



Session 3:
Morphology (Part 2)
*MS/HS Literacy Teacher Professional
Development Series*

Recap

In the last session, we spent time...

- defining what morphology is and the impact it has on middle and high school students specifically.
- determining where morphological awareness fits into a lesson.

Today's Objective

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ★ understand how morphology impacts fluency, spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.
- ★ implement a mini-lesson in morphology to support an upcoming curricular lesson.

Morphology and How it Applies to Middle and High School

- Morphology is defined as a system of units of meaning in words (Sedita, 2020).
- Morphemes consist of a base and affixes (prefixes and suffixes).
- Many teachers at the secondary level are not equipped to remediate reading, but developing knowledge around morphology can help with reading fluency and vocabulary comprehension so that students read and understand their content area texts better.

Morphemes

- Morphemes are the smallest units of meaning. Some words have one morpheme (play, show, build) and others have multiple morphemes (reconstructing, deconstruction).
- Morphemes provide students with numerous strategies for decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) as well as enhancing vocabulary. As children learn the common prefixes, suffixes, and Latin and Greek bases, they gain new understanding of these meaning-based building blocks in English words (Henry, 2017).

SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE (2001)

Morphemes play a role in both the upper and lower strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING
(alphabetic principle,
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)

THE MANY
STRANDS
WOVEN INTO
SKILLED
READING

INCREASINGLY STRATEGIC

INCREASINGLY AUTOMATIC

SKILLED
READING

Fluent execution
and coordination of
word recognition and
text comprehension.



Teaching Morphological Awareness

- It improves the following areas:
 - vocabulary comprehension
 - reading aloud
 - spelling
 - phonological awareness: builds up awareness of speech sounds
 - reading comprehension

How to Teach Morphology

- Determine what morphemes are best to teach.
 - Start with a brief introduction on the most popular prefixes and suffixes to ensure students understand the most common meanings and high frequency words.
 - Branch out to Latin and Greek roots for the demands of secondary content area: math, science, social studies.
- Morphology should be taught explicitly in order for it to be effective:
 - Teacher provides a means to help students define the base or affix.
 - Students have guided practice with the words.

Other Morphemes to Teach

- [Most Common Affixes](#)
- [Prefix, Suffix, and Root by Grade Level](#)
- [Common Suffixes, Common Greek and Latin Roots, and Common Numerical Prefixes](#)
- Curriculum may already have morphology embedded. This is a great place to start. Use the morphemes that are in current units of study.

Activities to Integrate with Morphemes

- provide definitions and examples
- word family maps (word matrix)
- word sums
- find the roots
- fix the affix
- word sort
- spotlight
- building blocks
- syllabifying the “big words”

For a larger explanation of the following activities consult [Teaching Morphology to Improve Literacy](#), and [Dyslexia Help](#).

Word Matrix

- One of the most common activities in middle and high school for teaching morphology is a word matrix.
- Select the number of morphemes you would like to teach and use the explicit instructions that follow when teaching.

Pre-made word matrices can be found at [Morpheme Matrices](#).

Explicit Instructions for Teaching Word Matrices

- Explicit Instructions:
 - **Explain** the purpose: “There are many big or long words in newspapers, magazines, books, job ads, and on the internet. They often include word parts (or morphemes) called prefixes, roots, and suffixes. We will learn how to combine (or assemble) them and figure out their meanings and uses.”
 - **Model** the pronunciation of the Latin root and read its simple meaning.
 - **Model** how to assemble only free Latin roots + suffixes = new words; discuss meanings and changes.
 - **Model** the pronunciation of the prefixes and read their simple meanings - or pronounce, define, and assemble one at a time.
 - **Model** how to assemble prefixes + Latin roots = new words; discuss meanings and changes.
 - **Model** or guide how to assemble prefixes + Latin roots + suffixes = new words; discuss meanings and changes.
 - **Guide** students in rereading, spelling, and using the new words in oral sentences.
 - Have students write a few sentences and share them with the group or a partner.

Source: MORPHEME MATRICES: https://atlasabe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Morpheme_Matrices-rev072120.pdf

Layout of Word Matrices

Common prefixes form new words and change meaning or part of speech (2-4/matrix)	Latin root simple meaning free or bound	Most common inflectional suffixes change noun number or verb tense (-s/es, -ed, -ing)
Less common prefixes form new words and change meaning or part of speech (0-3/matrix)		Common derivational suffixes form new words and may change part of speech (3-5/matrix)

Source: MORPHEME MATRICES: https://atlasabe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Morpheme_Matrices-rev072120.pdf

Example Word Matrix

form

Morpheme Matrix 1

in	in re de	form to shape	ed ing	s
		free	al ation	er

Source: MORPHEME MATRICES: https://atlasabe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Morpheme_Matrices-rev072120.pdf

“Spotlight” Activity

Purpose: Students will better understanding curriculum/content vocabulary using knowledge of morphological awareness.

Task: Select one or two complex, curriculum-specific words from your lesson. When it comes up during your lesson, explicitly teach the affixes and root to help students understand the meaning of that word. Let students know that the meanings of those affixes and roots apply to other words within the content and across content as well by relating the affixes or roots to other words as well.

Example: When teaching shapes in your math class, write the word “triangle”. Explain that the prefix “tri” means three, and this shape is called a “triangle” because it has three angles. Relate this to other words that share this prefix, such as tricycle, triceratops, and triplet.

Source: Zeh, [Teaching Morphology to Improve Literacy](#)

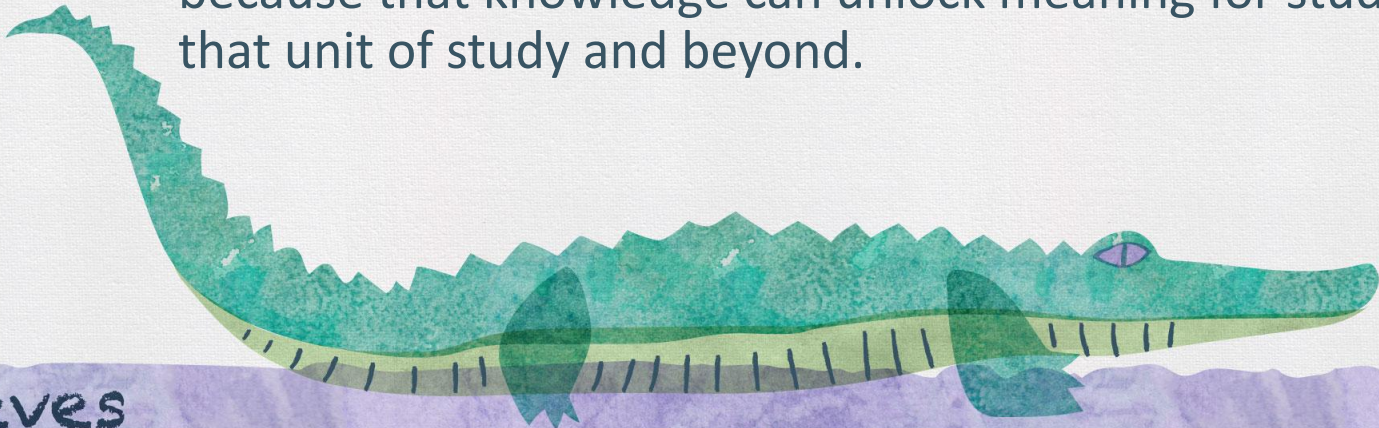
Fitting Morphology Instruction into Lessons

- as pre-work activity when introducing a unit or chapter
- practice of already learned roots and affixes:
 - as a warm-up activity before a lesson
 - as an early finisher
 - for reinforcement

**Initial instruction of the morphemes should be direct teaching.

Final Thoughts

- Morphology instruction can be used to increase fluency, spelling, expand vocabulary, and reading comprehension.
- Morphological awareness activities can be taught with very little prep time from the teacher, but the impact can be huge because that knowledge can unlock meaning for students in that unit of study and beyond.



Engage



Consider an upcoming unit of study:

- What morphemes need to be taught for the students to have a deeper understanding?
- What activity will you choose to explicitly teach the morphemes?
- Where will this fit in your lesson?

Question or Suggestions?

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