



Dyslexia Community of Practice Session 4 After Initial Phonics Instruction: Multisyllabic Word Reading

Sharon Vaughn & Elizabeth Stevens

December 3, 2025

mimtsstac.org



Dyslexia Community of Practice Facilitators:



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A Note about Recording

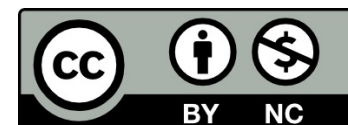


- We are recording this session so the content may be available to:
 - Others in our Dyslexia Community of Practice who were unable to attend today
 - You! If you want to refer to this session later, it's available to you.
- Rest assured the recordings will not be made publicly available, so we hope you'll share your ideas freely within this safe space.

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Training Effectiveness

- At the end of the session, you will be asked to provide feedback on today's training
- Results will be used to make improvements to professional learning and for reporting to TA Center stakeholders
- One of the feedback questions you will see is related to promoting and positively portraying diversity among educators and learners (e.g., focus on asset-based language, positive representation of multiple identities)

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Group Agreements

We are Responsible

- Return on time from breaks
- Take care of our needs

We are Engaged

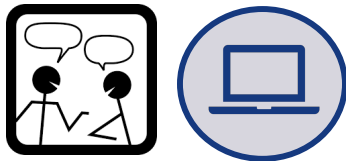
- Share what you know and ask questions
- Plan to participate in multiple ways
 - Chat, breakout rooms, polls, reactions, unmute
 - Ask questions

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We want to hear from you!

- ✓ We are committed to making this time engaging and meaningful to support your learning as a teacher and coach.
- ✓ When you see these icons, please join in the conversation via the chat or in your breakout sessions.



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MiMTSS Dyslexia CoP Session Schedule

Date	Time	Topic
September 9, 2025	2:00-3:30pm ET	The Neurobiological Underpinnings of Dyslexia
October 7, 2025	10:00-11:30am ET	Misunderstandings of the Science of Reading
November 4, 2025	3:00-4:30pm ET	Structured Literacy
→ December 3, 2025	11:00am-12:30pm ET	Multisyllabic Word Instruction
January 23, 2026	2:00-3:30pm ET	Supporting Reading Comprehension for Students with Dyslexia
February 24, 2026	10:00-11:30am ET	Differentiating Tier 1 Instruction for Students with Dyslexia
March 26, 2026	3:00-4:30pm ET	Using Data to Inform Instruction
April 20, 2026	11:00am-12:30pm ET	Deliberate Practice and Feedback: The Secret Sauce

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Agenda

11:00-11:10 Welcome and check-in on Session 3



11:10-11:50 Content presentation

11:50-12:05 Application activity

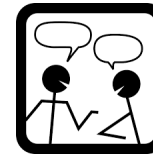
12:05-12:15 Debrief application activity as a whole group

12:15-12:30 Wrap up

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In the chat: Share one takeaway you learned from Session 3 (i.e., Structured Literacy).



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After Initial Phonics Instruction:
Multisyllabic Word Reading Instruction

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MI Dyslexia multisyllabic WR Session 4

Visual settings Edit

When poll is active respond at [PollEv.com/elizabethste773](https://poll-ev.com/elizabethste773)



1. Multisyllabic word reading instruction aligns with the Science of Reading only for students reading above the 2nd grade level.

True	False
0%	0%

False!

When Do We Begin Multisyllabic Word Reading?

Students can learn to read multisyllabic words as early as 1st grade or after they learn basic phonic skills and sight words.

Early taught multisyllabic words might include:

mother, father, paper, teacher, pencil, spider, tiger, bathtub

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MI Dyslexia multisyllabic WR Session 4

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When poll is active respond at [PollEv.com/elizabethste773](https://poll-ev.com/elizabethste773)



2. We should teach students to read multisyllabic words after they have mastered reading one-syllable words.

True	False
0%	0%

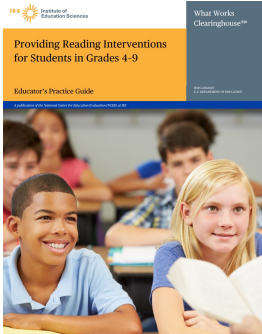
False!

We can effectively and successfully teach students multisyllabic words as they learn to decode simpler one-syllable words.

Learning to read BIG words is fun and makes reading more interesting too!

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Strong Evidence for Teaching Multisyllabic Word Reading



Recommendations in the practice guide:

1. Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words.
2. Provide purposeful fluency-building activities to help students read effortlessly.
3. Routinely use a set of comprehension-building practices to help students make sense of the text.
4. Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of stretch text that will expose them to complex ideas and information.



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Idea #1: Multisyllabic Reading by Analogy

Knowing syllable patterns, multisyllabic words, prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings helps students expand the number of new words they can read and spell.

Example:

Rain, rains, raining, rainbow

Do, doing, undo, redo, doable



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Chunking Multisyllabic Words

- Teach meaningful units of words, known as morphemes, such as:
 - Root and base words
 - Common prefixes and suffixes
 - Inflectional endings
 - morphemes that are added to show different forms of words, such as tense, number, plural, possession, or comparison



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Chunking Multisyllabic Words

- Divide words into word parts, read each part, and combine to read the words:

ex-per-i-ment

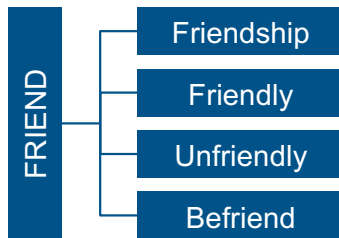
- If words have parts that are phonetically irregular, teach students to be flexible and try other sounds to see if they can find a word that makes sense in context.



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Word Webs or Maps

- Develop word webs or maps to have students develop knowledge of how prefixes and suffixes change the meaning of words.



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Idea #2: Identify Students' Word Reading Skills

- Identify students' word-level reading skills and teach vowel and consonant letter sounds and combinations as needed.
- Targets for instruction are VOWEL PAIRS and BOSSY 'R'

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Common Vowel Sounds and Vowel Combinations

Resource 1.1. Common vowel sounds and vowel combinations

long vowel sound	vowel sound as in <i>me</i> , <i>labor</i> , <i>polar</i>
short vowel sound	vowel sound as in <i>cap</i> , <i>digger</i>
vowel-consonant-e	"e" makes the vowel sound long as in <i>cake</i> , <i>mistake</i>
vowel combinations oa, ea, ee, ai	long vowel sounds as in <i>boat</i> , <i>remain</i> , <i>teachable</i>
vowel diphthongs oi, oy, ou, ew	vowel sounds as in <i>toy</i> , <i>destroy</i> , <i>newsworthy</i>
r-controlled vowels	vowel sound as in <i>car</i> , <i>fur</i> , <i>personable</i>
consonant-le	consonant sound as in <i>battle</i> , <i>belittle</i>

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< MI Dyslexia multisyllabic WR Session 4

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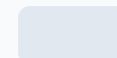


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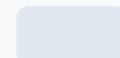
3. Multisyllabic word reading instruction is best taught with words in isolation.

0%



True

0%



False

Both!

How can the answer be true and false?

Because we want to teach the words in isolation to practice syllable combination and separation AND we want to practice reading multisyllabic words in connected text.

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Idea #3: Teach Students a Routine

To decode multisyllabic words

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A screenshot of a PollEv poll interface. At the top, the title is "MI Dyslexia multisyllabic WR Session 4". Below the title, it says "When poll is active respond at PollEv.com/elizabethste773". There is a QR code on the right. The main question is "4. There is one SoR routine for teaching multisyllabic word reading (e.g., syllable division)". Below the question, there are two buttons: "True" and "False", both showing "0%" for responses.

MI Dyslexia multisyllabic WR Session 4

When poll is active respond at PollEv.com/elizabethste773

4. There is one SoR routine for teaching multisyllabic word reading (e.g., syllable division).

0% True 0% False

28



False!

There are several effective routines for teaching students to read multisyllabic words including:

- Teaching vowels and vowel pairs to recognize syllables
- Teaching morphological features to recognize prefixes and suffixes
- Teaching students to combine words such as "butterfly".

SIX SYLLABLE TYPES IN SYLLABLE-TYPE APPROACH

Syllable Type	Description	Examples
Closed	Have one short vowel and end in a consonant (VC, CVC, CCVC, CVCC)	<u>sat</u> , <u>past</u> , <u>trunk</u> , <u>happen</u> , <u>demanding</u>
Open	Have one long vowel sound that is spelled with a single vowel letter and occur at the end of the syllable (CV, V, CCV, CCCV)	<u>no</u> , <u>spry</u> , <u>repeat</u> , <u>migrate</u>
Vowel Combination	Have a vowel digraph or diphthong (vowel team or cluster). Includes vowel teams such as as, ou, ew, ea. (CVVC, CCVVC, CVVCC)	<u>heater</u> , <u>Monday</u> , <u>looking</u> , <u>sprain</u> , <u>boil</u>
R-Controlled	Have a vowel combination such as ar, or, er, ir, or ur. Vowel is not long or short, but controlled by the r following it.	<u>first</u> , <u>burden</u> , <u>garbage</u> , <u>primer</u>
Vowel-Consonant-E	Have a vowel followed by a consonant followed by a silent e. (Vce, CVCe, CCVCe)	<u>cope</u> , <u>deplane</u> , <u>graduate</u> , <u>compute</u>
Consonant-le	Contain a consonant followed by an l, followed by a silent e	<u>cradle</u> , <u>muddle</u> , <u>double</u>

WHICH SYLLABLE TYPE?

- Cat
- Sparkle
- Game
- Behind
- Waiting
- Hopeless
- Picnic
- Partner
- Bubble
- Me
- Spoil
- Third

1-closed

2-open

3-vowel combination

4- r-controlled

5- vowel-consonant-e

6- consonant-le

Rules for Breaking Words into Syllables

1. Every syllable has a vowel
2. Break off prefixes and suffixes
3. Open syllables end in vowels and the vowel makes the long sound
4. Closed syllables end in consonants and the vowel makes the short sound
5. Break between double consonants

WHICH ADVANCED WORD READING SKILLS SHOULD I TEACH?

ADVANCED WORD READING SKILLS

Common Letter Combinations (digraphs) and Affixes

One-syllable Words Containing a Letter Combination

Two-Syllable Words Containing Closed Syllables

Words with Rule-Based Sounds

Structural Analysis & Multisyllabic Words

One & Two Syllable Exception Words



STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

- **Structural analysis**-breaking words into prefixes, suffixes, and root words to determine meaning and pronunciation.

- Students must be explicitly taught:
 - inflectional endings (-ed, -es, -ing, -s)
 - morphemes-smallest parts of words that have meaning (i.e., base words, roots, prefixes, & suffixes)
 - **Ex:** unbeliever = un believe er



WHY TEACH STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS?

- Decoding instruction often ends after second grade but:
 - Dramatic increase in number of multisyllabic words in grades 3+
 - From fifth grade on, the average student encounters approximately 10,000 new words in print each year
 - New multisyllabic words are often content words that carry the meaning of the passage



WHY TEACH STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS?

- Poor decoders, even those who can decode single syllable words, have a difficult time with multisyllabic words (Just & Carpenter, 1987).
- Poor decoders:
 - pronounce fewer affixes and vowel sounds correctly
 - are 2-4 times more likely to omit syllables (Shefelbine & Calhoun, 1991)



STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS VOCABULARY

- **base word**-part of a word that establishes the basic meaning of a word and can stand alone or be combined

unbeliever

- **root**-part that establishes meaning, but is not a complete word

construct, construction, constructed

- **prefix**-a morpheme that precedes a root or base word

prevent

- **suffix**-a morpheme added to the end of a root or base word

hopeless



OVERT STRATEGY FOR READING MULTISYLLABIC WORDS

1. Circle the prefixes.
2. Circle the suffixes.
3. Underline the vowels in the uncircled parts of the word.
4. Say the parts of the word.
5. Say the whole word.
6. Make it a real word.

EXAMPLE

reconstruction



COVERT STRATEGY FOR READING MULTISYLLABIC WORDS

1. Look for prefixes, suffixes, and vowels.
2. Say the parts of the word.
3. Say the whole word.
4. Make it a real word.



ONE AND TWO SYLLABLE EXCEPTION WORDS

- Some words are so irregular that you should teach them the same way you teach exception words:
 - Introduce the word, students repeat
 - Students spell word aloud and in writing
 - Students read word again
- **Examples:**
 - chaos
 - stomach
 - nauseous or nausea



MI Dyslexia multisyllabic WR Session 4

Visual settings Edit

Join by Web [PollEv.com/elizabethste773](https://poll-ev.com/elizabethste773)



5. Phonics knowledge translates into multisyllabic word reading.

0%	0%
True	False

Necessary but not sufficient!

Phonics skills and knowledge of grapheme–phoneme correspondence and decoding skills are necessary for reading multisyllabic words but do not automatically transfer to reading multisyllabic words.

Example of a Multisyllabic Word Routine

Example: Teacher demonstrating how to identify prefixes, suffixes, and vowel combinations to decode a multisyllabic word

The teacher refers to the following steps that are posted in the classroom:

1. Look for prefixes and suffixes. Circle prefixes and suffixes in the word.
2. Underline the remaining single vowels and vowel or vowel-consonant combinations.
3. Loop under each word part as you say it.
4. Say the whole word by blending the parts together, making it into a word you recognize.

Example of a Multisyllabic Word Routine (cont'd)

1. Look for prefixes and suffixes. Circle prefixes and suffixes in the word.

Teacher: Today we are going to learn a routine for breaking longer words into parts so we can easily sound them out. In this routine there are four steps. In the first step, we circle the prefixes and suffixes in the word. The first word is unreasonable. I am going to circle un- because it is a prefix and -able because it is a suffix. Remember un- means not and -able means capable of being.

unreasonable

Example of a Multisyllabic Word Routine (cont'd)

2. Underline the remaining single vowels and vowel or vowel-consonant combinations.

Teacher: In Step 2, I am going to underline the vowel sounds that are left. I am going to underline *ea* and *o*. I am doing this because each syllable has a vowel sound.

unreasonable

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Example of a Multisyllabic Word Routine (cont'd)

3. Loop under each word part as you say it.
4. Say the whole word by blending the parts together, making it into a word you recognize.

Teacher: In Step 3, I am going to use my pencil to loop under each word part as I say it: *un rea son able*. Now, in Step 4, I am going to blend the parts together: unreasonable. Unreasonable means not capable of reason or explanation.

unreasonable

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Example of a Multisyllabic Word Routine (cont'd)

- + practicing with more examples

The teacher follows the same procedure for two more examples, *misinform* and *salamander*. In the word *misinform* the single vowel, *i*, and the *r*-controlled combination, *or*, are underlined. The teacher reminds students that *mis-* means wrong and that the word *inform* means to tell someone. *Misinform* means to tell someone something wrong. In the word *salamander* the three single vowels, *a*, and the *r*-controlled combination, *-er* are underlined. Note that *-er* is not a suffix in the word *salamander*. "Salamand" is not a word on its own. Therefore, *-er* in *salamander* is not circled. The teacher explains that a salamander is an amphibian that looks like a lizard.

misinform
salamander

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Don't Forget to Embed Spelling Instruction

- In the lesson... AND
- Provide lots of practice!

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Application Activity with Colleagues or Alone



Reminder: Our Breakout Room Norms

- Identify the **facilitator** who will lead discussion and keep the group moving forward
- Identify a **notetaker** who will document key ideas and share those with the larger group (in the chart or aloud)
- Identify a **timekeeper** who will keep track of time and support with making sure the group answers all questions



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MULTISYLLABIC WORD READING TEST SAMPLE: 6TH GRADE STUDENT WITH DYSLEXIA

1. maintain	13. potential	25. disturbance
2. pretend	14. donation	26. inaudible
3. misprint	15. amusement	27. conference
4. perturb	16. miserable	28. unglamorous
5. costume	17. ordinary	29. expenditure
6. gentle	18. distasteful	30. combination
7. priceless	19. reflective	31. unavoidable
8. perform	20. resentment	32. meaningfulness
9. intake	21. abnormal	33. circumstantial
10. progression	22. investment	34. perfectionist
11. continent	23. protection	35. admiration
12. humanize	24. impressive	36. inexpensive

- Read the list of words and make note of any errors or error patterns you think might occur.
- Identify instructional practices you would teach to remedy errors.

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Let's debrief!

What questions do you have for us related to multisyllabic word reading instruction?

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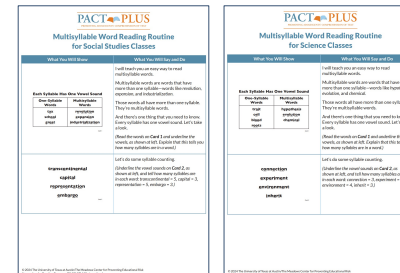


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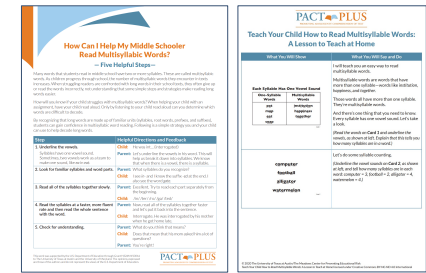


More Resources to Explore!

<https://meadowscenter.org/resource/multisyllable-word-reading-routine-for-science-and-social-studies-classes/>



<https://meadowscenter.org/resource/helping-your-kid-with-reading-multisyllable-words/>



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What's coming up?

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Sharon & Liz's Office Hours!

Questions for us? Want to chat further? Send us an email!



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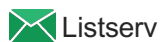
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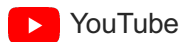
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