Introduction: The Common Core
The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) represent a coherent progression of learning expectations in English language arts and mathematics. They are designed to prepare K-12 students for college and career success.

The English Language Arts (ELA) K-5 standards focus on six strands:
- Three Reading strands – Literature, Informational Text, Foundational Skills
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening, and
- Language.

Because the Reading (Literature and Informational Text strands) standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read, they speak to the importance of all students having ownership of the Reading: Foundational Skills strand.

Grade 5 Standards

Reading: Foundational Skills

Phonics and Word Recognition
3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
   a. Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.

Language

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 5 meaning and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
   b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis).
Phonics and Word Study in the Upper Elementary Grades

The *National Reading Panel Report* (2000) described in detail the importance of phonics instruction in the upper elementary grades. In fact, the report recommends such instruction through sixth grade and after, for students yet to master orthographic patterns in English. Despite this, in many schools phonics is not part of regular instruction for upper elementary students.

Although students in Grade 5 should have the ability and expertise to sound out most words phoneme by phoneme, they now must possess and apply skills for decoding words by syllables and by using knowledge of roots and affixes. In order to be proficient with grade level reading materials, students must be competent and confident in their ability to apply grade level phonics and word recognition skills. Students who understand how words are formed tend to have larger vocabularies and better reading comprehension skills than their peers who have little to no understanding of morphology.

Teachers need to develop instructional routines for teaching and learning new words. In Grade 5, students are expected to recognize, understand and use a growing number of words with greater depth and breadth. Keep in mind that word reading/learning is a matter of knowing “how” (procedural), giving students strategies for determining word meaning that lead to becoming word conscious. In other words, students are moving toward becoming metacognitively and metalinguistically aware, and being able to manipulate the structural features of English.

Students at this grade level often benefit from keeping a journal or log of new words. Students should categorize or record words in a manner that works best for them. Their word journal becomes a tool for students to use as a quick reference for words they have studied, as well as the strategies for deciphering new words. Some students will include illustrations, examples, and non-examples.

Possible journal or log sections include:
- Completed graphic organizers concerning word recognition and vocabulary
- Greek roots
- Latin roots
- French roots, etc.
- Prefixes
- Suffixes
Direct Instruction

Utilizing Direct Instruction ensures that students will get the support they need to “own” new skills and concepts. The table below outlines the process used in direct instruction.

| Teacher Explains Task | **Discuss How and When the Skill is to be Used** – Involve students in a conversation concerning why the skill should be learned and applied in their lives.  
**Explain and Demonstrate the Skill** – Use simple yet accurate academic terms to move students to mastery.  
**Engage Every Student** – Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Focus on higher order questions. |
| Teacher Models Task (I do) | **The Teacher (I do)** - Model the new strategy explicitly (work to see the strategy from your students’ current background) and let your students see you use the strategy throughout the day, with lots of “I do it” on the part of the teacher. Students have to be actively engaged throughout the lesson, even when the teacher is “doing”—make sure they are NOT passive listeners. Engage them verbally and through response cards: yes/no cards, stop/go cards. Keep an ongoing list of how you keep your students actively involved throughout the lesson; this serves as a “reality check” to make sure students are kept actively engaged/involved, and also provides a quick-reference for effective methods you have used with your students.  
**Explain and Demonstrate the Skill** – Use simple yet accurate academic terms to move students to mastery. “Think Aloud” procedures are most helpful.  
In a “Think Aloud,” the teacher models the thought processes that take place when difficult or unfamiliar material is read aloud. Teachers verbalize their thoughts as they read orally to students. The purpose is to assist students’ comprehension as they gain insight to how the mind can respond to what is known with what is being read.  
Work to increase the complexity of your examples and student work until the work is at grade-level or beyond. Move students to doing their own “Think Aloud.”  
**Engage Every Student** – Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Focus on higher order questions. |
### Teacher and Student Practice Task Together (we do)

**Engage Every Student** – Invite volunteers to attempt the strategy on their own. Give corrective feedback as needed, allowing for follow-up questions. All feedback (including praise) needs to be specific. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Focus on higher order questions.

### Student Practice (you do)

**Access Student Ownership** – After many “I do it” and “we do it” examples, ease into “you do it” opportunities under your careful eye. Applying new learning accurately is crucial to future success. Student responses should give you a clear picture of their level of understanding and level of application.

**Engage Every Student** – Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Invite volunteers to attempt the strategy on their own. Give corrective feedback as needed, allowing for follow-up questions. All feedback (including praise) needs to be specific. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Focus on higher order questions.

**Constructive Feedback** – Remember to begin with less complex examples with the goal of moving to grade level and above examples. Students may work independently, in pairs and or small groups. This is the perfect time for students to verbally state each step of the strategy, while giving their reason for the choices they are making.

### Scaffolding/Constructive Feedback

**Constructive Feedback** – Remember to begin with less complex examples with the goal of moving to grade level and above examples. Students may work independently, in pairs and or small groups. This is the perfect time for students to verbally state each step of the strategy, while giving their reason for the choices they are making.

**Scaffolding and Differentiation** – At this time the teacher will need to provide additional opportunities for student practice (with immediate feedback and reteaching—with possible accommodations) to ensure all students have every opportunity to learn.

**Engage Every Student** – Provide students with ongoing opportunities to ask questions. Give corrective feedback as needed, allowing for follow-up questions. All feedback (including praise) needs to be specific. Carefully monitor students’ accurate use of all academic and content specific terms. Focus on higher order questions.
Planning Instruction for Phonics and Word Recognition

Well thought-out and planned instruction with Greek and Latin roots, create opportunities for students to grow their vocabularies exponentially. According to Rasinski, Padak, Newton, & Newton (2000), every word root a student adds to their understanding allows them to apply meaning to twenty or more English words.

The following are prefixes, suffixes, and roots that are most often studied in fifth grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefixes</th>
<th>Suffixes</th>
<th>Roots</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a-</td>
<td>-ate</td>
<td>aqua</td>
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<td>ab-</td>
<td>-ation</td>
<td>chron(o)</td>
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<td>abs-</td>
<td>-cracy</td>
<td>cour</td>
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<td>ad-</td>
<td>-crat</td>
<td>cur</td>
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<td>di-</td>
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Learning Words in Context: Morphology and Content Area Vocabulary

Rich, explicit vocabulary instruction should be part of daily instruction in every content area (science, social studies, mathematics, reading, etc.) with a focus on morphology. Who better to teach the meanings of roots than the content specialists? Teachers should carefully check current textbooks and any curriculum guidelines provided by their school or district to know the specific prefixes, suffixes, and roots that students need to know.

Instruction should include the use of morphology as a cognitive strategy. Teachers encourage and guide students to become word conscious, monitoring their understanding and applying strategies for breaking words apart in order to determine meaning and accurate pronunciation.

It is best to introduce new terms in the context of a meaningful subject-matter lesson in which students are active participants in discussing and using the new terms. Students practice using the new words one-on-one, in small group discussions, and in large group with feedback from the teacher.

Teachers of upper elementary students are mindful that academic texts in general have a disproportionate number of words from Latin and Greek roots. This happens because words associated with scholarly, scientific, and technical content are often of Greek or Latin origin. Content specific vocabulary words often fall into the category of being “low frequency” words, because they do not appear in other contexts. Key content vocabulary is often a needed building block for more advanced conceptual knowledge. This is yet another reason to provide students with the ability to quickly and accurately decode/read/pronounce words so most of their focus can be on meaning.

Teachers understand the importance of teaching the meaning of new Greek and Latin roots in meaningful contexts. As students’ knowledge of words grows, it will involve spelling, accurate pronunciation, morphology, and syntax. Morphology is both a component of knowing a word and a strategy for learning new words. The manipulation of affixes has a significant impact on the part of speech a word denotes. The great news is that these skills can be specifically taught, leading to greater comprehension and the ability to recognize unfamiliar words.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>verb</th>
<th>adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strategy</td>
<td>strategic</td>
<td>strategize</td>
<td>strategically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provision</td>
<td>provisional</td>
<td>provide</td>
<td>provisionally</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The word *strategy* comes from *strategos*, a Greek word referring to a military general. When someone strategizes, he/she is thinking and acting in the manner of a military general. It means a person thinks on his/her feet, is ready to meet any challenge, and keeps his/her plans focused on the ultimate objective.
Advanced Word Analysis Skills: Syllables

The ability to decode multisyllable words quickly and accurately allows students to keep their focus on comprehension of the material being read. At the upper elementary level, students can no longer afford to decode words phoneme-by-phoneme. They are confronted with 7-, 8-, or 9-phoneme words, or longer. To read these words at a rate needed to comprehend the material being read, students need to use a different decoding strategy. Decoding words in chunks (i.e., syllables) allows for quicker decoding of multisyllable words.

Best practice involves direct instruction of syllable types with ongoing opportunities for students to apply knowledge of syllable types and syllable division rules. After a skill has been taught, students must have the opportunity to apply the skill in meaningful and purposeful reading. Students learn the importance of applying these skills in all reading assignments throughout the day. Research indicates that student learning is strengthened when the focus is on patterns rather than the rote memorization of rules. All students benefit from instruction in and application of orthographic patterns.

Use the following information on basic syllable patterns and rules for dividing syllables to provide students with the strong foundation needed at this level.

**Basic Syllable Patterns**

- **Closed** – Most common spelling unit in the English language; it accounts for approximately 50 percent of the syllables in connected text. Closed syllables have one vowel closed in by one or more consonants—the vowel is “short.”
  - **Examples:** hat, shop, sad, mag-net bed, fish, at

- **Vowel-Consonant-e** – The final e in a vowel-consonant-e (VCe) syllable makes the vowel “long.”
  - **Examples:** lake, complete, time, same, invite

- **Open** – An open syllable contains a vowel at the end of the syllable. The vowel is usually “long.”
  - **Examples:** he, she, me, hi, va-ca-tion, so, ba-by

- **Vowel Team** – Also known as a vowel team or vowel digraph—vowel pair syllables have two adjacent vowels. Diphthongs ou/ow and oi/oy are included in this syllable pattern.
  - **Examples:** rain, meat, sail-boat, pause

- **Consonant-le** – Also known as the stable final syllable—syllable ending in –le is usually preceded by a consonant that is part of that syllable. This final syllable is unaccented—contains a consonant before the /l/, followed by a silent e.
  - **Examples:** can-dle, tum-ble, bu-gle
• **-r Controlled**—A vowel-r syllable is a vowel followed by r (or, ar, er, ir, ur).
  
  **Examples**: far, part, fern, **per-form, mir-ror, purse**

• **Odd and Schwa Syllables**—These are usually described as final, unaccented syllables with “odd” spellings.
  
  **Examples**: man-**age, sta-**tion

**Rules for Dividing Syllables**

• **Each syllable contains a vowel sound.** All English syllables have a vowel sound with the exception of “thm” as in rhythm and algorithm; occasionally –sm does the same thing, as in chasm, schism, etc. When dividing a word into syllables, vowel teams stay together.
  
  **Examples**: ai, ay, ea, ee, oa, ow, oo, oy, ou, ie, ei)

• **Divide between two middle consonants.** However, NEVER split up consonant digraphs because they represent one sound: /th/, /sh/, /ph/, /ch/, /wh/
  
  **Examples**: hap/pen, bas/ket, bet/ter, des/sert, sup/per.

• **Usually divide before a single middle consonant.** Exceptions are those times when the first syllable has an obvious short sound, as in “cab/in”.
  
  **Examples**: ‘o/pen”, “i/tem”, ‘e/vil/”, “re/port”.

• **Divide before the consonant before and “-le” syllable.** The only exception is “ckle” words like tick/le
  
  **Examples**: ble, gle, ple, as in ta/ble, bu/gle, pur/ple.

• **Three-letter blends stay together.**
  
  **Example**: con/struct

• **Prefixes and suffixes are separate syllables.**
  
  **Examples**: un/hap/py, hope/less, farm/er, re/turn
References


