

MULTIMORPHEMIC WORD READING LESSONS

Samantha Cooper, Ph.D. Deborah K. Reed, Ph.D. Anna S. Gibbs, Ph.D.











MULTIMORPHEMIC WORD READING LESSONS

Teaching students the pronunciations and spellings of the most frequently used affixes (prefixes and suffixes) helps students read long words.

The *peel-off* strategy is one approach to doing this (Kearns & Whaley, 2018). In this strategy, students read a printed word after they peel off the prefix and/or suffix. Once the word is identified, students can add back the affixes and accurately read and spell the multimorphemic word.

These resources are intended for instructors and tutors working with elementary students in Grades 3-5 who are experiencing difficulties reading long words. Unit 1 includes five lessons that focus on teaching suffixes and using the *peel-off* strategy to pronounce and spell multimorphemic words.

¹ Kearns, D. M., & Whaley, V. M. (2018). Helping students with dyslexia read long words: Using syllables and morphemes. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *51*(3), 212-225. https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059918810010





OVERVIEW OF UNIT 1: READING AND SPELLING WORDS WITH SUFFIXES

LESSON SEQUENCE AND PROCEDURES

There are a series of activities used across Lessons 1-4 in Unit 1. First, the instructor will introduce the meanings of two new suffixes and demonstrate how to use the *peel-off* strategy to break orally stated words into parts. Next, students will practice using the *peel-off* strategy to read multimorphemic words with those suffixes. Then, students will build words with the suffixes. Finally, students will spell multimorphemic words with the target suffixes. After the lesson activities are completed, the instructor will assess students' ability to read and spell multimorphemic words in a list before reading a connected text that contains the same words.

The new suffixes introduced in the first four lessons are:

- Lesson 1: -ity and -ful
- Lesson 2: -ive and -en
- Lesson 3: -ment and -or
- Lesson 4: -ate and -er

In Lesson 5, the instructor will review the suffixes previously taught across Lessons 1-4. Students will complete the same activities as identified for the earlier lessons but will complete them with the combination of eight suffixes they have learned.

INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE WORDS

Suffixes -ate and -er

- 1. Introduction and Build Knowledge
 - Instructor Model: alienate, kicker

2. Listening

- Instructor Model: precipitate, thinker
- Practice: commander, pitcher, dictate

3. Reading Words

- Instructor Model: carbonate
- Practice: launcher, viewer, cleaner, hydrate, adapter

4. Making Words

- Instructor Model: fabricate
- Practice: player, validate, reader, scratcher, decorate

5. Spelling Words

- Instructor Model: *teacher*
- Practice: singer, roaster, animate, candidate, painter

6. Assess

 liquidate, builder, originate, rotate, waiter, speaker, advocate, developer, orientate, trainer







OBJECTIVES:

- Given orally stated multimorphemic words with the suffixes -ate and -er, students will be able to correctly spell the words with 70% accuracy.
- Given a list of multimorphemic words with the suffixes *-ate* and *-er*, students will be able to correctly read the words with 80% accuracy.
- Given a text containing words with the suffixes *-ate* and *-er*, students will be able to complete the text and correctly read the application words in it with 83% accuracy.

Instructor Materials	Student Materials
Model lesson plan	 Copies of word part cards for each student
Activity 2: Suffix cards printed and cut out	White board and marker for each student
Activity 3: Word part cards printed and cut out	 Reading multimorphemic words in isolation, student copy
Spelling multimorphemic words assessment	 Lined notebook paper and pencil for each student
Reading multimorphemic words in isolation assessment, instructor copy	 Reading multimorphemic words in connected text, student copy
Reading multimorphemic words in connected assessment text, instructor copy	

Introduction

In this lesson, students will be introduced to words with the suffixes -ate and -er. This lesson contains multiple short activities that will reinforce identifying the suffixes and using them to read and spell multimorphemic words.

Tell students the purpose of today's lesson:

We will be completing different activities to help us learn to read long words. These long words are called multimorphemic words because they are made up of more than one morpheme, or meaningful part. Examples of morphemes are prefixes, suffixes, and root words or base words. In all of the words we practice in this lesson, we will be adding only suffixes.

Today we will learn about suffixes. Suffixes are the ending parts of words. The suffixes can change the meaning of the first part of the word or change how that word can be used. For example, adding the suffix -s to the end of the word student changes it from one student to many students. Students is the plural form of the word student. By the end of our lesson, you will be able to read and spell many more multimorphemic words.

Build Knowledge

The first suffix we will learn is -ate. Say it with me, -ate. The suffix -ate can form a noun, adjective, or verb. Let's look at the word alienate. [Display the word alienate with the suffix underlined and point to the suffix -ate.] The word is alien. Alien is a noun that has many meanings. One meaning is a creature from another planet. Another meaning, for alien is different. This is the meaning we will focus on today. When we add the suffix -ate to the word alien, it changes the noun into a verb that means to push someone away to make them feel different, like they don't belong. Let me use the word in a sentence like this, "It's important to make our friends feel welcome; you don't want to alienate them or make them feel alone." In this example, alienate is the opposite of being friendly.

The second suffix we will learn today is -er. Say it with me, -er. When the suffix -er is added to a word, it makes a noun that performs an action. Let's look at the word kicker. [Display the word kicker with the suffix underlined and point to the suffix -er.] The word kick is a verb that means to strike with your foot. When I add the suffix -er to kick, the word changes to a noun. A kicker is someone who strikes something with their foot. For example, "The football kicker was known for his accuracy because he made every field goal attempt during the football season." In this example, kicker is used to describe a football player who earns points for his team by kicking field goals.



Activity 1: Listening to Words with Suffixes

Materials: None

Activity Description: In this activity, the instructor will model how to identify suffixes -ate and -er in a spoken word. The instructor will model how to use the peel-off strategy to break a word into parts and figure out its meaning. This demonstration will help the students become aware of suffixes so they can use the peel-off strategy in later activities on spelling and reading multimorphemic words.

Begin by telling students:

Now I am going to model how to identify the suffixes -ate and -er in spoken words. Listen as I demonstrate what you will do. [Say to the students: precipitate and then demonstrate a think aloud about how you determine if this word ends with the suffix -ate or -er.]

Precipitate. When I say the word precipitate, I am listening to the end of the word for a suffix. [Say the word slowly, emphasizing the -ate suffix.] Precipitate. I hear the suffix -ate at the end of the word. This means that the suffix on precipitate is -ate.

Next, model peeling off the suffix to break the word into parts.

Because I identified a suffix in the word precipitate, I can use the peel-off strategy to figure out the meaning of the word. If I remove the suffix -ate from precipitate, I am left with precipit, which isn't a word by itself. When I add the suffix -ate, it becomes the word precipitate that has many meanings. Often the word is used as a verb that means to bring about suddenly. An example of how I would use precipitate in a sentence is: "Disrespecting someone can precipitate an argument."

The second suffix that we are learning about today is -er. When I say the word thinker I am going to pay close attention to the final sounds in the word. Thinker. [Say the word slowly, emphasizing the -er suffix.] I do not hear the suffix -ate at the end of the word. I hear -er at the end of the word. [Say the word slowly, emphasizing the -er suffix.] Thinker. This tells me that the suffix on thinker is -er.



Next, model peeling off the suffix to break the word into parts.

Now that I have identified the suffix -er on thinker, I can use the peel-off strategy to determine the word's meaning. If I peel-off the suffix -er from thinker, I am left with the word think. Think can have different meanings. One meaning is the verb to have a belief or opinion about something. When I add the suffix -er to the word think, the word becomes the noun thinker. A thinker is a person who uses their brain to consider ideas and make decisions about a topic. An example of how to use thinker in a sentence is: "My friend is considered a thinker because she can quickly solve puzzles and riddles."

Next, provide guided practice in identifying and peeling off suffixes with the words: *commander* and *dictate*.

Now that I have modeled how to identify the suffixes -ate and -er and use the peel-off strategy, I want you to practice with me. I will say one word at a time. For each word, we will be listening for the suffix -ate or -er. If you hear the suffix, then we will use the peel-off strategy to break the word into parts.

If students are not able to complete the routine, then use the prompts below such as:

- What suffixes are you listening for?
- Do you hear the -ate or the -er suffix at the end of the word?
- How do you break the word into parts?

If students are not successful with the prompting questions, then the instructor will need to provide additional modeling using the word *pitcher*.



Materials: Suffix cards, printed and cut out (see Activity Resources for suffix cards)

Activity Description: This activity is an application of the *peel-off* strategy to help students read multimorphemic words by breaking them into smaller parts.

Now we will practice looking for our suffixes in printed words so that we can peel-off the suffixes to read the words. First, let's review identifying our suffixes in print.

Shuffle the stack of suffix cards so that students cannot anticipate which card you will show next. Show the cards to the students, one at a time. Ask the students to read the suffix on each card as soon as it is shown. If the students have difficulty reading the suffixes automatically, say the suffix, reshuffle the cards, and have students read the cards again until they are successful in reading the cards automatically.

Now, let's look at this word. [Display the word carbonate but do not say it.] If I do not know how to read this word, I want to break it into parts that I can recognize. First, I will look for one of our suffixes: -ate or -er. [Have both suffixes displayed for students to reference during the lesson.] I know that suffixes are at the end of the word, and I see -ate at the end of this word. [Draw a scoop mark underneath the suffix and show that it matches the suffix -ate you already have displayed.] The suffix -ate changes the word to a noun or a verb. With the suffix peeled off the word [cover -ate with a sticky note or temporarily delete/erase it], let's look at the word that is left. [Display the word carbon.] I recognize this word! It is carbon, which is a noun that is a chemical element. If I add the suffix -ate back to the word, I can put the parts together to change the word to carbonate. Carbonate can be a noun or a verb. When it is a verb, it means to add carbon dioxide to something. such as a drink, to make it fizzy or bubbly. Here's an example of how to use carbonate in a sentence: "If you carbonate water, it will make the water fizzy or into what is called seltzer water."



Next, have students practice reading multimorphemic words by peeling off the suffixes.

It's your turn to try finding the suffixes, peeling them off to break a word into parts, and then reading the word. If you already know the word I'm about to show you, do not say it. We want to use this to practice our strategy so that when you come across long words you aren't familiar with, you will know what to do. [Show the word launcher but do not say it.]

Guide the students in practicing the strategy with these prompts:

- Do you see one of our suffixes on this word? What is it?
- What does the suffix tell us about the word?
- After you peel off the suffix, do you recognize the letters?
- What are the different ways to pronounce the word?
- Can you put the suffix together with the letters or the word to read the whole word?
- Using what you know about the word and the suffix, what do you think the whole word means?

Repeat the above process with the words: *launcher*, *viewer*, *cleaner*, and *hydrate*.

If the student is not able to complete the strategy, provide additional modeling using the word *adapter*.

After practicing the strategy with each word, have students read the full list of words with fluency.



Materials: Word part cards printed and cut out, with one set per student; white board and marker for each student (see Activity Resources for word cards)

Activity Description: In this part of the lesson, students will use word cards and suffix cards to create new words. The word parts are color coded, with suffixes in **purple** and words in **green**. This activity will help the students understand that multiple words can be made from the morphemes.

We have been practicing breaking words apart by peeling off the suffixes to see the letters or the word by itself and then putting the parts back together again to read the whole word. Today, we are going to make our own words by putting the suffixes -ate and -er on words that you already know. [Show the cards.]

Before beginning, review the suffixes with the students.

- Who remembers what suffixes are?
- Where do we find suffixes on a word?
- How does finding the suffixes help us with reading a long word?
- [Show the suffix -ate card.] Who remembers what this suffix is?
- What does it tell us about the word?
- [Show the suffix -er card.] Who remembers what this suffix is?
- What does it tell us about the word?

Review the words to make sure students know what they mean: *play*, *valid* (this word part means true or right), *read*, *scratch*, and *decor* (this word part means beauty).

Now I am going to let you make some words using the suffixes -ate and -er. [Show the word cards, one at a time.] Do you know what this word is? [If the students do not know, say the word.] Do you know what the word means? [If the students do not know, define the word.]

You are going to use these cards to make new words by combining them with our suffixes. You may make a word and then find that it is not a real word. That's okay. You are trying to make real words, but not every word you are trying to make will work. Some will be real words, and some may not be. You can use an online dictionary to check if your word is real. [Review any procedures for using devices and accessing online dictionaries.] If a word is not a real word, you will just try again.

Model creating the multimorphemic word fabricate with the word part fabric and the suffix -ate by saying, "The word fabric has different meanings." [Show students the word part cards.] Fabric can be a noun that means a material, or it can be a verb that means to construct. When you add the suffix -ate to the word fabricate, it becomes a verb that means to construct a story or tell a lie. Here's an example of how to use the verb fabricate in a sentence: "I tried to fabricate an excuse for why I did not turn in my homework, but my instructor did not believe me."

During this practice, students should make the following real words: player, validate, reader, scratcher, and decorate.

As students work, monitor, and ask guiding questions:

- Can you use what you know about the word parts to define this word?
- Do you need to check the online dictionary to see if that is a real word?
- Can the word be combined with the other suffix; why or why not?

If the student is not able to complete the strategy, return to modeling and create another word. If the student still has difficulty, ask the student to tell you some words that end in *-ate* or *-er*. Create new word cards so the student can create known words.



Materials: White board and marker for each student

Activity Description: In this activity, model using the *peel-off* strategy to break a spoken multimorphemic word into parts. Then, spell the parts to form the written word. This is intended to increase the student's concentration on parts of the word as well as increase their spelling accuracy. Start by reviewing the *peel-off* strategy.

Today we will be using the peel-off strategy to break a spoken word into parts so that we can spell the word. Who remembers what the peel-off strategy is? What are the steps I follow in using the peel-off strategy? What are the suffixes that we are learning to peel off? What does -ate tell us about the word? What does -er tell us about the word?

Model using the *peel-off* strategy with the word *teacher*.

We have used the peel-off strategy to read words, but today we are going to use the strategy to spell words. It can be difficult to spell a long word sound by sound. To spell a word like teacher, I need to break it into bigger parts than individual sounds to see what I recognize. Say the word teacher with me: teacher. I remember that I can listen for my suffixes in the word. I hear the suffix -er at the end of the word teacher. If I peel off that suffix, I have the word teach left. I know that teach is a verb that means to instruct. If I add the suffix -er to the verb teach, I make a new word, teacher. A teacher is a noun that means a person whose job it is to teach, or instruct, students.

Have the students use this strategy to spell the words: *singer*, *roaster*, *animate*, and *candidate*.



Guide the students in practicing the strategy:

- Repeat the word.
- Do you hear a suffix at the end?
- Which one of our suffixes do you hear?
- When you peel off the suffix, what word is left?
- Do you recognize that word? If not, pronounce the vowel as a short vowel. Then try to practice the vowel as a long vowel.
- Try spelling the word sound by sound.
- Now add back the suffix. Check that you have the right word by reading it.

Provide the students with explicit praise and explicit error correction as needed. Examples of explicit praise:

- I like how you are peeling off the suffix first and then spelling the word sound by sound.
- Great job, (say student's name), spelling the word correctly and then adding the suffix back to the end of the word.

If students incorrectly peel off the suffix, provide specific error correction such as:

- Let's try again. The -ate suffix is spelled with the letters a, t, and e. The -er suffix is spelled with the letters e and r.
- Let's try again together. Tell me the first sound you hear in [say the word].
- What letters can represent that sound? What is the next sound you hear in [say the word]? What letters represent that sound? [Continue until the word has been spelled.]
- You are right. That is one way to spell the sound you hear in [say the word]. But in this word, the sound is represented by different letters.

 Can you think of other letters that represent the sound? [If not known, provide them.]

If students have difficulty with the steps of this activity, then provide additional modeling with the word *painter*.



If students have difficulty representing the sounds in a word, provide the student a white board and marker and follow these steps:

- 1. Say the word for the student.
- 2. Practice counting out the phonemes of the word. Draw lines on the white board or paper to represent each phoneme. Have the student write the letter or letters that correspond with each phoneme.
 - Example word: painter.
 - The instructor says to the student, Let's sound out and spell the word on the white board. As you sound out the word, I am going to draw a line for each sound that you say. What are the sounds in the word painter?
 - Student says, /p//ai//n//t//er/.
 - 3. If the student spells the word correctly, return to the spelling activity. If incorrect, repeat steps 1-2.



- · spelling multimorphemic words assessment
- instructor and student copies of the reading multimorphemic words assessment
- instructor and student copies of the reading multimorphemic words in connected text assessment
- lined notebook paper and a pencil for each student

Activity Directions: After completing all instructional activities, assess whether the students have met the daily objectives. There are three parts to the assessment:

- Part 1: Spelling Multimorphemic Words
 - The student will be given a spelling task using 10 multimorphemic words: liquidate, originate, rotate, advocate, waiter, speaker, developer, trainer, and builder.
 - The spelling test is a group administered assessment and untimed.
 The criterion for the spelling test is to spell 7 out of the 10 words correctly. Students must spell both the word and suffix correctly to earn a point.
- Part 2: Reading Multimorphemic Words in Isolation
 - After the spelling test, students will be asked to read the same list of words that was used for the spelling test. This is individually administered. The criterion for this assessment is to read 8 out of the 10 words correctly.
- Part 3: Reading Multimorphemic Words in Connected Text
 - The students will read 6 of the assessment words in connected text. This is individually administered. The criterion is to complete the passage and read 5 out of the 6 suffixed words correctly.

ACTIVITY RESOURCES ACTIVITY 2- SUFFIX CARDS

Directions: The suffix cards below are created to use as flashcards with students. The instructor may print and cut out individual cards to create a deck of cards containing multiple copies of each suffix. Before completing the activity with students, shuffle the suffix cards so that students cannot anticipate the suffix you will show next.

ate	ate	ate	ate	ate
er	er	er	er	er

ACTIVITY RESOURCES ACTIVITY 3- WORD PART CARDS

Directions: The word part cards are created to use with students. The cards are color coded: words are **green** and suffixes are **purple**. Before the lesson, the instructor will print and cut out the cards, making one set for each student. The words will be placed together in a pile separate from the suffixes. Students also should be given a white board and marker to record the words they make by combining the words and suffixes.

ate	er
fabric	play
validate	read
decor	scratch

ACTIVITY RESOURCES SPELLING MULTIMORPHEMIC WORDS ASSESSMENT- INSTRUCTOR COPY

Activity Description: This spelling test is group administered. Before beginning, distribute a lined sheet of paper to each student. Prompt students to number their paper from 1 to 10 because there will be 10 words on the test.

General Directions: You are going to spell words that have the suffixes we have been learning. I will say the word and use it in a sentence. Then, you will spell the word on your paper. Do you have any questions?

Complete the following steps for each word:

- Step 1: Instructor says the word.
- Step 2: Instructor prompts all students to repeat the word chorally to ensure that students heard the word correctly.
- Step 3: Instructor reads the sentence to provide a context for the word.
- Step 4: Instructor repeats the word and prompts students to write the word on their papers.

Scoring Directions: Students are awarded 1 point for each word spelled correctly. Both the word and suffix must be correct. The criterion for this assessment is to spell 7 out of the 10 words correctly.

1. liquidate: If you heat a block of ice, you will liquidate it. Liquidate.	
2. builder: The builder used many tools to construct a beautiful treehouse with two slides. Builder.	builder
3. originate: The U.S. tradition of carving pumpkins for Halloween is known to originate from the country of Ireland. Originate.	originate
4. rotate: The Earth and other planets rotate or spin on their axes, which creates hours of daylight and dark. Rotate.	rotate
5. waiter: The waiter delivered the orders of hamburgers and fries to the table of students. Waiter.	waiter
6. speaker: The speaker at the assembly shared fascinating stories with the students about swimming with sharks in the Pacific Ocean. Speaker.	speaker
7. advocate: If you advocate for a friend, you stick up for them or speak on their behalf when they need you. Advocate.	advocate
8. developer: The developer made the most incredible homes; each house had a big backyard with a jacuzzi and pool. Developer.	developer
9. orientate: After getting off the bus, I had to quickly orientate myself to the right direction. Orientate.	orientate
10. trainer: We hired a dog trainer to help our dog Leo walk on a leash and do fun tricks; now he is the smartest dog in our neighborhood. Trainer.	trainer

ACTIVITY RESOURCES READING MULTIMORPHEMIC WORDS IN ISOLATION ASSESSMENT-INSTRUCTOR COPY

Administer this assessment to one student at a time in a distraction-free environment. This is not timed. Print one copy of the student version and one copy of the teacher version. Place the student copy in front of the student.

General Directions: You are going to read a list of long words that have the suffixes we have been learning. Please read out loud. Start with the word at the top of the page and continue reading down the list. Stop when you have read the last word. Ready? Begin.

Scoring Directions: Students are awarded 1 point for each word read correctly. The criterion for this assessment is to read 8 out of the 10 words correctly.

1. liquidate	6. careful
2. builder	7. advocate
3. originate	8. developer
4. rotate	9. orientate
5. waiter	10. trainer

ACTIVITY RESOURCES READING MULTIMORPHEMIC WORDS IN ISOLATION ASSESSMENT- STUDENT COPY

Directions: Please read each word out loud.

1. liquidate	6. speaker
2. builder	7. advocate
3. originate	8. developer
4. rotate	9. orientate
5. waiter	10. trainer

ACTIVITY RESOURCES READING MULTIMORPHEMIC WORDS IN CONNECTED TEXT ASSESSMENTINSTRUCTOR COPY

Administer this assessment to one student at a time in a distraction-free environment. This is not timed. Print one copy of the student version and one copy of the teacher version. Place the student copy in front of the student.

General Directions: This passage has words with the suffixes we have been learning. Please read this passage out loud, starting with the title and continuing until you have finished the passage. If you get stuck, I will help you with the word so you can keep reading. Ready? Begin.

Scoring Directions: The criterion is to complete the passage and read 5 out of the 6 assessment words correctly.

Building a New Gym

Today, Cassandra Richards would make her dreams come true. "Nice to meet you, Cassandra," said the land **developer**, Angel, who Cassandra was meeting with.

"And you," Cassandra replied.

"I hear you are wanting me to help you build a new gym. I have the blueprint here, but first" said Angel, "I was wondering, where did this idea **originate** from?"

"I have always had a passion for fitness," Cassandra answered. "Growing up, I loved playing sports and staying in shape and today, I am a personal **trainer**. My job is to help people learn how to exercise and help them keep up with their fitness goals."

"I see. Well, this blueprint looks quite nice and fairly easy to get done," Angel responded. "I think I know a **builder** who can get started on this for us pretty soon."

Angel began to rotate the blueprint on the table and push it towards Cassandra so that she could see it.

Cassandra said, "That's great news! However, I do want to **advocate** for a fair price. I need the building, of course, but the equipment also is going to be very expensive. Spending all of my money on an empty building wouldn't do me any good."

"Absolutely. I'll have you taken care of, Cassandra. Don't worry!"

ACTIVITY RESOURCES READING MULTIMORPHEMIC WORDS IN CONNECTED TEXT ASSESSMENTSTUDENT COPY

Directions: Please read the text out loud.

Building a New Gym

Today, Cassandra Richards would make her dreams come true. "Nice to meet you, Cassandra," said the land developer, Angel, who Cassandra was meeting with.

"And you," Cassandra replied.

"I hear you are wanting me to help you build a new gym. I have the blueprint here, but first" said Angel, "I was wondering, where did this idea originate from?"

"I have always had a passion for fitness," Cassandra answered. "Growing up, I loved playing sports and staying in shape and today, I am a personal trainer. My job is to help people learn how to exercise and help them keep up with their fitness goals."

"I see. Well, this blueprint looks quite nice and fairly easy to get done," Angel responded. "I think I know a builder who can get started on this for us pretty soon."

Angel began to rotate the blueprint on the table and push it towards Cassandra so that she could see it.

Cassandra said, "That's great news! However, I do want to advocate for a fair price. I need the building, of course, but the equipment also is going to be very expensive. Spending all of my money on an empty building wouldn't do me any good."

"Absolutely. I'll have you taken care of, Cassandra. Don't worry!"

Suggested Citation:

Cooper, S., Reed, D. K., & Gibbs, A. S. (2024, December 4). *Multimorphemic word reading lessons: Unit 1-lesson 4*. Tennessee
Reading Research Center. trrc.utk.edu/multimorphemic-word-lesson-4

Reprint permission:

All requests to reprint this material should be directed to the TRRC at trrcinfo@utk.edu.