



Discover Morph Mastery

What is it and why does it matter?

About me



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1. What is morphology?



The structure of
English orthography
(the written word)

Morphology

System of language
by which words are
structured according
to units of meaning
called morphemes

Phonology

System of language by
which words are
structured according
to units of sound called
phonemes

Etymology

History and origin of
the meaning and
form of words



Examples of morphemes

PREFIX

re-
un-
dis-
mis-

ROOT

run
fit
mount
take

SUFFIX

-ing
-est
-ed
-s



Examples of morphemes

PREFIX

in-
sub-
auto-
inter-

ROOT

act
divide
mob-
person

SUFFIX

-ive
-ion
-ile
-al



Morph Mastery uses characters, symbols and colours to help learners discriminate between prefixes, suffixes and roots.

 **Prefa** 
 **Root** 
 **Sufa** 

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Words can be separated into morphemes...and morphemes can be put together to build words.

  
un-want-ed

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All morphemes provide meaning.

 
inter-city

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Morphemes are not the same as syllables!

 
help-ed

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Often prefixes add to, or change, the meaning of the root.

 
super-human

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Many suffixes are grammatical.

 
miss-ed

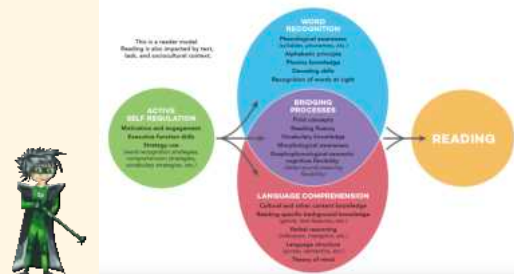
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2. Why does morphology matter?



ACTIVE VIEW OF READING



N. K. Duke and K. B. Cartwright, 2021, Reprinted with permission. Note: Several wordings in this model are adopted from Scarborough (2001).

What do we know from research so far?

1. There is a gap in attainment in UK schools and teaching strategies do not fully meet need.



Around one in four pupils in the UK enter secondary school below the expected reading, and writing standards, a gap that typically widens with age (Department for Education [DfE], 2025; Ricketts, Mok, & Nation, 2020).

Older struggling readers rarely receive targeted support beyond phonics, yet the secondary curriculum demands mastery of morphologically complex vocabulary (Cain & Oakhill, 2014).

What do we know from research so far?

2. Morphological teaching impacts literacy outcomes.

Studies consistently show that morphological awareness predicts word reading, spelling, and comprehension independently of phonological skill and vocabulary (Carlsle, 2000; Deacon & Levesque, 2024).

Meta-analyses by Bowers, Kirby, and Deacon (2010) and Goodwin and Ahn (2013) report medium-sized effects on decoding and spelling. Controlled studies demonstrate that small-group instruction improves multisyllabic word reading, spelling, and motivation (Toste et al., 2019; Filderman & Toste, 2022, Ardanouy, Zesiger, & Delage, 2024).



What do we know from research so far?

3. This impact is especially true for lower attaining readers and it increases through schooling.

Meta-analyses show significant positive effects on literacy, particularly for older and lower-attaining readers (Goodwin & Ahn, 2013; Bowers, Kirby, & Deacon, 2010).

The relationship between morphological awareness and comprehension grows stronger across development, as vocabulary becomes increasingly derived and morphologically dense (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2012).



What do we know from research so far?

4. Less is known about the exact mechanisms within morphological teaching that influence literacy.

The developmental mechanisms by which morphological awareness grows and influences reading and spelling are less clear. Recent longitudinal work suggests a bidirectional relationship: growth in MA promotes comprehension, while increased reading experience further strengthens MA (Levesque, Kieffer, & Deacon, 2021).



Phonics is not the full story!



There is an explanation for every English spelling and exceptions are very rare. It just depends on what the rules are.

English does not always follow phonic rules!

Kicked Strict
Kissed Mist
Hunted Horrid



Roosevelt & Simplified Spelling Board 1906



Morphology explains spelling.

Comftabl?

Comfortable



Excervait?

excavate



Morphemes provide information. This contributes to orthographic depth.



miss-ed

mist



dis-cuss-ed



dis-gust



3. Strategies



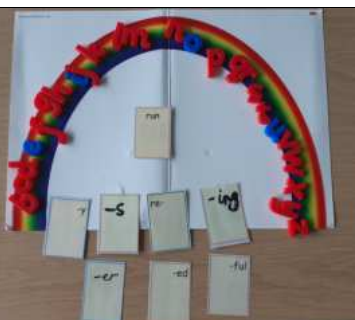
Resources are free downloadables with the book or can be purchased ready made from Autopress Education (www.autopresseducation.co.uk)

Use code Morph10 for a site wide discount

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Using tactile resources to teach morphemes



Morpheme cards help with structure





un-	fit	-ness -s +t -ing +t -er +t -ed +t -est
-----	-----	---

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A yellow sticky note with a vertical line down the center. On the left side, under the letter 'A', the words "clean", "fired", and "amazed" are written in cursive. On the right side, under the letter 'C', the words "shipping" and "later" are written in cursive. A green marker with a blue eraser tip lies horizontally across the middle of the sticky note. Below the sticky note, two small white cards are visible, each with a vertical line and some faint, illegible markings.

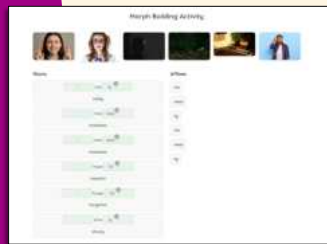
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Morph Training

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

morph		-ed		-ing	
wash	hug	walk	talk	sit	cheer

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1929 | KALIF. C.A. III



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comfortable



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Word Mastery

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What is the root?



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What is the prefix?



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What is the suffix?



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Can you change the prefix or suffix?



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Sentence work

its b Its helpsut that
churches cure tidier then
parties.

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Text work:
Word
Espionage
(reading)

98

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4. Beyond spelling



Disciplinary vocabulary Reflect or refract?

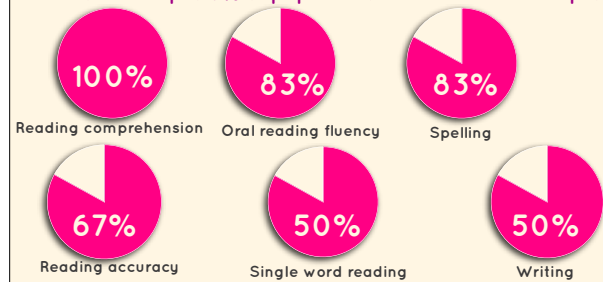


Deflect, reflex, flex, flexible
Fracture, fraction, fractious

5. Evidence



Hertfordshire pilot: % of pupils who made accelerated progress



Research project with Glasgow University

Group intervention with 84 students (21 schools) age 10 - 12 in spring and summer term of 2026 with pre and post intervention assessments in January and April. Control group has done DfE approved synthetic phonics intervention.



6. The interventions



Intervention training: 1:1 or groups



Cost - £175 per person
25% discount will be offered to all who signed up for this webinar before June 8th 2026.



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Intervention training: 1:1 or groups?



	Who for?	Duration & frequency of lessons	Structure of training course	Differences?
1:1 intervention	Learners with persistent literacy difficulties & specific needs Individuals who are working well below their peers	3 x weekly 30 minutes	8 sessions lasting 1 hour each	Extended focus on morphological awareness (useful for language development)
Group intervention	Groups of learners with literacy difficulties needing tailored support	2 x weekly 45 minutes	5 sessions lasting 125 hours each	Extended focus on vocabulary Online Morph Builder activity



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Both interventions...

- ...are multi-sensory, structured, tailored to the learners and incorporate over-learning
- ...are designed for learners with a basic knowledge of phonics (minimum cvc words and some ability to blend phonemes)
- ...are suitable for learners with dyslexia and/or literacy difficulties
- ...are designed for ages 8 - 14 but can be adapted
- ...are informed by assessment and based on the English National Curriculum for spelling
- ...can be delivered by a well qualified TA with oversight from a teacher



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Both courses...

- ...are step by step, working through how to assess and plan for a group.
- ...require trainees to work with learners for tasks in between sessions.
- ...are designed to set you up so you have delivered your first lessons by the end of the course.
- ...require no prior knowledge of morphology but a good grasp of English language is essential.



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Practical considerations

- Not an off the shelf intervention! Planning time is required but this reduces over time.
- Most resources can be downloaded and made (or purchased from Autopress education). In addition you'll need tactile letters, spinner bases and voice recorders (optional).
- Morph Mastery works best when it impacts classroom practice.



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View film footage of Day 1, 2 and 3 lessons for free on my blog.



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Thank you for listening!

Please keep in touch.



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