

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.

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Reading List

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