

Teaching Word Parts Guidelines

This document includes two lesson templates to help you teach word parts, one for affixes and one for vowels. Word parts include prefixes, suffixes, and vowel patterns. Lessons are based on a multisensory approach to reading instruction.

Multisensory Instruction: This approach integrates visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities. VAKT is a sight word multisensory teaching method that includes visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile methods to reinforce learning (Minskoff, 2006). Based on the Orton-Gillingham method, VAKT simultaneously links seeing the word (V), hearing and saying the word (A), with writing or manipulating the letters and letter patterns within words (KT). This method helps students learn new word parts deeply and aids in recall.

Oral Repetition: Throughout each scripted lesson, the consistent use of oral repetition helps students remember sounds through voicing and hearing their own voice using the sound. Use repetition several times in each lesson. This is usually a quick oral response.

Pronunciation: Teach the word parts according to how they sound. For example, the suffix “-ion” in stallion, billion, million sounds like /yun/. Another instance is the suffix “-age.” It looks like the word *age*, but think about it in the words, *sausage*, *luggage*, and *advantage*, where the vowel sound gets reduced to a short “i” or short “u.” Finally, consider the many sounds of “-ed”: /d/, /ed/, /t/. You may wish to have students say all three sounds, or occasionally quiz them on all three sounds, so they know if a word doesn’t sound right they may have to try a different sound for “-ed.”

Draw attention to regularity: Instead of saying a word part “doesn’t follow the rules” like “-ion,” draw attention to the fact that the last sound in the suffix is in fact /n/, so that sound corresponds to the letter. Another example, when teaching “-tious” you may want to remind them of another suffix in which “ti” says /sh/ “-tion.” It is beneficial to focus on the regularities in a word part as opposed to the exceptions.

Do I need to do all the steps for all the word parts? No. Students may have prior knowledge of specific word parts such as “in-” which is also a high frequency word. However, VAKT should be used with any parts that are new to students. If you decide not to use VAKT and later realize you have misjudged how well a student knows a part, you can always return to this instruction. The pace should be quick; introducing one word part takes 3-5 minutes.