



Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties:


The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Chapter 9: Word Recognition



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Chapter 9

Word Recognition

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Strategy for reading multisyllable words adapted with permission from Archer, A. L., Gleason, M. M., & Vachon, V. (2005a). *REWARDS: Multisyllabic word reading strategies*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

TERMS TO KNOW

Consonant blend	A combination of consonant letters found before or after a vowel sound in a syllable, in which each consonant represents a unique sound (<i>tr-</i> , <i>spr-</i>)
Consonant digraph	A combination of consonant letters that represent one speech sound (<i>ph-</i> , <i>ch-</i>)
Decoding	Using sound-symbol relationships to read words and determine the meaning of text
Irregular word	A word in which letters or letter combinations do not make their most common, or expected, sounds; a word that does not follow the most common conventions of phonics; often taught as sight words
Prefix	A morpheme that comes before a root or base word and modifies its meaning
Schwa	An indistinct vowel sound found in unstressed English syllables (usually sounds like short <i>u</i> or short <i>i</i>)
Suffix	A morpheme that follows a root or base word and modifies its meaning
Syllable	A minimal unit of speech organized around a vowel sound

(Harris & Hodges, 1995; Moats, 2000)

INTRODUCTION

The goal of reading is, of course, to make meaning from the text (NICHD, 2000), but, as discussed in the chapter on assessment, there are many reasons why students at the secondary level have difficulties with reading comprehension. Some students have difficulty with quickly and accurately recognizing the words on the page. For some students, this problem is related to serious difficulties **decoding** even simple words. These students often need long-term, intensive intervention. Other students recognize short words easily, but are inaccurate when they try to decode words with more than one or two syllables.

This section will focus on word recognition instruction, specifically for students who need instruction in reading multisyllable words. We will conclude with recommendations to guide the selection of instructional materials for intervention with students who have more severe word reading difficulties.

In order to design effective word recognition instruction, it is important to know:

- How to teach students to recognize different syllable patterns.
- A strategy for reading multisyllable words.
- How to plan and implement effective word recognition instruction.
- How to select a scientific research-based word recognition program for middle school struggling readers.

TEACHING STUDENTS TO RECOGNIZE SYLLABLE PATTERNS IN WORDS

When skilled readers encounter unfamiliar multisyllable words, such as technical or scientific terms, they usually look for familiar or pronounceable parts within the words. Then they mentally “pronounce” each word part to attempt to read the word. You can try this yourself with the words in the following sentence from a medical essay:

Our previous work demonstrated that regulation of apoptotic cell death is a critical factor in controlling lymphomagenesis.

(Eischen, 2006)

You probably separated the word *apoptotic* into pronounceable parts such as *a-pop-to-tic*, or you might have divided it as *a-pop-tot-ic*. Either way, you probably were able to make your way through the word with a close approximation of the correct pronunciation. The word *apoptotic* means “pertaining to apoptosis,” a kind of programmed cell death in which the body eliminates cells that threaten survival.

For the word *lymphomagenesis*, you may have recognized the prefix *lympho-* as a word part you have heard before. You may have associated it with lymph nodes in the body or the cancer lymphoma. You may have also recognized the word *genesis*, meaning “beginning or origin”. You may have divided the word into two parts: *lymphoma* and *genesis*, concluding that it has something to do with the beginning of a lymphoma cancer. The word *lymphomagenesis* does, in fact, mean “the growth and development of lymphoma, a kind of cancer in the network of glands and vessels that are the basis of the body’s immune system”.

Using the strategy of looking for recognizable word parts within these words helped you pronounce the words and gave you clues to the words’ meanings. Students with difficulties reading multisyllable words can be taught to use this strategy.

WHAT DO STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SYLLABLES?

In order to use the strategy of identifying recognizable word parts within long words students must know:

- That these words are composed of pronounceable word parts called syllables.
- That each **syllable** contains one vowel sound (but that sound may be spelled with a vowel combination as in *maintain*, with the letter *y* as in *slowly*, or even with a contraction in which the vowel letter is “hidden” as in *couldn’t*).
- How to recognize syllables composed of common **prefixes**, **suffixes**, and root words.
- How to divide the word into word parts, read each part, and combine the parts to read the word.
- How to be flexible when a word has a part or parts that are phonetically irregular (also called **irregular words**).

Although there are other reasons that students may be taught the “correct” way to divide words into syllables as they are in the dictionary, it is not necessary that students know the rules for dictionary syllabication in order to read multisyllable words. What is essential is that when students see a long word they do not know, they quickly look for word parts they recognize, pronounce “chunks” of the word separately, and then put these chunks together to pronounce the entire word. Finding the vowels in the word can help students “chunk” the word into pronounceable parts.

SYLLABLE TYPES

One way to help students recognize pronounceable word parts is to teach them the basic types of syllables that occur often in words and how these syllables are usually pronounced. Six syllable types are taught in several word recognition programs:

- Closed syllables (*pic-nic*; *ab-sent*).
- Open syllables (*ve-to*; *a-pron*).
- Silent *e* syllables (*de-bate*; *base-ball*).
- Vowel team syllables (*re-frain*; *car-toon*).
- Vowel-*r* syllables (*en-ter*; *or-phan*).
- Consonant-*le* syllables (*bot-tle*; *bea-gle*).
- Other (syllables that do not fit these patterns) (*gar-bage*; *fur-ni-ture*).

As you can see from examining this list, the first five syllable types have patterns that are common in short single-syllable words. In describing these patterns, we will use *C* to stand for *consonant* and *V* to stand for *vowel*.

Closed syllables are made up of the patterns VC (*at*, *in*), CVC (*dig*, *mat*), CCVC (*plot*, *slug*), CVCC (*nest*, *mint*), and other **consonant blend** patterns such as CCVCC (*clamp*). The vowel sound in a closed syllable may be spelled with the letter *y* as in *gym*. Closed syllables can also be spelled using **consonant digraphs**,

as in *chin*, *math*, and *shop*. In each of these words, the vowel makes its short sound. Students can be taught to look for closed syllable patterns and that the vowels in these syllables will usually be short. One way to help students remember that these are closed syllables is to show them that these syllables end with a consonant, so that the vowel is “closed off” from the rest of the word.

Open syllables are made up of a single vowel (*a*), the CV pattern (*no*, *hi*), or a consonant blend or digraph followed by a vowel (*pre-*, *she*). The vowel sound in an open syllable may be spelled with the letter *y* as in *la-dy* or *fly*. The vowel in an open syllable is usually pronounced with its long sound. Students can be taught to look for open syllable patterns and that the vowels in these syllables will usually be long. One way to help students remember that these are open syllables is to show them that these syllables end with a vowel, so that the vowel is “open” to the rest of the word.

Silent *e* syllables have the VCe pattern found in *ate*, *pine*, and *rope*. A silent *e* syllable may begin with a vowel or a consonant, and consonants in the pattern may include consonant blends (*smile*) or consonant digraphs (*shake*).

In a vowel team syllable, the vowel sound is spelled with a letter combination, as in the words *rain*, *boat*, *snow*, *boot*, and *play*. Usually, the consonants before and after the vowel team form a chunk to help read the entire word.

Vowel-*r* syllables are syllables in which a vowel letter is followed by the letter *r*. These are sometimes referred to as “*r*-controlled vowels” because the pronunciation of the vowel is changed when it follows the letter *r*. In vowel-*r* words or syllables, the vowel and the *r* that follows it make only one sound. You cannot hear the sound of the vowel separately from the sound of the *r*. Examples of vowel-*r* words are *park*, *herd*, *sir*, *for*, and *fur*.

Consonant-*le* syllables are found in words that end in a consonant followed by the letters *le* (*bot-tle*, *ca-ble*, *ma-ple*; *pud-dle*).

Syllables that do not conform to one of these patterns would be included in the “other” category. For example, the first syllable (*a*) in the word *apart* would be identified by students as an open syllable and pronounced as a long *a*. Since this syllable is not stressed (accented), it is pronounced with a **schwa** sound resembling a short *u*.

A STRATEGY FOR READING MULTISYLLABLE WORDS

As we have described in other sections of this book, a strategy is a multistep plan of action that is implemented to solve a problem or overcome a difficulty. Students who have problems reading multisyllable words benefit from learning and applying a consistent strategy for reading these words. Multisyllable word reading strategies found in different reading programs may vary somewhat, but a basic strategy that many students can learn and apply successfully is described below. This strategy was adapted from one developed by Archer, Gleason, & Vachon (2005a).

1. **Find the vowels.** Quickly scan the word and locate the vowels. Since each syllable will have one vowel sound, the vowels are the key to locating the syllables in unknown words.
2. **Look for word parts you know.** Students should be able to recognize common prefixes and suffixes quickly. Identifying these common word parts, as well as syllable patterns, can make it possible to read unknown multisyllable words quickly and efficiently.

3. **Read each word part.** Remember that each word part will contain one vowel sound.
4. **Read the parts quickly.** Put the parts together to read the word.
5. **Make it sound like a real word.** “Flex” the word as needed so that it sounds like a real word. Often, multisyllable words do not “follow the rules.” For example, vowels in unaccented syllables often make the schwa sound, resembling a short *u* or *i*. Once students put the parts of a multisyllable word together, they may need to “play with” the vowel sounds until the word sounds correct. This step is difficult, if not impossible, if the word is not in the student’s spoken vocabulary, but instruction in multisyllable word recognition can help extend this vocabulary.

In order to apply this strategy, students must be able to:

- Identify vowel letters.
- Recognize common prefixes and suffixes.
- Say the sounds of vowel letters, vowel teams, and *r*-controlled vowels.
- Apply the silent *e* rule in silent *e* syllables.
- Flex a word by changing the vowel sounds until they arrive at a recognizable word.

It is important to teach these key preskills while teaching the strategy. Provide daily instruction and review in the sounds of vowels and vowel combinations and in quickly recognizing common prefixes and suffixes. Instruction in the meaning of these word parts can help extend students’ vocabularies.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING WORD RECOGNITION INSTRUCTION

Teaching Syllable Types and the Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy

Middle school students who have difficulty reading multisyllable words benefit from direct, explicit teaching of the syllable types and the multisyllable word reading strategy described above. As described in Chapter 4: Components of Effective Instruction, this includes:

- Setting a purpose for the activity.
- Clearly teaching concepts (such as the syllable types) and modeling skills (such as identifying different syllable types in words or using the word reading strategy).
- Providing guided practice with immediate feedback.
- Providing independent practice with close monitoring.
- Teaching students how to generalize what they have learned so that they can apply skills in many different contexts.

Sample word recognition lessons are provided to illustrate this process.

Syllable Types

Students should be taught to recognize and pronounce each syllable type. Introduce the syllable types one at a time and provide practice on newly taught syllable types combined with previously learned syllable types. It is very important to review the sounds of the vowels in each syllable type. Vowel sounds are often confusing to struggling readers. For example, when introducing closed syllables, review the sounds of the short vowels (*a* as in *bat*, *e* as in *egg*, etc.) and when introducing vowel-*r* syllables, review the sounds of the *r*-controlled vowels (*ar* as in *car*, *er* as in *her*, *ir* as in *fir*, *or* as in *for*, and *ur* as in *fur*.) Special time will need to be taken to review the many vowel combinations found in vowel team syllables (such as *ai* in *rain*, *oi* in *oil*, and *ay* in *play*).

A possible sequence for teaching syllable types is:

1. Introduce closed syllables. Review short vowel sounds. Practice reading closed syllables. Practice reading words made up of only closed syllables.
2. Introduce open syllables. Review long vowel sounds. Practice reading open syllables. Practice reading open syllables mixed in with closed syllables. Practice reading words made up of open syllables and closed syllables.
3. Introduce silent *e* syllables. Practice reading silent *e* syllables. Practice reading silent *e* syllables mixed in with open and closed syllables. Practice reading words made up of open syllables, closed syllables, and silent *e* syllables.
4. Continue this pattern of practicing the new syllable type, practicing it mixed in with previously learned syllable types, and practicing reading words with all the syllable types learned so far.

Teachers of older struggling readers have found that they can teach and review very basic word reading skills such as reading CVC patterns (found in simple words such as *log*, *tip*, and *mat*) by having students practice reading CVC syllables. In this way, older struggling readers can review the basics of reading without reading “first-grade words”. Rather than practicing reading *rat* or *mop*, students practice words like *pic-nic*, *cus-pid*, and *pump-kin*.

Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy

As described above, students must be taught basic preskills in order to be able to apply the multisyllable word reading strategy; however, it is not necessary that students master all of these preskills before they begin to apply the strategy to read words. Students can learn to apply the strategy as they are learning and reviewing the preskills.

Just as in any strategy instruction, the multisyllable word reading strategy should be clearly modeled for students, and students must have many opportunities for practicing each part of the strategy. It may be helpful to teach one or two components of the strategy at a time. For example, one lesson may focus on finding and circling vowels in words, while in other lessons students learn to recognize and circle common prefixes. Lists of common prefixes, suffixes, and root words are included in the Appendix. Another lesson or group of lessons will focus on teaching students to flex words until they sound correct. Just as the introduction and practice opportunities for the syllable types are cumulative, lessons on the components of the word reading strategy build on each other.

A sample sequence for teaching the multisyllable word reading strategy is:

1. Set a purpose for learning the strategy. Model the entire strategy on several words while “thinking aloud” to demonstrate thought processes that are involved in applying the strategy.
2. Teach students that words are made up of pronounceable parts called syllables and that each syllable contains one vowel sound. Teach students to identify vowels in words. Have students practice circling vowel letters and vowel combinations in words.
3. Teach students that they will be able to read multisyllable words more quickly if they can recognize word parts and patterns within the words. Have students practice finding and underlining common prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings (such as *-ing* or *-ed*), along with any syllable types they have learned so far.
4. Model quickly locating the vowels and recognizable word parts in two-syllable words, reading the words in “chunks,” and then reading the chunks quickly to say the whole word. Have students practice in pairs. Start with two-syllable words that do not require “flexing” (words in which the vowels make their expected sounds) and then progress to three-syllable words.
5. Teach students that sometimes they have to flex, or “play with,” the vowel sounds in a word until it sounds like a real word. Model this with a word like *chil-dren*. First read the word with the short vowel sounds that would be expected in closed syllables, pronouncing the *e* as in *den*. Then flex the word and pronounce the *e* with a schwa sound (similar to a short *u*), producing the word as it is normally said. Have students practice flexing syllables in words.
6. Model and provide practice in the entire multisyllable word reading strategy.

Note that this sequence should not be introduced too quickly. Be sure that students have had many opportunities to practice each step before introducing the next step. Monitor the students closely during practice and model again if necessary.

The following sections include sample word recognition lessons designed to teach students to recognize and read common syllable types and to use the consistent strategy to read multisyllable words.

SELECTING AN EFFECTIVE WORD RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Most students who have serious difficulties with word recognition, particularly those who need intensive intervention—those with instructional reading levels below grade 3—will benefit from a more systematic approach to word reading instruction than the one described above. Systematic instruction is based on a carefully designed scope and sequence, in which less difficult skills are introduced before more difficult skills and many opportunities for practice are integrated into the lesson design. This level of systematic instruction is best provided by implementing a high-quality reading intervention program, usually consisting of published materials. This section will provide guidelines for selecting such a program for middle school students.

The following guidelines are based on characteristics of instruction that are found in many studies of effective intervention for struggling readers. Figure 101 is designed to be used as groups of educators evaluate reading intervention programs.

FIGURE 101. GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING A READING PROGRAM.

<p>Introduction</p> <p>This document was developed to assist the Curriculum and Instruction Team at the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) as they review reading programs for grades 4–12 to determine alignment with current reading research.</p> <p>Process of Using Guidelines</p> <p>When reviewing a reading program thoroughly, it is not sufficient to examine only a sample of lessons. In order to determine whether a program is aligned with current reading research, it is essential to review all the teacher and student materials. This document was developed to help navigate a reviewer through the lengthy but important process of reviewing a reading program. It was designed to be utilized in conjunction with the resources listed below. When using this document, place a check mark in either the yes or no column after each question. If the answer is not clear or not evident, write “not evident” in the comments column and leave the yes/no columns blank. It is very important to use the comments column to detail specific examples, note questions, etc. When a question is marked “no” or “not evident,” it is a concern that the program may not be aligned with current reading research. That is, if a reading program is aligned with current reading research, then “yes” will be marked on all of the questions with evidence to support this assertion written in the comments column.</p> <p>Note that this document includes the sequence of instruction from 4th through 12th grade.</p>

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It is expected that a comprehensive reading program will incorporate the five components of reading identified by the National Reading Panel (phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) and reflect the elements of instructional design.

The following resources on the FCRR Web site (<http://www.fcrr.org>) will assist educators who use this tool to guide their review of a reading program:

- Glossary of Reading Terms (boldface words in the Guidelines are found in the Glossary).
- Continuum of Phonological Awareness Skills.
- Continuum of Word Types.
- FCRR Reports (reviews of reading programs already posted).
- References and Resources for Review of Reading Programs.

Overall Instructional Design and Pedagogy of the Reading Program			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there a clear “road map” or “blueprint” for teachers to get an overall picture of the program (e.g., scope and sequence)?			
Are goals and objectives clearly stated?			
Are there resources available to help the teacher understand the rationale for the instructional approach and strategies utilized in the program (e.g., articles, references, and reliable Web sites)?			
Is instruction consistently explicit?			
Is instruction consistently systematic?			
Is there a coherent instructional design (e.g., are the components of reading clearly linked within as well as across each component)?			
Are there consistent, “teacher-friendly” instructional routines that include direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, student practice and application with feedback, and generalization?			
Are there aligned student materials?			
Does the level of difficulty of the text increase as students’ skills are strengthened?			
Are there ample guided student practice opportunities, including multiple opportunities for explicit teaching and teacher directed feedback, (15 or more) needed for struggling readers?			
Are all of the activities (e.g., centers) reading related (i.e., word building, fluency practice)?			
Are teachers encouraged to give immediate corrective feedback?			

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Overall Instructional Design and Pedagogy of the Reading Program

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is scaffolding a prominent part of the lessons?			
Are there specific instructions for scaffolding?			
Is differentiated instruction prominent?			
Is instruction individualized based on assessment?			
Are there guidelines and materials for flexible grouping?			
Is small-group instruction with (small teacher-pupil ratio) part of daily instruction?			
Is movement from group to group based on student progress?			
Are enrichment activities included for advancing/proceeding students?			
In addition to the components of reading, are the dimensions of spelling, writing, oral language, motivation/engagement and listening comprehension addressed?			

Word Analysis (WA) Instruction/Word Study

Phonological analysis, decoding, structural analysis, syllabication,
context clues, spelling, & dictionary skills

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Overall, does instruction progress from easier word analysis activities to more difficult?			
Is word analysis only a small portion of each lesson (10 to 20 minutes)?			
Does the program emphasize the use of grade-appropriate dictionaries and student-friendly explanations?			
Is there explicit instruction in the use and weaknesses of context clues to determine word meaning?			
Is explicit instruction in the meaning of roots and affixes provided and are there activities for students to manipulate common roots and affixes to analyze the relationship of spelling to meaning of complex words?			
Are word parts that occur with high frequency (such as <i>un</i> , <i>re</i> , and <i>in</i>) introduced over those that occur in only a few words?			

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Word Analysis (WA) Instruction/Word Study
Phonological analysis, decoding, structural analysis, syllabication,
context clues, spelling, & dictionary skills

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Are the limitations of structural analysis made clear?			
Are there activities for distinguishing and interpreting words with multiple meanings?			
Does the program include word origins, derivations, synonyms, antonyms, and idioms to determine the meaning of words and phrases?			
Are words used in word analysis activities also found in the student text?			
Once word analysis strategies have been mastered, are these strategies immediately applied to reading and interpreting familiar decodable connected text?			
Is there ample unfamiliar decodable text to provide practice with word analysis strategies?			
Are there ample opportunities to read multisyllabic words daily?			
Is there a section of the program devoted to word study?			
Does the program include spelling strategies (e.g., word sorts, categorization activities, word-building activities, analogical reasoning activities)?			

Fluency Instruction

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is fluency building a part of each day's lesson?			
Does fluency-based instruction focus on developing accuracy, rate, and prosody?			
Do fluency-building routines include goal setting to measure and increase word-level fluency instruction and practice, reading accuracy and passage reading rate, teacher or peer feedback, and timed readings?			
Is fluency assessed regularly?			

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Fluency Instruction

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there a fluency goal for each set of grade levels (e.g., 4-5 [113-127 wpm], 6-8 [140-142 wpm]) included? (Based on Hasbrouck and Tindal's end-of-the-year oral reading fluency scores at the 40th percentile.)			
Are ample practice materials and opportunities at appropriate reading levels (independent and/or instructional) provided?			
Are there opportunities to read narrative and expository text aloud?			
Are research-based fluency strategies included (e.g., repeated reading, peer reading, tape-assisted reading, choral reading, student-adult reading)?			

Vocabulary Instruction

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there a component that incorporates reading and writing vocabulary?			
Is systematic and explicit instruction in morphemic analysis provided to support building word meaning through knowledge of root words, prefixes, and suffixes?			
Is high-level terminology used to bring richness of language to the classroom?			
Are there ample activities provided to practice writing vocabulary in context?			
Are there opportunities for wide, independent reading?			
Is there repeated exposure to vocabulary in many contexts?			
Is there frequent use of teacher read-alouds using engaging books with embedded explanation and instruction?			
Is diverse vocabulary through listening and reading stories and informational text provided?			
Are a limited number of words selected for robust, explicit vocabulary instruction?			

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Vocabulary Instruction			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Do sources of vocabulary instruction include words from read-aloud stories, words from core reading programs, words from reading intervention programs, and words from content area instruction?			
Are only important (words students must know to understand a concept or text), useful (words that may be encountered many times), and difficult (multiple meanings, idioms) words taught?			
Are vocabulary words reviewed cumulatively? For example, are words selected for instruction that are unknown, critical to passage understanding, and likely to be encountered in the future?			
Are ample opportunities to engage in oral vocabulary activities provided?			
Are student-friendly explanations and dictionary definitions used?			
Are word-learning strategies taught?			
Does the instructional routine for vocabulary include: introducing the word, presenting a student-friendly explanation, illustrating the word with examples, and checking the students' understanding?			
Are ample opportunities to use word-learning strategies provided?			
Is word awareness introduced through the use of word walls; vocabulary logs; and practice activities that are engaging, provide multiple exposures, encourage deep processing, and connect word meaning to prior knowledge?			
Is vocabulary taught both directly and indirectly?			
Are rich contexts for vocabulary learning provided?			
Are repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items prevalent?			
Are vocabulary tasks restructured when necessary?			
Is computer technology used to help teach vocabulary?			

Comprehension Instruction			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is comprehension monitoring taught?			
Is the use of multiple strategies prevalent?			

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Comprehension Instruction

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Are cooperative learning groups part of instruction?			
Are frequent opportunities to answer and generate questions provided?			
Are graphic and semantic organizers, including story maps, used?			
Are there ample opportunities to engage in discussions relating to the meaning of text?			
Are there ample opportunities to read narrative and expository text on independent and instructional levels?			
Is explicit instruction in different text structures included?			
Are before-, during- and after-reading comprehension strategies emphasized?			
Is prior knowledge activated before reading?			
Are ample opportunities provided to generate questions during reading to improve engagement with and processing of text?			
Are there ample opportunities to employ a conceptual understanding of beginning, middle, and end in narrative text?			
Is learning to determine which strategy to use and why (metacognition) part of instruction?			
Are there connections made between previously learned strategies and new text?			
Are strategies applied for authentic purposes using appropriate text?			
Is there an emphasis on creating independent strategic learners?			
Is strategy instruction cumulative over the course of the year?			
Are there frequent opportunities to discuss story elements and compare stories?			
Are elements of story grammar (setting, characters, important events, etc.) used for retelling a story?			
Are summarization strategies taught?			
Are opportunities provided to interpret information from charts, graphs, tables, and diagrams and connect it to text?			
Does text contain familiar concepts and vocabulary?			
Are main idea strategies previously taught (e.g., using pictures, then individual sentence, then paragraphs, etc.)?			
Are ample opportunities to employ main idea strategies using more complex texts, where the main idea is not explicit, provided?			

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Listening Comprehension			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there an element of the program that requires students to follow specific oral directions in order to perform or complete written activities?			
Are ample opportunities to utilize listening comprehension strategies provided?			
Are there ample opportunities to listen to a variety of text structures?			
Are there ample opportunities to use reflective (describing feelings/emotions that accompany what is said instead of information given) and responsive (e.g., repeating, paraphrasing, summarizing, questioning for elaboration and/or clarification) listening skills to make connections and build on ideas of the author?			

Motivation and Engagement			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there a component of the program that fosters intrinsic motivation in students (e.g., student selection of books, various genres of book titles, multicultural/international book titles)?			
Are there clear content goals for supporting intrinsic reading motivation?			
Is there a component of the program that fosters extrinsic motivation in students (e.g., external recognition, rewards, or incentives)?			
Are there ample opportunities for students to engage in group activities (social motivation)?			
Are there personal learning goals provided for reading tasks?			
Are students given immediate feedback on reading progress?			

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Assessment

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is rigorous assessment included in the program?			
Is formative evaluation included?			
Are the assessment instruments reliable and valid?			
Do the assessments measure progress in word analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension?			
Do the assessments identify students who are at risk or already experiencing difficulty learning to read?			
Does assessment aid teachers in making individualized instruction decisions?			
Does the program provide teacher guidance in response to assessment results?			

Professional Development for the Reading Program

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there adequate time offered for teachers to learn new concepts and practice what they have learned (before implementation)?			
Is there a plan for coaches, mentors, peers, or outside experts to provide feedback to teachers and follow up assistance as they put new concepts into practice?			
Are teachers taught how to administer and interpret assessments that accompany the program?			
Is PD for the program customized to meet the varying needs of the participants (e.g., first-year teachers, coaches, principals)?			
Does the PD provide support (e.g., principal checklists, follow-up in class modeling, a video/CD for teachers to view modeled lessons, printed teaching charts, graphs, transparencies) to facilitate application of content?			

STUDENTS WHO DO NOT RESPOND ADEQUATELY TO INTERVENTION

Some middle school students with severe reading difficulties and disabilities do not make adequate progress in word recognition, even when they are provided with small-group intervention using research-validated, high-quality programs. These students probably need the kind of long-term, highly intensive intervention that can best be provided in special education. Students who are provided with quality small-group intervention in general education, but who do not make adequate progress after one or two semesters, may need to be referred for evaluation for a learning disability. Students with severe reading disabilities who are already served in special education must be provided with regular, highly intensive interventions (very small groups for extended periods of time) delivered by well-qualified teachers using programs that have evidence of effectiveness with students with severe and persistent reading difficulties. Some of these students may need different kinds of intervention approaches than have been described in this manual.

CONCLUSION

Comprehension problems often result from difficulties in quickly and accurately reading words. Students who cannot accurately read the words on the page often have problems with higher-level skills requiring inference and interpretation of text.

Some middle school struggling readers benefit from instruction in word identification. Students who can read simple words quickly and accurately but are inaccurate readers of multisyllable words may need instruction in recognizing common syllable patterns as well as common prefixes and suffixes, along with a strategy for reading multisyllable words. Students with more serious word reading problems may need a highly systematic and explicit intervention program. Decisions about the need for word identification instruction should be based on diagnostic assessments and continuous progress monitoring (see Chapter 2: Selecting and Administering Assessments).

Struggling readers at the secondary level do not have the luxury of time to experiment with reading programs or instructional approaches that do not have solid evidence of effectiveness from high-quality research. Unfortunately, there has not been a large amount of scientific research conducted to establish the effectiveness of specific published intervention programs for struggling readers at the middle school level. If this kind of evidence is not available, it is necessary to evaluate the components of programs to find out whether they have characteristics that have been identified as essential for the progress of middle school students with severe reading problems.

Finally, it must be remembered that some students have severe and persistent reading disabilities, including dyslexia, that make it difficult for them to progress in intervention programs that are successful for most students. These students require long-term intervention of high intensity, similar to what is normally provided within special education or dyslexia programs.

WORD RECOGNITION **SAMPLE LESSON**

The Silent *e* Syllable Type

OBJECTIVE

Students will recognize and read the silent *e* syllable type and compare silent *e* words to words with previously taught syllable types. Students will sort words into groups, categorizing the words as examples of closed, open, or silent *e* syllable types.

MATERIALS

- Syllable Types chart (See Appendix).
- Textbook chapter.
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board.
- Overhead transparency.
- Pocket chart.
- Index cards.

PREPARATION

Choose a passage from your text and select at least 10 examples of words that contain silent *e* syllables, beginning with one-syllable words. Write each word on an index card. The examples used in this sample lesson are taken from an excerpt from *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan.

DAILY REVIEW

Use the Syllable Types chart to quickly review the two types of syllables you have already taught: closed and open syllables. (See Figure 102 and Appendix.)

Teacher:

We have been learning about different syllable types so that we can quickly recognize and pronounce the parts of a word. Raise your hand if you can tell me what a syllable is. Devon? Yes, a syllable is a word part containing one vowel sound. When you are reading and you

come to a word that you don't know, you can look for syllable patterns to help you.

Write the words "closed" and "open" on index cards and place them in the top row of the pocket chart to create column headings.

We have learned about closed and open syllables. A closed syllable ends in at least one consonant and the vowel is short. Remember that the vowel is "closed off" by the consonant at the end of the word. Let's think of some examples of words that contain a closed syllable.

Record student responses on index cards and place the cards in the "closed" syllable column. Sort the words into groups by the number of syllables.

Good work. These words belong in the "closed syllable" column: *such*, *fresh*, and *with*. You also thought of some words that have more than one syllable and that contain closed syllables: *picnic*, *absent*, and *rabbit*.

Now let's review open syllables. An open syllable ends in one vowel, and the vowel is usually long. Remember that the vowel is at the end of the syllable so the vowel is "open" to the rest of the word. What is an example of a word that contains an open syllable?

Record student responses on index cards and place the cards in the "open syllable" column of the pocket chart. Sort the words into groups by the number of syllables.

Good work again. I'll place these examples in the "open syllable" column: *we*, *she*, *so*, *see*, and *go*. These are all one-syllable words.

Now I'll read the words that have more than one syllable and that also contain an open syllable. The word *paper* has an open syllable at the beginning of the word: *pa-*. The word *tomato* has three open syllables, although we usually pronounce the first syllable with a "lazy" schwa sound, /u/ (short *u* sound). (Illustrate the difference between pronouncing the first syllable in *tomato* with a long *o* sound and with a schwa, or short *u*, sound.)

Continue to add student responses to the "open syllable" column and underline the open syllable. Prompt them or provide examples if they have problems generating the words on their own.

I'll write these examples in the "open syllable" column and underline the open syllable: *baby*, *sequel*, *item*, *protect*, *bacon*, *human*, and *trophy*.

STATE OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE

Teacher:

Today we are going to learn a new syllable type to help us quickly recognize and pronounce the parts of a word; we will learn the silent *e* pattern. Silent *e* syllables normally end in one vowel, one consonant, and a final *e*. The final *e* is silent and the vowel is long.

Silent *e* syllables follow the same pattern as one-syllable silent *e* words like *cake* and *like*. The *e* at the end tells us that the vowel in the word will be long.

Sometimes silent *e* syllables or words may have a special ending like *-s* or *-d* that follows the final *e*. These are still silent *e* syllables. Examples are the words *likes*, *liked*, and *bikes*.

Silent *e* syllables may begin with a vowel, as in the word *ape*, or a consonant, as in the word *tape*. Let's review the long sounds that vowels make.

Review long vowel sounds.

MODEL AND TEACH

Genre: Expository or narrative

Grouping: Whole class or small group

Create a new column in the pocket chart labeled "Silent e."

Teacher:

Let's begin by reading a set of one-syllable words that contain the silent *e* syllable pattern. I'll read the word first and then you repeat it. Listen for the long vowel sounds in each word.

Display the index cards one at a time, reading the word aloud and having students repeat it after you. After reading the word, place it in the pocket chart.

Examples: home, owe, nine, hopes, scale, blame, crazed, poke, quote, whine, use.

Now let's take a closer look at the silent *e* pattern.

Use the overhead projector to provide explicit instruction. Write the first word from the list on the transparency.

Find the first vowel. It is always followed by a consonant and then an *e*. The first vowel is long, and the *e* is silent. I will circle the first vowel and draw a line through the silent *e*.

Remember: Silent *e* syllables may begin with a vowel or a consonant. Which words on our list begin with a vowel?

Solicit student input.

That's right; *owe* and *use* begin with vowels.

Write the examples on the overhead.

I will circle the first vowel in each of these words and draw a line through the silent *e* at the end. That reminds me that the first vowel is long and the silent *e* doesn't have a sound.

Which words on our list begin with a consonant?

Solicit student input.

That's right, *home, nine, hopes, scale, blame, crazed, poke, quote,* and *whine* begin with consonants or consonant blends.

Write the examples on the overhead, thinking aloud and soliciting student input.

Again, I will circle the first vowel in each of these words and draw a line through the silent *e* at the end. What sound does the first vowel make? That's right, the first vowel is long. Why did I draw a line through the *e*? You're right again, because it doesn't have a sound. I notice that the word *crazed* ends with the letter *d* because it is in the past tense. This is still a silent *e*

word because it is made from the word *craze* with an ending added to it.

Introduce two-syllable words that contain syllables that follow the silent “e” pattern.

All the examples on our list are one-syllable words, but the silent *e* pattern also occurs in words with two or more syllables. Let’s look at an example of a two-syllable word that contains the silent *e* pattern.

Write the word “cupcake” on the transparency.

There are two syllables in the word *cupcake*. The first syllable is *cup*. I know that *cup* follows the closed syllable pattern because the vowel is closed in by the consonant, so the vowel is short.

The second syllable is *cake*. *Cake* follows the silent *e* syllable pattern, so the first vowel is long and the *e* is silent. I’ll circle the first vowel in *cake* and draw a line through the silent *e*. Read it with me: *cake*. Now read the whole word: *cupcake*. Remember, in words that contain more than one syllable, like *cupcake*, the syllables may follow different syllable patterns.

Now let’s read some two-syllable words from the selection you will read in our textbook that contain syllables that follow the silent *e* pattern. I’ll ask a student to find the silent *e* syllable in each word. Then I’ll ask you to read each syllable in the word. Finally, you will put the syllables together and read the whole word.

One at a time, show students the note cards containing two-syllable words taken from the text selection. Call on a student to identify and read the silent “e” syllable in each word. Underline the silent “e” syllable on the index card. If the student has difficulty, read the silent “e” syllable for the class and have the whole group read it after you. Then point to each syllable in the word and ask the class to read it. Finally, have the students read the entire word. If the word is likely to be unfamiliar to the student, provide a brief definition of the word and/or an example.

Examples: nickname, cascade, embraced, ungrateful.

Teacher:

Jonathan, read the silent *e* syllable in the first word. Yes, the silent *e* syllable is *name*.

Point to the silent “e” syllable.

Everyone, read the silent *e* syllable. Now read the first syllable. Read the whole word. Yes, *nickname*. A nickname is a special name we use for our close friends or members of our families. Sometimes it is a shorter way of saying the person’s real name. My sister’s name is Katherine, but we call her Kate. Kate is her nickname.

Repeat with the other words. If students have problems with the word “embraced,” point out that the silent “e” syllable has a special ending to show that the action happened in the past.

Have the students practice reading all of the silent “e” words on the index cards without you. Include both the one-syllable and two-syllable words on the list. Point to each word, skipping randomly from word to word, and have students read them chorally, answering together as you point to the word. Listen carefully to their responses. If any students misread a word, stop right away and read the word to the students, then have them repeat it with you, and finally have them read it as a group without you. If there are many errors, you can either a) slow down a little to give students more “think time,” b) point to the silent “e” syllable first and have students read that one and then read the whole word, or c) reteach how to recognize and read open, closed and/or silent “e” syllables.

After students have practiced reading the words on the cards as a group, call on each student to read one or two words, skipping randomly between the words and including both one-syllable and two-syllable words. If students

make errors, model how to read the word, have the group read it together, and then have the individual student read the word again. Then ask the student who made the error to read a different word alone.

Teacher:

Jessica, read this word.

The word on the index card is “cascade,” but Jessica says “casted”.

The silent *e* syllable in this word is *cade*, and the word is *cascade*. Everyone, read the silent *e* syllable. Yes, *cade*. Now read the whole word. Jessica, read the silent *e* syllable. Now read the whole word. Yes, *cascade*. Jessica, now read the silent *e* syllable in this word.

Point to “grate” in “ungrateful”. If Jessica struggles, ask her to provide the sound of the long “a” in the syllable and then read the syllable.

Yes, the silent *e* syllable is *grate*. Now, Jessica, read the first syllable. Read the next syllable. Read the last syllable. Read the whole word. Yes, the word is *ungrateful*. Everyone, read the word.

Refer to the list of words in the pocket chart.

Now we have learned three syllable patterns, closed, open, and silent *e*. Remember, when you are reading and you come to a word that you don't know, you can look for syllable patterns in the word to help you read it.

We can sort words by their syllable patterns to review what we have learned.

GUIDED PRACTICE

Preparation: Prepare additional index cards with words that follow the closed, open, or silent *e* pattern to provide practice with new words.

Grouping: Whole group or small group

Remove all the index cards from the pocket chart. Model the sorting procedure.

Teacher:

I will read the first three words and sort them according to syllable types. If the word contains more than one syllable, the syllable to sort by is underlined. After I finish, you will have a turn to sort words on your own. Many of these words are from the selection in our textbook that we began reading this week, *The Joy Luck Club*, by Amy Tan.

Show students the first word. Begin with a silent “e” word, such as “fame”.

I know that this is a silent *e* word because the first vowel is followed by a consonant and an *e*. The word is *fame*. It goes in the “Silent *e*” column of our pocket chart.

Place the index card in the correct column. Continue modeling how to sort words, choosing one example of a closed syllable and one example of an open syllable. Think aloud about the syllable pattern as you place the word in the correct column of the pocket chart.

The next word is *tests*. The first vowel in *tests* is *e*. It is a closed syllable because the vowel is closed by the consonants that follow.

The next word is *piano*. Remember that if the word has more than one syllable, I have underlined the syllable I want you to sort by. The first vowel in the syllable that is underlined is *o*. It is open because it is not followed by a consonant.

Provide opportunities for student practice. Distribute the remaining word cards and call on students one at a time to sort the words into groups using the pocket chart categories. Require students to explain their thinking and justify their choices. Provide corrective feedback as needed.

Janelle, your word is *nickname*. It has two syllables, and the second syllable is underlined. What spelling pattern does *name* follow?

Student:

It is a silent *e* word because the first vowel, *a*, is followed by a consonant and then an *e* comes at the end.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Grouping: Partners

1. Provide partners with a set of word cards to sort into open, closed, and silent *e* syllable patterns. Select words from your textbook so that students will encounter the words again in their reading.
2. Tell students that they are going to practice sorting words by syllable patterns to practice what they have learned. Give each student a handout like the one in Figure 102 with the sorting categories at the top and enough rows for students to sort at least 30 words into groups. Include the list of the word-sort words at the bottom of the handout.
3. Students work in partner groups to sort their set of word cards onto the sorting sheet.
4. When they have finished the word sort, they can write the words on their own copies of the sorting sheet, using the list at the bottom of the page.

FIGURE 102. SAMPLE GUIDE FOR WORD SORT BY SYLLABLE TYPE.

Closed Syllable	Open Syllable	Silent <i>e</i> Syllable
<p>Word List: home, ice, owe, we, nine, hopes, <u>genius</u>, scale, ape, <u>casca<u>de</u></u>, blame, <u>si</u>lent, spoke, crazed, use, poke, quote, <u>fiasco</u>, shape, whine, cute <u>ungrate</u>ful, theme, <u>embrace</u>d, five, <u>nickna</u>me, she, so, see, <u>Lindo</u>, take, <u>Chi</u>nese, <u>pi</u>ano, <u>tro</u>phy</p>		

Activity based on Bear, D., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S. R., & Johnston, F. (2003). Words their way: Word sorts for syllables and affixes spellers. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. Vocabulary selected from Tan, J. (1989). The joy luck club. New York: Putnam.

GENERALIZATION

Teacher:

Raise your hand if you can tell me how you might use this to help you outside of this class.

Student:

Whenever we're reading and we don't know a word, we can look for the syllable types that we know to help us read it.

Teacher:

Yes. When you are reading in your science class today, I want you to remember to try looking for open, closed, and silent *e* syllables in difficult words. I'm going to give each of you an index card to use as a bookmark when you are reading in science. If you come to difficult words, make a quick note of some of the words on this bookmark and bring it back to our class tomorrow. We'll look at the words and see whether we can look for syllable patterns we know to help us read the words.

MONITOR STUDENT LEARNING

Check students' work on their copies of the sorting sheet. Provide opportunities for students to partner-read (see Chapter 8: Fluency) selected passages that contain multiple examples of words that follow the three syllable patterns that have been introduced. Have partners remind each other to use the strategy of looking for syllable types to help them read unfamiliar words. Monitor their reading closely and provide feedback.

PERIODIC/MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE

Share this strategy of looking for syllable patterns with your students' content area teachers so that students can follow the same procedure in other classes and generalize the strategy. Tell the content area teachers about the index cards that students will use as bookmarks and on which students will record challenging words as they read content area text.

WORD RECOGNITION **SAMPLE LESSON**

The Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy adapted with permission from Archer, A. L., Gleason, M. M., & Vachon, V. (2005a). *REWARDS: Multisyllabic word reading strategies*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

TERMS TO KNOW

Nonsense word (or Pseudoword)	A word that is not a real word in English but follows the syllable patterns in real words. For example, the word <i>tig</i> is not a real word, but it follows the consonant-vowel-consonant pattern as in <i>log</i> .
Prefix	A morpheme that comes before a root or base word and modifies its meaning
Schwa	An indistinct vowel sound in unstressed syllables (usually sounds like short <i>u</i> or short <i>i</i>)
Suffix	A morpheme that follows a root or base word and modifies its meaning
Syllable	A minimal unit of speech organized around a vowel sound

(Harris & Hodges, 1995; Moats, 2000)

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn and apply the Multisyllable Word Strategy to read unfamiliar multisyllable words.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

Before this lesson, the students should have already learned to identify and pronounce open and closed **syllables**. They should have also learned the **prefixes** *un-* and *in-*, the **suffix** *-ly*, and the ending *-ed*, meaning past tense.

MATERIALS

- Multisyllable word list strategy (see Appendix).
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board.
- Overhead transparency.
- Pocket chart.
- Index cards.
- Prepared word list.

PREPARATION

Prepare a list of 6–8 multisyllable words that contain only closed and open syllables and prefixes, suffixes, and endings that students have learned. These words should be made up of only closed syllables in which the vowels are pronounced with their short sounds and open syllables in which the vowels are pronounced with their long sounds. Do not include words that have syllables in which vowels make the **schwa** sound (like the *a* in *ago*) or other vowel sounds (like the *i* in *piano*). Sample words with open and closed syllables and common affixes include *depended*, *accepting*, *unspoken*, *elastic*, *unintended*, *instrument*, *damppest*, *dismissed*.

DAILY REVIEW

Teacher:

You have been learning different syllable patterns so that we can quickly recognize and pronounce the parts of words we don't recognize. You have also learned about word parts such as prefixes and suffixes, to help us understand the word meanings. When you are reading on your own and you come to a long word with multiple syllables, you can look for syllable patterns that you know and word parts that you recognize to help you read the word.

Using the overhead transparency, chalkboard, or pocket chart with index cards, quickly review the types of syllables and a few prefixes and suffixes you have already taught. Write examples of words containing these syllable types and familiar word parts, and have students read the words together as a group. If students make errors on a word, point out the syllable types or familiar word parts and read the word to them. Then have the students read the word after you. Continue with the other words, but be sure to return to the problem word later and have the students read it without your help. Finally, have individual students take turns reading one or two words each.

Example words with open and closed syllables and common prefixes and suffixes or word endings: combat, submit, album, exact, witness, bonus, unit, even, uneven, inexact, gladly, exactly, witnessed.

Teacher:

We have learned about closed and open syllables. A closed syllable ends in at least one consonant and the vowel is short. Remember that the vowel is “closed off” by the consonant

at the end of the word. Let's read some words that contain a closed syllable.

Point to "combat," "submit," "album," "exact," and "witness" as students read them together.

Good. Now let's read some words with open syllables. An open syllable ends in what kind of letter—Tamika? Yes, a vowel. And what kind of sound will the vowel have in an open syllable—Simon? Yes, it will make its long vowel sound. Remember that in open syllables the vowel is at the end of the syllable so the vowel is "open" to the rest of the word. Here are some words with open and closed syllables.

Point to "bonus," "unit," and "even" as students read them together.

Teacher:

Wonderful. You have also learned to recognize some word parts that may appear at the beginning or end of a word and that change the meaning of the word. We know that the prefixes *un-* and *in-* mean what, Terri? Yes, they both mean "not". Here are words that begin with those prefixes. Read the prefix.

Point to "un" in "uneven".

Now read the word.

Point to "uneven".

Yes, *uneven*. Now read this prefix.

Point to "in" in the word "inexact".

Now read the word.

Point to "inexact".

Yes, *inexact* means "not exact". Something that is exact is just right in every way, so if something is *inexact*, it is not just right in every way. If your work is *inexact*, it has some mistakes.

These two words end with the word part *-ly*.

Point to "gladly" and "exactly".

If we put *-ly* at the end of the word *slow*, how would we say the new word—Jerome? Yes, the word would be *slowly*. The suffix *-ly* means "in a __ way," so the word *slowly* would mean "in a slow way". Here are two words that end with the suffix *-ly*. Read the suffix.

Point to "ly" in "gladly".

Now read the word.

Point to "gladly".

Yes, *gladly*. Now read this word part.

Point to "ly" in "exactly".

Good. Now read the word.

Point to "exactly".

Yes, *exactly* means “in an exact way” or “just right in every way”. The last word on our list has an ending you know well—*ed*. What does that tell you about the action in the word—Javier? Yes, it means that it happened in the past. Now look at the word, everyone. Read the first part.

Point to “*wit*” in “*witnessed*”.

Yes, *wit*. Now read the next part.

Point to “*ness*” in “*witnessed*”.

Yes, *ness*. Read those parts together.

Point to “*witness*”.

Now add the *-ed* ending and read the whole word.

Point to “*witnessed*”.

Yes, *witnessed*.

STATE OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE

Teacher:

Today, you will learn a strategy, or plan, to read words with more than one syllable. You will be able to use this strategy in any class to help you read words with more than one syllable.

MODEL AND TEACH

Genre: Expository or narrative

Grouping: Whole class or small group

Display a poster with the steps for the multisyllable strategy written on it. (This poster will be kept in the room for student reference as they learn the strategy.)

FIGURE 103. MULTISYLLABLE WORD READING STRATEGY.

Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy	
1.	Find the vowels.
2.	Look for word parts you know.
3.	Read each word part.
4.	Read the parts quickly.
5.	Make it sound like a real word.

Adapted with permission from Archer, A. L., Gleason, M. M., & Vachon, V. (2005a). REWARDS: Multisyllabic word reading strategies. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Teacher:

I'm going to show you how I would use the strategy if I were trying to read a word I didn't know. You might already be able to read the word that I'm going to write, but, if you can, don't say it out loud. I want to show you what you could do if you were trying to read a long word that you don't know.

Write "fantastic" on an overhead transparency. Think aloud as you model each step of the strategy for the students.

The first step in the strategy is, "Find the vowels." I know that every syllable must have a vowel sound, so finding the vowels will help me find the syllables in the word.

Point to the word "fantastic" on the overhead.

In this word I see an *a*, another *a*, and an *i*. I'm going to circle the vowels in the word.

Circle the vowels in the word "fantastic".

Step 2 of the strategy is, "Look for word parts you know." Hmmm. I see something that looks like *fan* at the beginning. That isn't one of the prefixes we have worked on, but it is a word part I know. I'm going to underline it.

Underline "fan" in "fantastic".

I also see two more closed syllables in the word. I'm going to underline the closed syllables.

Underline "tas" and "tic" in "fantastic".

Step 3 is, "Read each word part." OK. Since these are closed syllables, I think the vowels will have their short sounds. *Fan-tas-tic*.

Step 4 is, "Read the parts quickly." *Fantastic*. That makes sense! The word is *fantastic*.

Step 5 says, "Make it sound like a real word." The word I read sounds right. *Fantastic*. I don't think I have to change it. It sounds like a real word.

*Be sure to emphasize the accented syllable: "fantastic". At first, it may be helpful to demonstrate how placing the emphasis on the wrong syllable will make it into a **nonsense word**: "fantastic," "fantastic". Changing the emphasis to the correct syllable can be part of Step 5: Make it sound like a real word.*

HELPFUL HABIT		For English language learners, teach this strategy: Whenever you hear a new multi-syllable word, pay attention to which syllable has the emphasis. You can put a dot under it or underline this syllable. The next time you hear or read the word, this mark will remind you of the correct pronunciation.
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GUIDED PRACTICE

Grouping: Whole group or small group

Teacher:

Now, let's do one together.

Write the word "unimpressed" on the overhead transparency.

Teacher:

What is the first step of our strategy—Ta’Michael?

Student:

Find the vowels.

Teacher:

Ta’Michael, what are the vowel letters?

Student:

A, e, i, o, u, and sometimes *y*.

Teacher:

Good. Please come up and circle all of the vowel letters you see in this word.

Ta’Michael circles “u,” “i,” “e,” and “e.”

Thank you, Ta’Michael. What’s the next step in the strategy—Terri?

Student:

Look for word parts you know.

Teacher:

Terri, do you see any word parts you know?

Student:

It has *un-* at the beginning.

Teacher:

Excellent, Terri. You found the prefix *un-* in the word. What does that mean—Javier? Yes, *un-* means “not.” Terri, come up and underline the prefix *un-* in the word. Great, thank you. What other word parts do you see in the word—Simon?

Student:

I see *-ed* at the end. That means it’s in the past.

Teacher:

Excellent, Simon. Please come up and underline the *-ed*. Now, do you see any syllable types you know? Remember, the vowels can help you find the syllables since each syllable has one vowel sound in it. Tamika, what do you see?

Student:

I think there are two closed syllables: *im-* and *press*.

Teacher:

Wow, Tamika, you are really using what you know about syllables! Please come underline those two word parts. The next steps in the strategy are to read the parts, and then read them quickly. Everyone, read the first part.

Point to “un-”.

Teacher:

Yes, *un-*. Read the part.

Point to “im”.

Read the part.

Point to “press”.

Now read those parts together.

Students:

Unimpress.

Teacher:

Good. Now add the ending to make it show that it happened in the past.

Students:

Unimpressed.

Teacher:

Terrific. Does it sound like a real word—Maia?

Student:

I think so. I’ve heard the word *impress*, like you wear a really cool shirt to try to impress your friends.

Teacher:

That’s a great example, Maia. You’re right. The base word is *impress*. If you impress someone, you make them think that something is very important or special. So what would *impressed* mean—Tamika?

Student:

Well, I think the *-ed* ending means I did it in the past.

Teacher:

Yes it can mean that. We could say, “I impressed all my friends when I wore my new shirt.” There is another meaning for this word. I could say, “I was impressed when I saw Maia’s cool new shirt.” That means I saw the shirt and thought it was very special. Now what would it mean if I said, “I was *unimpressed* when I saw the boy tell a joke.” Anyone?

Student:

If *un-* means “not,” I guess I did not think it was very special. I didn’t like the joke very much.

Teacher:

Exactly! If you are unimpressed by something, you don’t think it is very special. Simon, can you finish this sentence—I was unimpressed when...

Student:

I was unimpressed when...I saw last night’s basketball game.

Teacher:

Why were you unimpressed when you saw the game?

Student:

We lost. We played bad.

Teacher:

OK. That makes sense. Everyone, please read the five steps of the strategy together.

Point to the poster as the class reads. Repeat, if necessary.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Grouping: Partners

Teacher:

You did a very good job of using the strategy to read this long word. Now I'm going to give you a chance to read some words with your partner. Listen carefully to my directions. When you get together with your partner, I will give you a list of words. First, Partner 1 will use the strategy to read a word. Partner 2 will check Partner 1's work and remind Partner 1 how to use the strategy, if needed. If both partners are not sure about how to use the strategy to read the word, raise your hands and I will come to help you figure it out. When you have finished a word, raise your hand and I'll come to check you. Then you switch jobs, and Partner 2 uses the strategy to read the next word, while Partner 1 helps.

What will you do first when you get into your partners—Javier?

Student:

Partner 1 will read the first word.

Teacher:

Yes. Remember that you will use the five steps in our strategy to read the word. What will Partner 2 do—Simon?

Student:

Help Partner 1, if needed.

Teacher:

What if you both get stuck on the word—Tamika?

Student:

Raise our hands and you'll come.

Teacher:

Yes. And what will you do when you have figured out a word—Ta'Michael?

Student:

Raise our hands so you can check it.

Teacher:

Excellent. Please move over next to your partners.

Give each pair a list of six to eight multisyllable words that are made of open syllables; closed syllables; and prefixes, suffixes, and endings that they have learned.

IMPORTANT: Do not include irregular words or those that have syllables in which the vowels do not make their predicted sounds (i.e., the long sound in open syllables and the short sound in closed syllables. At this point students should not have to do Step 5 of the strategy. They should not have to “play with” the vowel sounds in the word to make it sound like a real word.) After students have mastered the strategy, teach a lesson on reading words with the schwa sound, in which you model how to make it sound like a real word. See page 237 for a description of Step 5 of the Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy.

Have students work in partner groups to read the words, following the directions above.

GENERALIZATION

Teacher:

How might you use the Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy to help you outside of this class?

Student:

It could help when we try to read hard words.

Teacher:

Yes. When you are reading in your science, social studies, English, or math classes, I want you to remember to try the strategy. It may not work for all the hard words you see because we haven't learned all the syllable types yet, but try it anyway. You may be able to figure out most of the words this way. I'm going to ask you tomorrow how you used the strategy in your other classes.

Do you think you might be able to use the strategy at home?

Student:

Maybe when I'm reading my new comic book. Sometimes they have some long words in them.

Teacher:

Good idea, Simon. Anytime you read, at home or at school, and you come to long words that you don't know, try the strategy. I can't wait to find out how it works for you.

MONITOR STUDENT LEARNING

Check students' work carefully as they work with their partners to read words.

Plan several lessons to review the strategy and have students apply it in more challenging words, especially as you teach more syllable types.

Provide opportunities for students to partner-read selected passages that contain multiple examples of multisyllable words that contain the syllable types the students have learned. Remind students to try the strategy to read words that have more than one syllable. Have partners remind each other to use the strategy to help them read unfamiliar words. Monitor their reading closely and provide feedback.

PERIODIC/MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE

Review the strategy often, and teach more lessons on using the strategy, as needed. It may require several lessons and opportunities to practice before students begin to use the Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy independently. Share this strategy with your students' content area teachers so that students can follow the same procedure in other classes and generalize the strategy. Ask the content area teachers to remind students to try the Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy when they come to a long word they don't know.

Syllable Types

Syllable Type	Examples	
Closed	pic-nic	ab-sent
Open	ve-to	a-pron
Silent <i>e</i>	de-bate	base-ball
Vowel team	re-frain	car-toon
Vowel- <i>r</i>	en-ter	or-phan
Consonant <i>-le</i>	bot-tle	bea-gle
Other	gar-bage	fur-ni-ture

Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy

1. Find the vowels.
2. Look for word parts you know.
3. Read each word part.
4. Read the parts quickly.
5. Make it sound like a real word.

Adapted with permission from Archer, A. L., Gleason, M. M., & Vachon, V. (2005a). REWARDS: Multisyllabic word reading strategies. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.