

High-Frequency Morphemes in English Language Arts

The following tables list high-frequency morphemes (i.e., prefixes, suffixes, and Latin and Greek roots) in the English Language Arts subject area, followed by a brief definition and two example words that include the morpheme. Teachers can use this list to identify high-utility morphemes to explicitly teach during English Language Arts lessons. These lists are based on research conducted by Lane et al. (2019) on high-utility morphemes in academic words.

Note: The most common form of the morpheme is listed in the first column, although there may be other forms (e.g., the morpheme “cap” has the variants “cep” and “cip,” among others).

To learn more about explicit morphology instruction and strategies for teaching morphemes, see the Iowa Reading Research Center’s *Effective Morphology Instruction for Secondary Students Across Content Areas* eLearning module.

References

Lane, H. B., Gutlohn, L., & van Dijk, W. (2019). Morpheme frequency in academic words: Identifying high-utility morphemes for instruction. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 58(3), 184–209.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2019.1617375>



Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Example
con	with, joint	conclusion, conjecture
re	back, again	review, relationship
in	1) in, on, toward; 2) not	information, inductive
ad	toward, in, near	advertise, address
de	away from, down	develop, debate
pre	before, earlier	predict, present
ex	out	external, exaggerate
pro	forward, prior to	production, processing
dis	not, apart, absence of	discuss, discourse
e	lacking, out	effect, edit
sub	under, below, secondary	subject, subheading
inter	between	internal, interview
per	through, completely	persuasive, perceiving
trans	beyond, across	transform, transitional
a	on/in, to, not, without	about, anonym
ab	away, from	abstract, abbreviate
anti	against, opposite	antagonist, anticipating
intro	inside	introduction, introspect
multi	many	multiple, multicultural
ob	down, facing, against, to	objective, obtaining
over	do too much of X	overview, overgeneralization
under	under	understand, understate

Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning	Example
al	relating to, characterized by - noun, adjective	verbal, universal
ly	manner or like - adverb	friendly, indirectly
ation	act of, state of - noun	translation, detonation
ic	of, pertaining to, like - adjective	topic, syllabic
ate	cause, make - verb, adjective	narrate, understate
ive	causing, making - adjective	persuasive, superlative
ize	to make more like X - verb	plagiarize, summarize
ment	result of, act of - noun	judgement, improvement
ure	state of, process, office, function - noun	lecture, juncture
er	one who, that which - noun	listener, modifier
ary	relating to, place where - noun, adjective	literary, vocabulary
ent	action or state - noun	fluent, omniscient
ity	state of, quality - noun	generality, readability
logy	science or study of - noun	phonology, terminology
ence	action, state, quality - noun	inference, reference
ist	one who - noun	protagonist, realist
or	one who, that which - noun	narrator, illustrator
ory	pertaining to, categorized by - adjective	memory, introductory
ar	of, pertaining to - adjective	singular, unfamiliar
ion	act of, state of - noun	transition, tension
ous	full of, having - adjective	various, vicarious
y	state, quality, condition - noun	soliloquy, photography

Latin Roots

Latin Root	Meaning	Example
pos	to put, to place, to set, to pose	posture, preposition
sta	to stand, to set	stanza, statement
fac	to do, to make	artifact, fiction
dic	to say, to tell	dictate, predict
jec	to throw, to lie	interject, subject
not	to write, to mark	noting, denote
act	to do, to act	interact, actor
duc	to lead	introduce, producing
gen	race, kind, birth	genre, generate
lat	to carry, to bear	relations, translation
mob	to move	motive, emotion
rect	straight, right	director, indirect
vert	to turn	advertise, convert
cap	to take, to hold, to receive, to contain	caption, concept
form	shape	format, formal
lect	to choose, to pick, to read	collective, lecture
verbum	word or verb	proverb, verbal
vid	to see, to separate	video, divided
anim	living, soul	inanimate, animals
clar	clear	clarify, declarative
cult	to care, to cultivate	culture, multicultural
cur	to run, to go	current, cursive
fer	to carry, to yield	reference, infer
liter	letter	literature, literal
mod	bound, method, manner	modify, modulate
pend	to hang, to weigh	appendix, dependent
plic	to fold	application, explicit
sequ	to follow	sequential, sequence
son	sound	sonnet, consonant
struct	to build	construct, structural

Greek Roots

Greek Root	Meaning	Example
log	to speak, to write, to read, to reason	dialogue, logical
graph	to write, to draw	biography, program
syn	together	synonym, syntax
ana	back	analyze, anagram
nom	name	acronym, pseudonym
para	beside, position	paraphrase, parody
bio	life	biography, biocentrist
crit	to judge	criticize, critical
drama	drama	dramatic, dramatize
thesis	proposition, statement	synthesize, antithesis
typ	mark, type	archetype, typeface
odo	path, road	episode, periodical
bal	to throw, cast, put	hyperbole, symbolism
archae	rule, begin, foremost	archive, archetype
dia	through, across, between	dialect, diagram
apo	derived from, away	apology, apostrophe
phon	sound, voice	phonetic, phonology
phras	express	rephrase, paraphrase
agon	contest	antagonist, protagonist
allel	one another	parallel, parallelism
auto	self	autobiography
lysis	breakdown, decomposition	analysis, catalysis
epi	above, in addition to	epilogue, episode
chron	time	chronology, chronicle
phor	to carry, produce, bring	metaphor, anaphor
peri	around, near	periodical, experience
photo	light	photocopy, photograph
phas	show, appearance	emphasis, emphasize
meta	beside, after, later	metaphor, metonym
pol	to sell	political, policy
schema	form, figure	schemata, schematic
semi	half	semicolon
techn	skill, craft, art	technical, technique