

# Lesson Skill: Determining meaning of words by taking them apart

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**Strand** Reading--vocabulary

**SOL** 6.4  
7.4  
8.4

## Materials

- Copies of the attached Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes handout
- Available technology projection of the Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes handout

## Lesson

1. Review the meaning of *root*, *prefix*, *suffix*, and *affix*, using the overhead transparency of the Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes sheet. Emphasize the fact that learning the meanings of roots and affixes gives one the ability to “take apart” unfamiliar words for better understanding of their meanings.
2. Choose words to model, such as the following:
  - *portable* = *port* (carry) + *able* (capable of). Something that is portable is capable of being carried.
  - *deport* = *de* (away, from, reverse of) + *port* (carry). To deport someone is to carry (move) him/her away from a place.
  - *renew* = *re* (again) + *new*. To renew something is to make it new again.
3. Distribute copies of the attached Prefixes, Suffixes, and Roots handout. Pair students, and give partners an opportunity to take apart the following words, using the handout as a reference:
  - *autobiography*
  - *biography*
  - *biology*
  - *predictable*
  - *subtract*
  - *graphology*
  - *disrespectful*
  - *submarine*
  - *reclosable*
  - *predict*

4. Have students practice this process when reading assigned texts.  
Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes

A word can consist of three parts: the **root**, a **prefix**, and a **suffix**.

Prefixes and suffixes are known as **affixes** because they are *affixed to* (attached to) a root.

Prefixes and suffixes, which originated as words themselves, are now syllables added to roots to create new words.

The **root** is the base element of the word—the part of the word that contains the basic meaning (definition) of the word.

A **prefix** is a syllable(s) forming a word element placed *before* a root, word, or word group to modify the meaning or make a new word.

A **suffix** is a syllable(s) forming a word element that is placed *after* a root, word, or word group to modify the meaning or make a new word. The suffix may also modify the word's grammatical function by redefining its part of speech (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, adverb).

**Common Roots**

*struct* = build

*port* = carry

*graph* = writing

*bio* = life

*tract* = pull

*flect, flex* = bend

*dict, dic* = speak, say

*im* = in, into

**Common Prefixes**

*un* = not, none

*pre* = before, in advance

*re* = again, back

*sub* = under, below

*dis* = not, none

*auto* = self

*de* = away, from, reverse of

**Common Suffixes**

*able* = capable of

*ion* = act or process; condition

*ology* = study of

*ful* = quantity that fills

*less* = without, missing