

Learning Word Meanings with Morphemes

Common Core State Standard

- CCSS.ELA. RF.4.3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. a. Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.

Overview

This routine is a 10–15-minute instructional routine that can help students determine the meaning of unknown words through the analysis of word parts. In this lesson, students will learn to identify word parts, their meaning, and learn the spelling rules associated with different morphemes.

Symbol Key



Explicit Instruction



Opportunities to Respond



Feedback

Sample Lesson: -able and -ible

Lesson Objective

Students will decompose multimorphemic words into individual morphemes and identify the meaning of each morpheme.

Materials

- Student copies of Learning with Morphemes handout.
- 1 White board, marker, and eraser for every 3-4 students.

Vocabulary

Targeted Morphemes for Instruction: -able, -ible

Pretest words: comfortable, visible




Instructional words: comfortable, likable, visible, edible, solvable, enjoyable,

Step 1: Introduction (3-5 minutes)


Connect to previous learning (if applicable)

- Review previous learning that applies to current lesson
- Reference recent discussions about current lesson
- Connect to ongoing analysis in larger unit of study

Preview

-  Set the scene/Connect to students' lives:
 - "Have you ever come across a big word when reading and just thought to yourself, 'What does that mean?' Have you ever been stumped on how to spell those big words on your own?"
-  Share today's focus:
 - "Today we are going to look at how morphemes, or word parts, can help us learn the meaning of new words and how learning the spelling patterns of these words can help us spell them on our own."
-  Explain real-world importance:
 - "By learning about different word parts, we can learn the meanings of new words that we encounter even if we never learned about them in school. This can make us better readers and writers."

Activating Prior Knowledge

-  Activating Activity:

- Ask students to spell the words 'comfortable' and 'visible' by sounding them out. Have students do this in the Warm-Up section of the handout.



- Activating Questions:
 - How difficult was it to spell these words? (Use Thumbs Up or Down gauge difficulty)
 - What strategies did you use to spell these new words?

Review Key Terms



- Identify morpheme pattern to be learned:
 - Words with -able and -ible

Step 2: Meanings of Morphemes (2-3 minutes)



- Present the morpheme patterns to the students by writing the words on the board. Underline the suffix in each word.
 - "The words comfortable and visible have endings that sound very similar, but we can see that these endings are not spelled the same."

Comfortable Visible



Engagement Check

- Ask questions to check for comprehension & engage students:
 - "Does anyone know what these two words mean?"
 - "Can you predict what the word parts -able and -ible mean?"



- Define the morpheme pattern.
 - "A word part added to the end of a word is called a suffix. The word that it is added to is called the root word. The suffixes -able and -ible both mean 'able to be or have.'"
 - "So, when we add -able to the word comfort, the word changes slightly to mean 'something that is able to have comfort.'"

Step 3: Guided Pattern Discovery (7-10 minutes)

Modifications of Root Words



- Explicitly identify the roots of Comfortable and Visible and discuss how the root word of each was modified.
 - “Remember, both -ible and -able are suffixes with the same meaning. However, they are spelled differently. How can we know when to use -ible instead of -able? Well, we can look to see how the root word changes.”
 - Box the root word of both words.

Comfort able Visible

- “In the word *comfortable* we can clearly see the root word. *Comfort* is a word that we are familiar with, and we can see that *-able* was added to the end of the it. But in the word *visible*, the root word is not quite clear. When we remove *-ible* all that is left is *vis-*. *Vis* is a word part meaning *to see*. ”



Engagement Check

- Ask questions to check for comprehension & engage students:
 - “What might be the rule for adding the suffix -ible?”



Discovering Morpheme Patterns





- Pair students (or create small groups) for collaborative thinking
- Partners/groups work together to:
 - Sort a given list of words into appropriate categories given observed spelling patterns.
 - Ask students write a spelling rule for each category that they created
 - Ask students to create a rule for that word.

Teacher Support



- Circulate among partners/small groups to:
 -  Monitor discussions and answer questions.
 -  Offer feedback

-  Provide scaffolded prompts
-  Support struggling teams



Engagement Check

- At the end of the group work time, bring the whole class back together.
- Ask student groups to share out how they grouped their words into categories.
- Ask students to share their spelling rule for each category.



- Review Spelling Rules for -able and -ible
 - Category #1: -able
 - Words Included in category: comfortable, enjoyable
 - Spelling rule: If you remove the suffix, you have a complete root word.
 - Category #2: -able
 - Words: likable, solvable
 - Spelling rule: If you remove the suffix, you have a root word that is recognizable, but the ending vowel was dropped.
 - Category #3: -ible
 - Words: visible, edible
 - Spelling rule: If you remove the suffix, the root word is not a complete or stand-alone word.


Step 4: Spelling with Morphemes (5-7 minutes)




- Explain how students can use their knowledge of and morphemes to sound out and therefor spell long words.
 - “Remember how we spelled comfortable and visible at the beginning of class and how tricky it was? Well, now we can use our knowledge of morphemes to spell the words. We start by sounding out the root word and spelling it and then sounding out the suffix and spelling it. Let’s try.”
 - Comfortable = com-fort- able
 - “Now you will try to sound out and spell our newly learned words. Remember to use your new spelling rules for the suffixes -able and -ible.”



Divide class into teams of 3-4 students where they will:

- Receive a white board and white board markers.
 - Teacher will ask students to spell one of the instructional.
 - Students will have 30 seconds to identify the correct morphological ending and spelling.
 - At the end of 30 seconds, students will hold up their white boards and teacher will give one point to each group who spells the word correctly.
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- Offer corrective feedback for misspelled words, emphasizing the spelling rule and how it changes the spelling.
 - Student groups can be called on randomly to provide a definition for an additional point.
- Repeat for 5-6 rounds.
- ### Step 5: Reflection (2-3 minutes)
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- Ask students where they might encounter suffixed words and where this strategy might be helpful to them to figure out their meaning



 - Add the morphemes to a class reference wall or individual vocabulary notebook

Adaptations

Support

Plan for Support

- Schedule follow-up with students who are struggling
 - Plan ongoing review opportunities

Supportive Structures

- Provide sentence frames for discussion and practice
 - Use visual supports to show relationships
 - Allow think time before discussion
 - Accept various forms of participation (verbal, written, gestural)

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Materials

Learning with Morphemes

Prior Knowledge Check		
1.	2.	
Today we are learning about the morpheme(s):		
This word part means		
This is an example of a (circle one): prefix root word suffix		
Discovering Morpheme Patterns When morphemes are added to a word, they change the meaning of the root word. But morphemes also have predictable spelling rules. the root word and suffix to sort the words into appropriate categories. Can you figure out the spelling rules?		
Comfortable	Likable	Visible
-able	-able	-ible
The spelling rule for the morpheme _____ is...	The spelling rule for the morpheme _____ is...	The spelling rule for the morpheme _____ is...

Resources

Identifying Morphemes to Teach

- [List of common morphemes](#)

Morphologically Rich Texts

- Connecting to World Cultures and Languages- [Stories of Words](#)
- [Guidance on creating Texts with AI](#)

Other Morphological Instruction

- [Teaching Morphology Resource Kit](#)
- [Building Morphology Through Word Parts](#)
- [Explicit Morphology Instruction for Secondary Students](#)
- [Literacy Hub: Morphology Instruction](#)