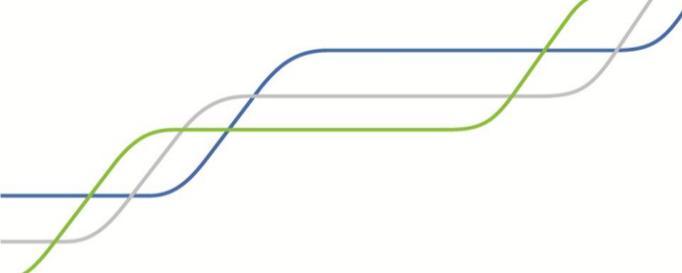
You can also make use of multimedia and embedded supports to further support your varied learners and foster vocabulary development. Take a look at the videos below on [Captioning](#) and [Embedded Supports](#) for more ideas on how to leverage multimedia for vocabulary learning.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Searching for meaning in new words can be a bit like gathering clues to solve a mystery. Mr. Chen took advantage of this analogy in his unit on Ancient India by thematically tying vocabulary acquisition to the archeological excavation of the sites his students were studying. In particular, Mr. Chen sought to assist his struggling readers by offering strategies for tackling the unfamiliar terms in the social studies text, which aligns with the CCSS for literacy (see above).

Mr. Chen focused his instruction on modeling a good technique for word analysis. He presented a word that students would encounter several times in their reading—terracotta—and led the class through an analysis of the roots and parts of the word. By listing other words that sound like the prefix *terra-* (such as terrarium and extraterrestrial), students were able to determine that *terra-* relates to dirt and the earth.



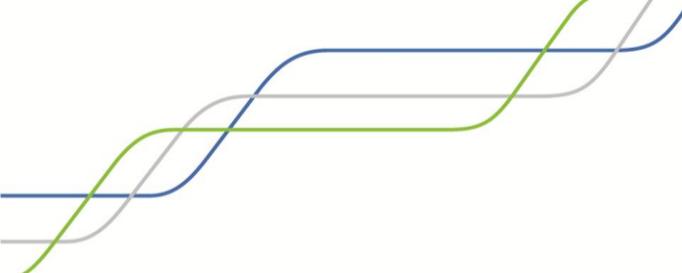
Mr. Chen has access to several technology tools that he knows will benefit his struggling students. On his interactive whiteboard, he will demonstrate how to use Harappa.com to explore audio, video, text, and photos. He will also encourage students to use online reference tools—such as [Visual Thesaurus](http://VisualThesaurus.com), the [Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary](http://Merriam-WebsterOnlineDictionary.com), and PrefixSuffix.com—to help students understand word parts. He has found that the classroom wiki, which was created in order to record and share words, has become a “go-to” place for students.

Mr. Chen’s lesson plan is detailed in the chart below, which divides the lesson into three parts: before reading, during reading, and after reading.

Lesson Plan

Before Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review strategies for approaching new words.• List these strategies on the whiteboard and publish them on the class wiki.• Display links to various online resources.• Explain how the resources can help students uncover meaning.
During Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Model word analysis strategies with an unfamiliar word that will appear frequently in upcoming readings from an archeology website.• Elicit a list of words that sound similar and model how you would use these words to find and define a common root.• Use an online resource to define a root.• Display images illustrating the new word.• Arrange students into groups and have them review assigned sections of a social studies website.
After Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have students collect information, images, and key vocabulary words.• Have teams organize their information into three categories: important facts, key details, and vocabulary words.• Have the class share what they have learned and add content to the class wiki.



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- Create a list of new vocabulary words.

ONLINE TEACHER RESOURCES

This article draws from the [PowerUp WHAT WORKS](#) website, particularly the [Word Analysis Instructional Strategy Guide](#). PowerUp is a free, teacher-friendly website that requires no log in or registration. The Instructional Strategy Guide on Word Analysis includes a brief overview that defines word analysis along with an accompanying slide show; a list of the relevant ELA Common Core State Standards; evidence-based teaching strategies to differentiate instruction using technology; another case story; short videos; and links to resources that will help you use technology to support instruction in word analysis. If you are responsible for professional development, check out the [PD Support Materials](#) for helpful ideas and materials for using the word analysis resources. Want more information? See [PowerUp WHAT WORKS](#).