

## SECTION 5

# PREPARATION RESOURCES

This section of the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA) Study Guide provides the following additional resources you can use to prepare for taking the VRA:

- A reading list of Virginia reading assessment standards and related literature.
- A glossary of terminology related to reading assessment.

### Glossary

#### Affix

A morpheme or meaningful part of a word attached before or after a root or base word to modify its meaning; a category that includes prefixes and suffixes.

#### Alphabetic principle

The use of letters and letter combinations to represent phonemes in an orthography.

#### Automaticity

Fluent performance without the conscious deployment of attention.

#### Base word

A free morpheme, usually of Anglo-Saxon origin, to which affixes can be added.

#### Blend

A consonant sequence before or after a vowel within a syllable, such as *cl*, *br*, or *st*; also called "consonant blend."

#### Book talk

A discussion of one or more books by a teacher, librarian, or student to introduce books and to induce others to read them.

#### Bound morpheme

A morpheme, usually of Latin origin in English, that cannot stand alone but is used to form a family of words with related meanings. A bound root (such as *-fer*) has meaning only in combination with a prefix and/or a suffix.

#### Cloze procedure

Any of several ways of measuring a person's ability to restore omitted portions of an oral or written message by reading its remaining context.

#### Comprehension monitoring

The mental act of knowing when one does and does not understand what one is reading.

#### Consonant

A phoneme that is not a vowel and is formed with obstruction of the flow of air with the teeth, lips, or tongue; also called a closed sound in some instructional programs; English has 40 or more consonants; also may refer to an alphabet letter used in representing any of these sounds.

#### Consonant blend

(see **Blend**)

**Consonant digraph**

Written letter combination that corresponds to one speech sound but is not represented by either letter alone, such as *th* or *ph*.

**Context**

The sounds, words, or phrases adjacent to a spoken or written language unit.

**Context clue**

Information from the immediate textual setting that helps identify a word or word group, as by words, phrases, sentences, illustrations, syntax, or typography.

**Contextual analysis**

The search for the meaning of an unknown word through an examination of its context; the use of a larger linguistic unit to determine the meaning of a smaller unit.

**Continuant**

Speech sound that can be spoken uninterrupted until the speaker runs out of breath (/m/, /s/, /v/).

**Decodable text**

Text in which a large proportion of words (approximately 70%–80%) comprise sound-symbol relationships that have already been taught; used to provide practice with specific decoding skills and to form a bridge between learning phonics and applying phonics in independent reading of text.

**Decoding**

Ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences; also, the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out.

**Dialect**

A social or regional variety of a particular language with phonological, grammatical, and lexical patterns that distinguish it from other varieties.

**ESL students**

Students who are learning English as a second language; Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students.

**Etymology**

The study of the history and development of the structures and meanings of words; derivation.

**Expressive vocabulary**

The vocabulary used to communicate in speaking and writing.

**Figurative language**

Language enriched by word images and figures of speech.

**Figure of speech**

The expressive, nonliteral use of language for special effects, usually through images, as in metaphor and personification.

**Fluency**

(see **Reading Fluency**)

**Free morpheme**

A morpheme that can stand alone in word formation.

**Grapheme**

A letter or letter combination that spells a single phoneme; in English, a grapheme may be one, two, three, or four letters, such as e, ei, igh, or eigh.

**High-frequency word**

A word that appears many more times than most other words in spoken or written language.

**Idiom**

An expression whose meaning may be unrelated to the meaning of its parts.

**Inflection**

A bound morpheme that combines with base words to indicate tense, number, mood, person, or gender.

**Intonation**

Pitch level of the voice.

**Invented spelling**

The result of an attempt to spell a word whose spelling is not already known, based on a writer's knowledge of the spelling system and how it works; also referred to as "temporary spelling" or "developmental spelling."

**KWL**

A strategy developed by Donna Ogle that is especially useful for identifying purposes for reading expository text. The strategy, which typically involves the use of a graphic organizer, prompts the reader to consider **W**hat I **K**now (K), **W**hat I **W**ant To Learn (W), and **W**hat I Have **L**earned (L).

**Language Experience Approach (LEA)**

An approach to language learning in which students' oral compositions are transcribed and used as materials of instruction for reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

**LEP students**

Students with limited English proficiency; students who are learning English as a second language (ESL).

**Literature circle**

That part of a literature-based reading program in which students meet to discuss books they are reading independently. *Note:* The books discussed are usually sets of the same title, sets of different titles by one author, or sets of titles with a common theme.

**Metalinguistic**

Pertaining to an acquired awareness of language structure and function that allows one to reflect on and consciously manipulate the language.

**Minimal pair**

A pair of words that contrast only in one phoneme.

**Miscue**

A deviation from text during oral reading or a shift in comprehension of a passage.

**Miscue analysis**

A formal examination of the use of miscues as the basis for determining the strengths and weaknesses in the background experiences and language skills of students as they read.

**Morpheme**

The smallest meaningful unit of language.

**Morphology**

The study of meaningful units of language and how they are combined in word formation.

**Multisyllabic**

Having more than one syllable.

**Narrative text**

Text, usually with the structure of a story, that tells about sequences of fictional or real events and is often contrasted with expository text.

**Onset**

The part of a syllable before the vowel; some syllables do not have onsets.

**Orthography**

A writing system; correct or standardized spelling according to established usage in a given language.

**Phoneme**

A speech sound that combines with others in a language system to make words.

**Phonemic awareness**

The conscious awareness that words are made up of segments of our own speech that are represented with letters in an alphabetic orthography; also called *phoneme awareness*.

**Phonetic**

Referring to the nature, production, and transcription of speech sounds.

**Phonics**

The study of the relationships between letters and the sounds they represent; also used to describe reading instruction that teaches sound-symbol correspondences.

**Phonogram**

In word recognition, a graphic sequence comprised of a vowel grapheme and an ending consonant grapheme, as *-ed* in *red, bed, fed* or *-ake* in *bake, cake, lake*. Also known as "word family."

**Phonological awareness**

Metalinguistic awareness of all levels of the speech sound system, including word boundaries, stress patterns, syllables, onset-rime units, and phonemes; a more encompassing term than phoneme awareness.

**Prefix**

A morpheme that precedes a root or base word and that contributes to or modifies the meaning of a word; a common linguistic unit in Latin-based words.

**R-controlled**

Pertaining to a vowel immediately followed by the consonant /r/, such that its pronunciation is affected or even dominated by the /r/.

**Reading fluency**

Speed of reading; also, the ability to read text with sufficient speed to support comprehension.

**Rime**

A linguistic term for the part of a syllable that includes the vowel and what follows it; different from the language play activity of *rhyming*.

**Root**

A morpheme, usually of Latin origin in English, that cannot stand alone but that is used to form a family of words with related meanings.

**Semantic cue**

Evidence from the general sense or meaning of a written or spoken communication that aids in the identification of an unknown word.

**Semantic properties**

The component features of the meaning of a word.

**Sight words**

Words that are known as wholes, do not have to be sounded out to be recognized quickly, and are often taught and learned as "exception," "out-law," or "nonphonetic" words.

**Structural analysis**

The identification of word-meaning elements, as *re* and *read* in *reread*, to help understand the meaning of a word as a whole; morphemic analysis.

**Suffix**

A morpheme, added to a root or base word, that often changes the word's part of speech and that modifies its meaning.

**Syllable**

Unit of pronunciation that is organized around a vowel; it may or may not have consonants before or after the vowel.

**Syntactic cue**

Evidence from knowledge of the rules and patterns of language that aids in the identification of an unknown word from the way it is used in a grammatical construction.

**Syntax**

The rule system governing sentence formation; the study of sentence structure.

**Vowel**

An open phoneme that is the nucleus of every syllable and is classified by tongue position and height, such as high/low or front/mid/back; English has 15 vowel phonemes.

**Vowel combination**

A spelling pattern in which two or more adjoining letters represent a single vowel sound (e.g., *ea* for /e/ in *bread*, *oa* for /o/ in *boat*); also called vowel pattern, vowel digraph, vowel pair, or vowel team.

## Acknowledgments

Glossary definitions from: Harris, T. L. & Hodges, R. E. (Eds.). (1995). *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing*. Used with permission of the International Reading Association. All rights reserved. For multiple copies, please contact the Association at [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org).

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