

Reading Foundations Skills Glossary

Affix: A morpheme attached to the beginning or end of a base word to modify its meaning.

Example: “im-” in “impossible,” “-ing” in “jumping.”

Articulatory Gestures: Mouth movements necessary to enunciate sounds in language.

Automaticity of Words from Memory: The ability to recognize the pronunciations and meanings of written words immediately upon seeing them without expending any attention or effort decoding the words.

Base Word: The root part of a word in which the base element or basic meaning is contained.

Example: “possible” in “impossible,” “jump” in “jumping.”

Decode: The ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships in reading.

Digraph: Two letters used to represent one phoneme. Example: “sh” or “ea.”

Encode: Ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships in writing.

Grapheme: A letter or a number of letters that represent a sound (phoneme) in a word. Another way to explain it is to say that a grapheme is a letter or letters that spell a sound in a word. Some written scripts are simple ones, in which one letter usually represents one sound.

Graphophonic Cues: These involve the letter-sound or sound-symbol relationships of language. Readers identifying unknown words by relating speech sounds to letters or letter patterns are using graphophonic cues. This process is often called *decoding*.

Graphophonemic Knowledge: The recognition of letters and the understanding of sound-symbol relationships and spelling patterns. Note: Graphophonemic knowledge is often referred to as *phonics*.

Graphophonological Relationships: The correlation between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes).

Letter Identification: The ability to name a letter in two forms: uppercase and lowercase, as well as the ability to recognize letters both in isolation and within a word.

Morpheme: The smallest grammatical units of a language, each constituting a word or meaningful part of a word that cannot be divided into smaller independent grammatical parts. Example: “unfruitful” has three morphemes, the affixes “un-” and “-ful” and the base word “fruit.”

Phoneme: Any of the perceptually distinct units of sound in a specified language that distinguish one word from another, for example /p/, /b/, /d/, and /t/ in the English words *pad*, *pat*, *bad*, and *bat*.

Phoneme segmentation: The breakdown of words into individual sounds.

Phonics: A method of teaching reading by correlating sounds with letters or groups of letters in an alphabetic writing system.

Phonological Awareness-Phonemes: The ability to recognize that words are made up of units of sound (called phonemes) and the ability to manipulate phonemes (segment, delete, substitute, blend).

Phonological Awareness-Syllables: The ability to recognize that words can be divided into syllables, to segment and blend syllables in multisyllabic words, and to identify syllable type.

Plural: More than one.

Possessive: Shows ownership:

- Singular possessive: adds an “s,” belonging to one person or animal.
- Plural possessive: adds an “s’,” belonging to a group of people or animals.
- Possessive personal pronouns: no apostrophe (his, hers, yours).

Prefix: An affix placed at beginning of base word. Example: “un-” in “unkind”.

R-controlled: Any vowel followed by “r.”

Salient Sound: The most noticeable or strongest sound in a word.

Schwa: A vowel sound typically occurring in unstressed syllables in English. Example: “alone.” The “a” in “alone” is an unstressed syllable and makes a schwa sound (in this case pronounced /u/). The symbol for this sound is /ə/.

Suffix: An affix placed at end of the base word; changes the part of speech (educate, educator, education, educated).

Syllable: An individual beat in a word containing a vowel sound. For example, the word “moment” contains two syllables (or beats), each with its own vowel sound: “mo” and “ment.”

Syllable Types:

- **Closed:** syllable with a single vowel followed by one or more consonants (vowel sound is “closed” by the consonant.) Note: Vowel is usually short. Examples: “cab,” “dog,” “in,” “dish,” “letter.”
- **Open:** syllable that ends with a single vowel (vowel is not closed by a consonant; it is left open.) Note: Vowel is usually long. Examples: “hi,” “me,” “go,” “sky.”
- **V-C-e:** syllable with a single vowel followed by a consonant, then the vowel “e.” First vowel is usually long and final “e” in the syllable is silent. Examples: “bike,” “skate,” “note,” “close.”
- **V-r:** (ar, er, ir, ur, or): syllable with one or two vowels followed by the letter “r.” The “r” influences or controls the vowel sound. Examples: “car,” “her,” “for,” “dollar.”
- **Vowel Teams:** (“oa,” “ue,” “ai,” “ea,” “ie,” “ay,” “a/ew,” “oo”): syllable that has two consecutive vowels. Note: The letters “w” and “y” act as vowels. Examples: long vowel teams (“meat,” “road,” “mail,” “say”); variant vowel teams (“amount,” “look,” “paw”).
- **C-le (-al, -el):** syllable that has a consonant followed by the letters “-le,” “-al,” or “-el.” The vowel sound in this syllable type is the schwa (/ə/).

Vowel Diphthongs: Two or more letters that begin with one vowel phoneme (sound) and glide into another (“ouch,” “point”).

Vowel Team: Any vowel or letter combination that equals a vowel sound.