Morphology instructional model

Attributes of instruction

- Ensure your instruction is explicit and targeted.
- Teach sequentially and build on what students already know.
- Ensure your instruction is teacher-guided, with gradual release from 'I do' and 'We do' to 'You do'.
- Teach new affixes using a systematic synthetic approach with a focus on meaning.
- Teach new affixes initially by applying these to simple words for which students already know the letter–sound correspondences.
- Engage students actively in learning and ask them to demonstrate their understanding.

Definitions

These are important for both teacher and student knowledge.

Morphology: the study of meaningful parts of words; 'morph-' meaning 'form' and '-ology' meaning 'the study of'.

Base word: a word that carries meaning on its own.

Affix: a letter or group of letters added to the beginning or end of a word to change its meaning, including both prefixes and suffixes.

Prefix: a letter or group of letters added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning.

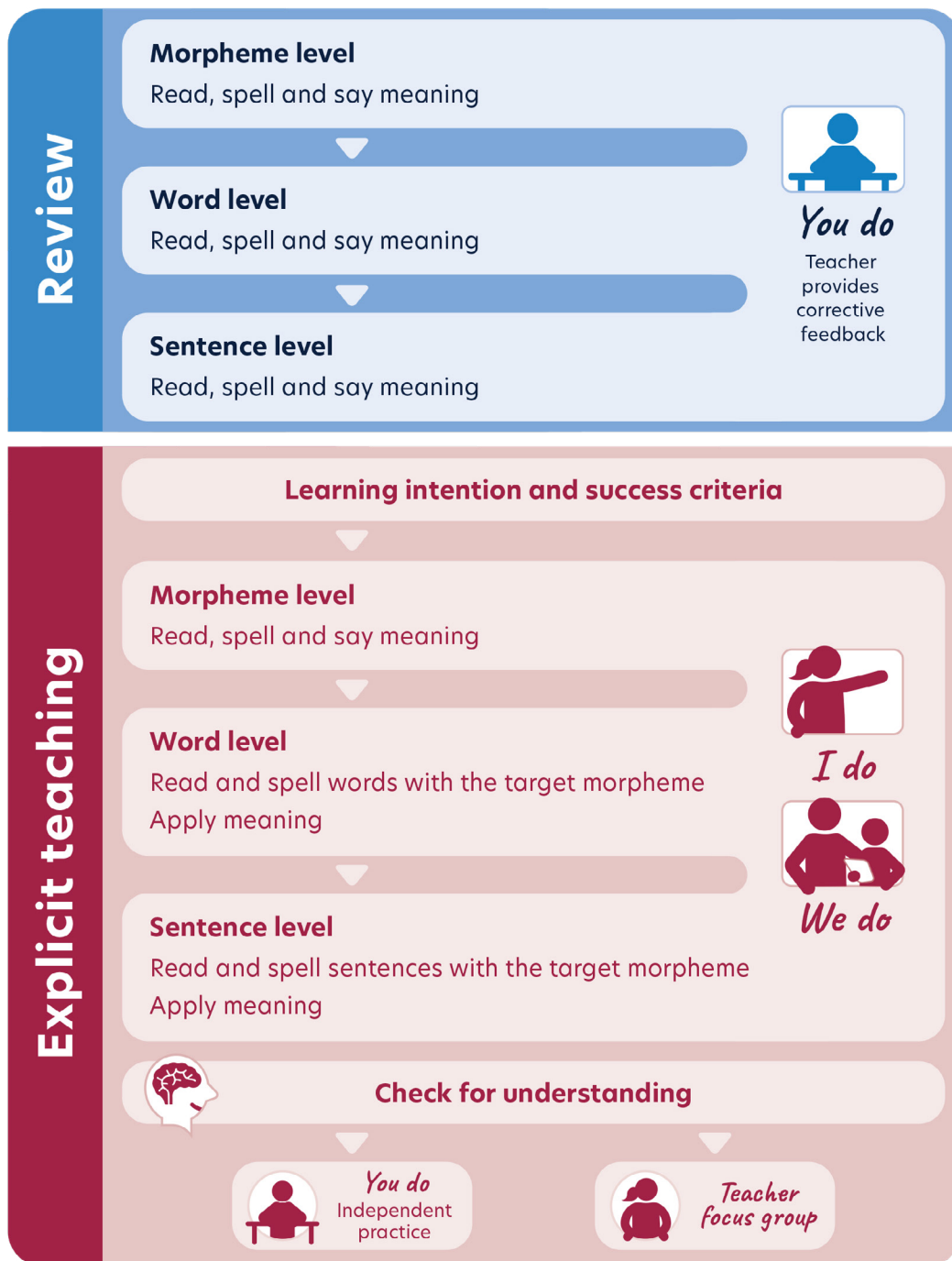**Suffix**: a letter or group of letters added to the end of a word to change its meaning.

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This infographic shows an instructional model for morphology. Each lesson begins with a review of previously learnt morphemes and their application to word and sentence reading and spelling.

The review is followed by explicit teaching of a new morpheme and how it can be applied at the word and sentence level.

Morphology instructional model

Review

Morpheme level
Read, spell and say meaning

Word level
Read, spell and say meaning

Sentence level
Read, spell and say meaning

You do
Teacher provides corrective feedback

Explicit teaching

Learning intention and success criteria

Morpheme level
Read, spell and say meaning

Word level
Read and spell words with the target morpheme
Apply meaning

Sentence level
Read and spell sentences with the target morpheme
Apply meaning

I do

We do

Check for understanding

You do
Independent practice

Teacher focus group

Sample morphology lesson

The following example shows all the elements of a morphology lesson. This example is aimed at Foundation students or any students requiring instruction for this concept.

All material can be adapted to introduce any new affix using explicit instruction.

Lesson section	Key components
Resources	• Class set of student mini-whiteboards, markers and erasers, or equivalent • Morphology review slides • Morphology lesson slides for -s suffix for plural nouns (the slide numbers below relate to this slide pack) • Class set of the morphology student worksheet that accompanies this lesson, plus an enlarged teacher copy (optional)
Morphology review	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 3 Students review previously learned morphemes and apply knowledge to read and spell example words; you can use slides from Morphology review slides. Relevant to this lesson: nouns and verbs review. Call out a selection of nouns and verbs. As each word is called out, students place hands on head and say 'noun', or hands on knees and say 'verb'.
Learning intention and success criteria	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 4 We are learning to add an -s suffix to a base word to show a plural, 'more than one'. I will know I have been successful if I can: • add an -s suffix to a base word • explain the meaning of the word when -s suffix is added.
Explicit instruction of new morphology concepts **(I do)**	Morphology lesson slides: Slides 5 and 6 Introduce -s suffix and explain that when we add -s to a noun (name of a person, place or thing) it changes the meaning of the word to create a plural, 'more than one'. Read the 'suffix' and 'meaning' sections on an enlarged worksheet or from the slide pack. Students follow along on their own copy of the worksheet, from this section until the end of the lesson.
Guided practice **(We do)**	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 7 Prompt students to answer the following questions, while following along on their worksheet: Teacher: What is the suffix? Students: /s/. Teacher: What is the meaning? Students: Plural, more than one.
Explicit instruction of new morphology concepts **(I do)**	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 8 Model adding -s suffix to base words on the whiteboard: hat, hats; pig, pigs; lock, locks. Discuss how the meaning of each word changes when the -s is added.

Lesson section	Key components
Guided practice (We do)	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 9 Read the first base word with the students: **pan.** Teacher: What do we need to do to this word to show the plural? Students: Add an -s. Teacher: Do it now on your worksheet. Roam the classroom to support students as needed. Repeat with words **cup** and **frog.**
Explicit instruction of new morphology concepts (I do)	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 10 Model decoding a sentence containing words with -s suffix added: **My hats are on the pegs.** Model decoding the sentence and then re-reading it for fluency. Explain how the meaning of each word is changed when the -s suffix is added.
Guided practice (We do)	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 11 Students help decode a second sentence, following along on their own copy of the worksheet: **The dogs are on the logs.** Discuss how the meaning of each word is changed when the -s suffix is added.
Guided practice (We do)	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 12 Dictated sentence: if students are working at the sentence level, dictate a sentence for students to write on their worksheet: **The ants hid in the bins.** Help students complete the sentence as required. Optional: students may also write an additional sentence of their own using words containing the target morpheme from the lesson.
Review slide	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 13 Introduce students to the slide that will be used to review this concept in future morphology reviews, so that students practise the expected responses when this slide is shown. Teacher: What is the suffix? Students: /s/. Teacher: What is the meaning? Students: Plural, more than one. Teacher: Your word is dog, add the suffix. Students: Dogs. Teacher: What does it mean? Students: More than one dog.

Lesson section	Key components
Checking for understanding	Morphology lesson slides: Slide 14
	Ensure students have understood and applied the new learning correctly before moving on to independent practice.
	Identify students who need further support; these students should then work in a focused teaching group.
	Provide a new word for students to add -s suffix to: **bat**.
	Students write the base word on their mini-whiteboard, exercise book or equivalent.
	Teacher: What do we need to do to this word to show the plural or more than one bat?
	Students: Add an -s.
	Teacher: Do that now and 'chin it' to show me your word.
	Each student can then explain to a partner what the word with the suffix added means; the teacher may use pop-sticks with student names to choose some students to share with the whole class.
	Repeat with base word: **hand**.
Independent practice (You do)	Students complete independent tasks that can be done without the need for teacher assistance, for example, read from their bank of decodable texts, looking out for examples of plural nouns with -s suffix added.
	During this time the teacher can:
	• run small groups for more targeted practice, using the 'I do, We do, You do' approach with more examples
	• confer with students
	• assess students' progress.

Suggestions for morphology independent practice tasks

Many of these activities can also be incorporated into other parts of a literacy block.

- Look out for words with known morphemes when reading.
- Using knowledge of morphemes when spelling.
- Word sorts based on morphemes: sorting groups of words into their morphemes, for example, misplace, mistook, misuse.
- Word families: creating lists of words based on like morphemes, for example, play, plays, played, playing, replay, playground.
- Word webs: combining base words with morphemes to create words.

Many of the following resources are suitable for middle to late primary students, but can be adapted to Foundation to Year 2 students using morphemes that students have already been taught.

- Morphological awareness – Dyslexia Help, University of Michigan
  This webpage includes some useful independent practice tasks for morphology.

- Morphology matters – William Van Cleave
  This PDF contains ideas for morphology activities, as well as general information about teaching morphology.

- Teaching morphology: resource kit – Literacy Impact
  This PDF contains ideas for morphology activities, including printable worksheets.

Useful resources and further reading

Literacy Hub professional learning: Explicit instruction for phonics – an instructional model

Literacy Hub professional learning: Morphology instruction and SSP

Phonics instructional model for reading and spelling

Spelling generalisations, syllable division and morphology