

Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, and Word Analysis for Teachers: An Interactive Tutorial

Ninth Edition

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Recognizing Words: Helping Children Develop Word Analysis Strategies



You are a proficient reader. When you read, you recognize most words without sounding them out. Most of the time, you recognize almost every word automatically, so you just think about the overall meaning of what you read. Your ability to recognize words rapidly and seemingly without effort is the foundation on which many other reading skills rest. How did you develop this ability?

Learning to read is a journey for every student. The paths of this journey are becoming increasingly clear to us, especially in the early stages when learning to recognize words is an important goal. We refer to children who are just beginning their literacy journeys as *emergent readers*.

Properly supported by their families and insightful teachers, emergent readers will develop effective word analysis strategies that are helpful in reading. These word analysis strategies lead to accurate and automatic word recognition and, ultimately, to effective reading comprehension.

Most printed words are unfamiliar to emergent readers. In the beginning, they do not realize that printed words represent spoken words, and they cannot analyze printed words to determine their oral equivalent. Emergent readers gradually develop this insight, which is an important facet on their literacy journey. Over time, most children develop the full range of word analysis strategies that enable them to become proficient readers, readers who are seldom conscious of these early skills that have become automatic.

What is word analysis? Word analysis refers to an extensive set of knowledge about our written language and strategies that permit readers to determine both the sounds of words and their meanings as they read. Word analysis develops as children acquire abilities in the following areas: phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, context use, sight word knowledge, morphemic analysis, chunking words, and dictionary skills.



PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological awareness develops when young children become aware that language is an object that may be analyzed and manipulated by them in different ways, such as rhyming, playing word games, and talking about words as objects. Emergent readers gradually become aware of language as an object. We see this when they begin to substitute one word for another at the end of a repeated sentence, play rhyming games in oral language, and later segment a spoken word, such as the two syllables that make up the word *into*. An important beginning step on the way to phonemic awareness is becoming aware of language as an object that can be manipulated and analyzed.



PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Phonemes are the smallest unit of speech sounds, such as the three separate sounds you hear in the word *read*. Phonemic awareness is being able to hear each sound as an individual unit. What is the difference between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness? Put simply, when you possess phonological awareness, you are aware of individual words and syllables as objects. When you possess phonemic awareness, you are aware of individual sounds or phonemes as objects. With phonological awareness, you can identify the two syllables in the spoken word *into*. With phonemic awareness, you can hear these two syllables and identify the two separate phonemes in the syllable *in* as well as the two phonemes in *to*. Having phonemic awareness allows you to succeed in developing phonic knowledge because you can identify the individual sounds in words. If you cannot hear these sounds, phonics will provide little help.



PHONICS

Phonics, or phonic knowledge, consists of two elements:
(1) understanding the relationships between letters and sounds and
(2) putting together, or blending, sounds represented by letters.
Knowing the more regular letter-sound, or graphophonic, relationships helps us to recognize many words by permitting us to sound them out.



CONTEXT USE

Using context provides important assistance during word analysis. We can often anticipate what a word is, even before we actually see it from the context that precedes the word. Other times, we can figure out an unfamiliar word by looking at the words and sentences that follow it. This is *context use*, which is an important type of word analysis skill.



SIGHT WORD KNOWLEDGE

When we see a word frequently, it becomes a *sight word*, a word that we recognize instantly without having to resort to phonics or context use. High-frequency words, such as *me*, *I*, *you*, children's names, and others, quickly become sight words for us. As children become better readers, the words they know by sight, without the need to consciously analyze them, increases substantially. We seek to expand children's sight word knowledge because knowing just 200 of the most common words by sight will enable children to recognize about 50 percent of all the words they will encounter while reading.



MORPHEMIC ANALYSIS

Morphemic analysis refers to using prefixes and suffixes to break a word apart for both its meaning and pronunciation. Often, this skill is useful when applying phonic generalizations. Morphemic analysis is helpful in the later stages of word analysis.



CHUNKING WORDS

Chunking refers to breaking words into smaller units; it is sometimes called structural analysis or syllabication. Chunking can help determine a word's pronunciation and meaning. In this chapter, we include only those chunking or syllabication generalizations that are most useful and consistent.



DICTIONARY SKILLS

We sometimes use a *dictionary* when analyzing either the pronunciation or the meaning of a word. Dictionary skills are useful for all of us.



DEVELOPMENTAL SPELLING PATTERNS

The spelling patterns we see in children's writing provide a window into their growing ability to recognize words. Uncorrected spelling patterns are especially revealing. A child who writes I LV MI CT ("I love my cat") tells us that he or she knows much about letter-sound relationships with initial and final consonants but is only beginning to develop an awareness of vowels appearing in the middle of words. If you know what to look for, children's developmental spelling patterns reveal important diagnostic information. They tell you where a child is at on the journey to becoming a fluent and automatic reader.



THE JOURNEY AHEAD

We will explore each of these word analysis elements in this book. Knowing about word analysis will help children as they begin to develop proficiency in reading. You will acquire an understanding about what young children must learn in the beginning stages of their journey. This will influence your decisions about what to teach young children to help them become successful readers.



PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHING WORD ANALYSIS IN YOUR CLASSROOM



Lesson Suggestions

Use the online word recognition lessons from Starfall (<http://www.starfall.com/>) in your classroom computer center. This valuable online resource contains activities within each of the areas discussed in this chapter and is designed for online use by children. The well-designed activities do not require users to provide identifying information about themselves or pay a fee to use the materials. It is the best-designed online experience for students in word analysis and early reading that we have encountered.



WORD ANALYSIS

<p>1. One element of reading instruction that teachers should be familiar with is word _____. Readers use word analysis to analyze written words and construct both their sounds and their _____.</p>	<p>analysis meanings</p>
<p>2. Printed letters, words, and sentences are language symbols from which a reader seeks to derive _____. Word analysis refers to those strategies a reader uses when unfamiliar words are encountered in written _____. Both sound and meaning are _____ by the symbols in our written language.</p>	<p>meaning language represented</p>
<p>3. Readers construct meaning from written language. Although emergent readers are already familiar with the spoken form of their language, most of them are unfamiliar with the _____ form of language.</p>	<p>written</p>
<p>4. Many word _____ strategies are referred to as decoding skills. A reader must be able to use the information of the _____ language code to decode words.</p>	<p>analysis written</p>
<p>5. Phonics is only one of many important word _____ strategies. Other elements of word analysis, such as phonological awareness and phonemic awareness, are skills that develop earlier. These enable readers to use word analysis _____.</p>	<p>analysis strategies</p>

<p>6. In reconstructing a message from written _____, a reader uses at least three types of cueing systems. These interrelated cueing systems are <i>graphophonics</i>, <i>semantics</i>, and <i>syntax</i>.</p>	<p>language</p>
<p>7. Grapho _____ information describes the relationship between sounds in our _____ and the written letters or spelling patterns making up written _____.</p>	<p>phonic language language</p>
<p>8. Semantic information refers to the meaning elements of language. The vocabulary and conceptual background of a reader influence his or her ability to use _____ information.</p>	<p>semantic</p>
<p>9. Syntax refers to the sentence patterns and structure, or grammar, of _____. Readers use these structures, or _____ cues, when constructing meaning from print.</p>	<p>language, syntactic</p>
<p>10. Readers use all three types of cueing systems simultaneously during the reading _____.</p>	<p>process</p>
<p>11. <i>Phonics</i> refers to the application of information about the sounds of _____ to the teaching of reading. The term <i>phonics</i> refers to the knowledge about how _____ are represented by letters or letter combinations in written language to help readers determine the oral equivalents of words. The English language does not have a completely predictable correspondence between sounds and written symbols, which makes phonics an incomplete word analysis system. Nevertheless, relationships between letters and sounds are sufficiently predictable to make _____ a useful word analysis strategy when it is combined with other strategies.</p>	<p>language sounds phonics</p>
<p>12. <i>Orthography</i> is the term used to refer to the writing system of a language. The writing system, or _____, of English is complex. English _____ is based on an alphabetic principle as well as morphological (word form) and syntactic considerations. Because of these additional influences, words are not always spelled the way they sound.</p>	<p>orthography orthography</p>

<p>13. A phoneme is the smallest single unit of sound in a language that distinguishes one <i>morpheme</i> (meaning unit) from another. For example, when the words <i>bit</i> and <i>sit</i> are spoken, only the first phoneme (out of three) is different. The spoken word <i>at</i> has two _____, whereas the spoken word <i>cat</i> has _____.</p>	<p>phonemes, three</p>
<p>14. A <i>grapheme</i> is a written or printed representation of a phoneme. For example, the letters <u>th</u>, <u>i</u>, and <u>s</u> in the word <i>this</i> represent a grapheme. Note that a single grapheme may include several letters that represent a single sound. When you see the written word <i>at</i>, you see two graphemes: _____ and _____. In the written word <i>path</i>, you see three _____: <u>p</u>, <u>a</u>, and <u>th</u>.</p>	<p>a, t graphemes</p>
<p>15. The written word <i>chat</i> has four letters. It also has _____ graphemes and _____ phonemes. Two of the letters appear in a single grapheme, <u>ch</u>. This grapheme represents _____ sound.</p>	<p>three three one</p>
<p>16. In reading, children are expected to learn letter-sound relationships or, as they are frequently referred to, grapheme-phoneme _____.</p>	<p>relationships</p>
<p>17. Before they learn grapheme-phoneme relationships, however, most children become aware of words and syllabic units as discrete units. This is often referred to as _____ awareness.</p>	<p>phonological</p>
<p>18. _____ awareness is the general term used to label the conscious awareness about the sounds of language. Phonological _____ is an important milestone for young children because it indicates that they are consciously aware of the sounds of language and can analyze and manipulate these sounds in different ways.</p>	<p>Phonological awareness</p>
<p>19. If children can identify individual words in oral language, clap the syllables in a word, or know how to rhyme one word with another, we can be confident that they have developed _____ awareness.</p>	<p>phonological</p>

<p>20. A special aspect of phonological awareness, and a more challenging milestone, is the development of phonemic awareness. _____ awareness is demonstrated when a child can analyze and manipulate individual phonemes, or sounds, in oral language. Being able to identify all the sounds, or phonemes, in a spoken word, such as <i>at</i>, demonstrates that a child has phonemic _____.</p>	<p>Phonemic awareness</p>
<p>21. Phonemic awareness is important for children to develop because it enables them to benefit from _____ instruction.</p>	<p>phonics</p>
<p>22. Being able to determine the graphophonemic relationships in a word does not, by itself, always enable a reader to comprehend what he or she _____. However, graphophonemic cues can be combined with other language information to result in meaningful _____.</p>	<p>reads reading</p>
<p>23. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in a language. The word <i>bookmark</i> has _____ morphemes.</p>	<p>two</p>
<p>24. Morphemic analysis refers to the analysis of words by using the meaningful parts of _____, such as prefixes, suffixes, contractions, compound words, and base words. Many texts on how to teach reading use the term <i>structural analysis</i>; this term is equivalent to <i>morphemic analysis</i> here. In addition, structural _____ includes the study of syllabic units in words and spelling patterns influenced by the addition of affixes.</p>	<p>words analysis</p>
<p>25. Morphemic _____ is concerned with how meaning is determined by the combination of morphemes, the smallest units of meaning in a language.</p>	<p>analysis</p>
<p>26. The word <i>box</i> contains one unit of meaning, or morpheme. In the word <i>boxes</i>, there are _____ morphemes: <i>box</i> and <i>es</i>. <i>Box</i> is called a free _____ because it can stand alone; another unit does not need to be added to it for the unit to have meaning. The <i>es</i> plural is an example of a bound morpheme. Bound morphemes function only when combined with a _____ morpheme.</p>	<p>two morpheme free</p>

<p>27. Morphemic analysis is an important aspect of word analysis. The use of morphemic analysis is limited, however, to words that contain identifiable morphemes, including _____, _____, and root words.</p>	<p>prefixes suffixes</p>
<p>28. The English spelling system is based on more than the correspondence between _____ and sounds. For example, consider the following word pairs: <i>sane</i> and <i>sanity</i>, <i>nation</i> and <i>national</i>, <i>democracy</i> and <i>democratic</i>. The sounds represented by the <u>a</u> in <i>sane</i> and <i>sanity</i>, the <u>a</u> in <i>nation</i> and <i>national</i>, and the <u>o</u> in <i>democracy</i> and <i>democratic</i> are not the same, even though these word pairs contain a basic meaning unit, or _____. Linguists use the term <i>morphophonemic</i> to refer to the combined meaning and _____ base of the English spelling system.</p>	<p>letters morpheme sound</p>
<p>29. Readers often use context clues during _____ analysis. Context clues require readers to rely on the other words and sentence patterning, or _____, in a reading selection, along with meaning cues in the material.</p>	<p>word syntax</p>
<p>30. _____ clues provide helpful information for determining word _____. Context clues are also helpful in determining pronunciation for readers who have previously heard a word orally but have never seen the printed form.</p>	<p>Context meaning</p>
<p>31. Efficient readers combine all _____ techniques to figure out the pronunciation and _____ of unfamiliar words.</p>	<p>word, analysis meaning</p>
<p>32. The ultimate aim of instruction in word analysis is to help students become more efficient readers. Efficient readers focus on meaning and recognize many words instantly. The words that readers _____ instantly comprise their sight _____ knowledge. One factor contributing to the development of extensive _____ word knowledge is a command of word analysis _____. Extensive _____ word knowledge also contributes to efficient reading.</p>	<p>recognize, word sight strategies, sight</p>

33. Phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, context clues, sight words, structural and morphemic analyses, and using the dictionary are word _____ strategies discussed in this text. For children, this knowledge is acquired over a period of years. For you, this information is condensed into a brief, interactive tutorial to save you time.

analysis



SELF-CHECK FOR CHAPTER 1

1. Readers use word _____ strategies to analyze written words to construct both sounds and meanings. Word analysis includes phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, context use, sight word knowledge, morphemic analysis, and dictionary skills.

analysis

2. The term *graphophonic relationships* refers to the relationships between letters and _____ .

sounds

3. The term *phonics* refers to how sounds are represented by _____ .

letters

4. A _____ is the smallest single unit of sound in a language that distinguishes one morpheme from another.

phoneme

5. A _____ is a written or printed representation of a phoneme.

grapheme

6. The spoken word *push* has _____ phonemes.

three

7. The written word *past* has _____ graphemes.

four

8. When children are able to identify individual words and syllables in a language, we can be confident that they have developed _____ awareness.

phonological

9. When children are able to identify individual sounds, or phonemes, in a language, we can be confident that they have developed _____ awareness.

phonemic

10. A _____ is the smallest unit of meaning in a language. The word *running* has two morphemes.

morpheme

<p>11. Readers often use surrounding words and other information, or _____ clues, during word analysis.</p>	<p>context</p>
<p>12. The words readers recognize instantly comprise their _____ word knowledge. Extensive sight word knowledge is important for efficient reading.</p>	<p>Sight</p>



ONLINE READING RESOURCES

To learn more about word recognition and the important role it plays during the reading process, explore these online resources:

- Owens, K. (2009). Phonics on the web. An online tutorial exploring many aspects of phonics.
Retrieved from <http://www.phonicsontheweb.com/index.php>.
- Cunningham, P. M., & Cunningham, J. W. (2000). What we know about how to teach phonics. In S. E. Farstrup, S. J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (pp. 87–109). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. (One of the best summaries of word recognition and phonics.)
Retrieved from http://www.learner.org/workshops/readingk2/support/HowToTeachPhonics_1.pdf;
http://www.learner.org/workshops/readingk2/support/HowToTeachPhonics_2.pdf; and
http://www.learner.org/workshops/readingk2/support/HowToTeachPhonics_3.pdf.
- Staudt, D. (2009). Intensive word study and repeated reading improves reading skills for two students with learning disabilities. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(2), 142–151. (This article describes how a teacher improved reading for two struggling readers by focusing on word analysis instruction and poetry.)
Retrieved from <http://www.reading.org/Publish.aspx?page5RT-63-2-Staudt.pdf&mode5retrieve&D510.1598/RT.63.2.5&F5RT-63-2-Staudt.pdf&key597A82610-E13D-404A-9978-E8AF56654E95>

