



Glossary for Foundational Skills Standards

This glossary provides terms and descriptions found within the K-5 ELA Foundational Skills Standards. Additional terms beyond those found in the standards, but useful for understanding concepts are also provided.



Definitions and content adapted from http://reading.uoregon.edu/big_ideas/pa/pa_what.php and www.readingrockets.org

Word	Meaning
Accuracy	The ability to recognize words correctly.
Advanced Phonics	Strategies for decoding multisyllabic words that include morphology and information about the meaning, pronunciation, and parts of speech of words gained from knowledge of prefixes, roots, and suffixes.
Affixes	Affixes are word parts that are "fixed to" either the beginnings of words (prefixes) or the endings of words (suffixes). The word disrespectful has two affixes, a prefix (dis-) and a suffix (-ful).
Alphabetic Awareness	Knowledge of letters of the alphabet coupled with the understanding that the alphabet represents the sounds of spoken language and the correspondence of spoken sounds to written language.
Alphabetic Code	Sound-symbol relationships to recognize words
Alphabetic Principle	The concept that letters and letter combinations represent individual phonemes in written words.
Alphabetic Understanding	Understanding that the left-to-right spellings of printed words represent their phonemes from first to last.
Automaticity	The ability to translate letters-to-sounds-to-words fluently, effortlessly. With practice and good instruction, students become automatic at word recognition, that is, retrieving words from memory, and are able to focus attention on constructing meaning from the text, rather than decoding.
Base Word	Base words are words from which many other words are formed. For example, many words can be formed from the base word migrate: migration, migrant, immigration, immigrant, migrating, migratory. Also called a free morpheme.
Blend	A blend is a consonant sequence before or after a vowel within a syllable, such as cl, br, or st; it is the written language equivalent of consonant cluster.
Blending	The task of combining sounds rapidly, to accurately represent the word.
Chunked Text	Continuous text that has been separated into meaningful phrases often with the use of single and double slash marks (/ and //). The intent of using chunked text or chunking text is to give children an opportunity to practice reading phrases fluently. There is no absolute in chunking text. Teachers should use judgment when teaching students how to chunk. Generally, slash marks are made between subject and predicate, and before and after prepositional phrases.
Chunking	A decoding strategy for breaking words into manageable parts (e.g., /yes /ter/ day). Chunking also refers to the process of dividing a sentence into smaller phrases where pauses might occur naturally (e.g., When the sun appeared after the storm, / the newly fallen snow /shimmered like diamonds).
Co-articulation	When saying words our mouth is always ready for the next sound to be made. While saying one sound, the lips, tongue, etc., are

	starting to form the sound to follow. This can distort individual sounds during speech because the sounds are not produced in isolated units (e.g., ham- the /m/ blends with the /a/ to distort the vowel). This process is called coarticulation. Because of coarticulation, some children have difficulty hearing the individual sounds in words and the concept of phonemes needs to be explicitly brought to their attention through instruction.
Cognates	Words that are related to each other by virtue of being derived from a common origin (e.g., 'decisive' and 'decision' or education (English) and educación (Spanish)).
Comprehension	Understanding what one is reading, the ultimate goal of all reading activity.
Consonant Blend	Two or more consecutive consonants which retain their individual sounds (e.g., /bl/ in block; /str/ in string).
Consonant Digraph	Two consecutive consonants that represent one phoneme, or sound (e.g., /ch/, /sh/).
Continuous Sound	A sound that can be prolonged (stretched out) without distortion (e.g., r, s, a, m).
Context Clues	Context clues are sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words. Context clues may be drawn from the immediate sentence containing the word, from text already read, from pictures accompanying the text, or from definitions, restatements, examples, or descriptions in the text.
Continuum of Word Types	Words can be classified by type according to their relative difficulty to decode. Typically this continuum is listed from easy to difficult, beginning with VC and CVC words that begin with continuous sounds and progressing to CCCVC and CCCVCC words. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CCVC words: Word pattern that begin with a consonant blend: flat •CVC words: Word pattern that begin with consonants and have one vowel; easily decoded: red. •CVCe words: Word pattern that begin with consonants and have a long vowel due to a silent e at the end of the word: cake. •CVVC words: Word pattern that begin with consonants but have two vowels so that the first vowel is long: read.
Decodable Text	Text in which a high proportion of words (80%-90%) comprise sound-symbol relationships that have already been taught. It is used for the purpose of providing practice with specific decoding skills and is a bridge between learning phonics and the application of phonics in independent reading.
Decodable Words	These words contain phonic elements that were previously taught.
Decoding	The process of using letter-sound correspondences to recognize words.
Derivational Affix	A prefix or suffix added to a root or base to form another word (e.g., -un in unhappy , -ness in likeness).
Digraph	A combination of two letters representing one sound, as in <i>ey, sh, ch, th, ea, ph.</i>

Diphthong	A sound made by combining two vowels, specifically when it starts as one vowel sound and goes to another: <i>oi, ou, ie</i> .
Elkonin Boxes	A framework used during phonemic awareness instruction. Elkonin Boxes are sometimes referred to as Sound Boxes. When working with words, the teacher can draw one box per sound for a target word. Students push a marker into one box as they segment each sound in the word.
Etymology	The origin of a word and the historical development of its meaning (e.g., the origin of our word <i>etymology</i> comes from late Middle English: from Old French <i>ethimologie</i> , via Latin from Greek <i>etumologia</i> , from <i>etumologos</i> ‘student of etymology,’ from <i>etumon</i> , neuter singular of <i>etumos</i> ‘true’).
Expressive Language	Language that is spoken.
Floss Rule	Words of one syllable, ending in “f”, “l”, or “s” - after one vowel, usually end in “ff”, “ll”, or “ss” (sounds /f/, /l/, /s/).
Fluency	Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, they can focus their attention on what the text means.
Grapheme	The individual letter or sequence of written symbols (e.g., <u>a</u> , <u>b</u> , <u>c</u>) and the multi-letter units (e.g., <u>ch</u> , <u>sh</u> , <u>th</u>) that are used to represent a single phoneme.
Graphophonemic	The relationship between letters and phonemes.
High Frequency Irregular Words	Words in print containing letters that stray from the most common sound pronunciation because they do not follow common phonic patterns (e.g., <i>were, was, laugh, been</i>).
High Frequency Words	A small group of words (300-500) that account for a large percentage of the words in print and can be regular or irregular words (i.e., Dolch or Fry). Often, they are referred to as “sight words” since automatic recognition of these words is required for fluent reading.
Homograph	Words that are spelled the same but have different origins and meanings. They may or may not be pronounced the same (e.g., <i>can</i> as in a metal container/ <i>can</i> as in able to).
Homonym	Words that sound the same but are spelled differently (e.g., <i>cents/sense, knight/night</i>).
Homophone	Words that may or may not be spelled alike but are pronounced the same. These words are of different origins and have different meanings (e.g., <i>ate</i> and <i>eight</i> ; <i>scale</i> as in the covering of a fish; and <i>scale</i> as in a device used to weigh things).
Idiom	A phrase or expression that differs from the literal meaning of the words; a regional or individual expression with a unique meaning (e.g., <i>it’s raining cats and dogs</i>).
Inflectional Suffix	In English, a suffix that expresses plurality or possession when added to a noun, tense when added to a verb, and comparison when added to an adjective and some adverbs. A major difference between inflectional and derivational morphemes is that inflections

	added to verbs, nouns, or adjectives do not change the grammatical role or part of speech of the base words (-s, -es, -ing, -ed).
Invented Spelling	An attempt to spell a word based on a student's knowledge of the spelling system and how it works (e.g., kt for cat).
Letter Combinations	Also referred to as digraphs, a group of consecutive letters that represents a particular sound(s) in the majority of words in which it appears (e.g., /ai/ in maid; /ch/ in chair; /ar/ in car; /kn/ in know; /ng/ in ring).
Letter-sound Correspondence	The matching of an oral sound (phoneme) to its corresponding letter or group of letters.
Morpheme	A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of language. A morpheme can be one syllable (book) or more than one syllable (seventeen). It can be a whole word or a part of a word such as a prefix or suffix. For example, the word ungrateful contains three morphemes: un, grate, and ful.
Morphemic Analysis	An analysis of words formed by adding prefixes, suffixes or other meaningful word units to a base word.
Morphemic Relationship	The morphemic relationship is the relationship between one morpheme and another. In the word books, book is a free morpheme (it has meaning by itself) and -s is a bound morpheme (it has meaning only when attached to a free morpheme).
Morphology	The study of the forms of words; meanings of words are determined or inferred by examining their meaningful parts (e.g., prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc.)
Morphophonology	Morphophonology is using a word's letter patterns to help determine, in part, the meaning and pronunciation of a word. For example, the morpheme vis in words such as vision and visible is from the Latin root word that means to see; and the ay in stay is pronounced the same in the words gray and play.
Multisyllabic Words	These are words with more than one syllable. A systematic introduction of prefixes, suffixes, and multisyllabic words should occur throughout a reading program. The average number of syllables in the words students read should increase steadily throughout the grades.
Oddities	Vowels that are pronounced differently from the expected pronunciation (e.g., the "o" in old is pronounced /ō/ instead of the expected /o/).
Onset	These units are smaller than syllables but may be larger than phonemes. An onset is the initial consonant sound of a syllable (the onset of bag is b-; of swim is sw-).
Onset-Rime Segmentation	Onset-rime segmentation is separating a word into the onset, the consonant(s) at the start of a syllable, and the rime, the remainder of the syllable. For example, in swift, sw is the onset and ift is the rime.
Orthographic Knowledge	Orthographic knowledge is understanding that the sounds in a language are represented by written or printed symbols.

Orthographic Units	The representation of the sounds of a language by written or printed symbols.
Orthography	A writing system for representing language.
Phases of Word Learning	<p><i>Pre-alphabetic</i> Sight word learning at the earliest period. Children do not form letter-sound connections to read words; if they are able to read words at all, they do so by remembering selected visual features.</p> <p><i>Partial alphabetic</i> Children learn the names or sounds of alphabet letters and use these to remember how to read words. However, they form connections between only some of the letters and sounds in words, often only the first and final letter-sounds.</p> <p><i>Full alphabetic</i> Children can form complete connections between letters in written words and phonemes in pronunciations.</p> <p><i>Consolidated alphabetic</i> Readers operate with multi-letter units that may be morphemes, syllables, or subsyllabic units such as onsets and rimes. Common spelling patterns become consolidated into letter chunks, and these chunks make it easier to read words.</p>
Phoneme	<p>Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that change the meanings of spoken words. A phoneme combines with other phonemes to make words. For example, if you change the first phoneme in bat from /b/ to /p/, the word bat changes to pat. English has about 41-44 phonemes. A few words, such as a or oh, have only one phoneme. Most words have more than one phoneme. The word <i>if</i> has two phonemes /i/ and /f/.</p> <p><i>Phoneme addition</i> In this activity, children make a new word by adding a phoneme to an existing word. (Teacher: What word do you have if you add /s/ to the beginning of park? Children: spark.)</p> <p><i>Phoneme blending</i> In this activity, children learn to listen to a sequence of separately spoken phonemes, and then combine the phonemes to form a word. (Teacher: What word is /b/ /i/ /g/? Children: /b/ /i/ /g/ is big.)</p> <p><i>Phoneme categorization</i> In this activity, children recognize the word in a set of three or four words that has the "odd" sound. (Teacher: Which word doesn't belong? bun, bus, rug. Children: Rug does not belong. It doesn't begin with a /b/.)</p>

	<p><i>Phoneme deletion</i> In this activity, children learn to recognize the word that remains when a phoneme is removed from another word. (Teacher: What is smile without the /s/? Children: Smile without the /s/ is mile.)</p> <p><i>Phoneme identity</i> In this activity, children learn to recognize the same sounds in different words. (Teacher: What sound is the same in fix, fall, and fun? Children: The first sound, /f/, is the same.)</p> <p><i>Phoneme isolation</i> In this activity, children learn to recognize and identify individual sounds in a word. (Teacher: What is the first sound in van? Children: The first sound in van is /v/.)</p> <p><i>Phoneme segmentation</i> In this activity, children break a word into its separate sounds, saying each sound as they tap out or count it. (Teacher: How many sounds are in grab? Children: /g/ /r/ /a/ /b/. Four sounds.)</p> <p><i>Phoneme substitution</i> In this activity, children substitute one phoneme for another to make a new word. (Teacher: The word is bug. Change /g/ to /n/. What's the new word? Children: bun.)</p>
Phoneme Manipulation	Adding, deleting, and substituting sounds in words (e.g., add /b/ to oat to make boat; delete /p/ in pat to make at; substitute /o/ for /a/ in pat to make pot).
Phonemic Awareness	The ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds.
Phonic Analysis	Attention to various phonetic elements of words.
Phonics	<p>Phonics is a form of instruction to cultivate the understanding and use of the alphabetic principle, that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes (the sounds in spoken language) and graphemes, the letters that represent those sounds in written language and that this information can be used to read or decode words.</p> <p><i>Analogy-based phonics</i> In this approach, children are taught to use parts of words they have already learned to read and decode words they don't know. They apply this strategy when the words share similar parts in their spellings, for example, reading screen by analogy to green. Children may be taught a large set of key words for use in reading new words.</p> <p><i>Analytic phonics</i> In this approach, children learn to analyze letter-sound relationships in previously learned words. They do not pronounce sounds in isolation.</p>

	<p><i>Embedded phonics</i> In this approach, children learn vocabulary through explicit instruction on the letter-sound relationships during the reading of connected text, usually when the teacher notices that a child is struggling to read a particular word. Letter-sound relationships are taught as part of sight word reading. If the sequence of letter-sounds is not prescribed and sequenced, but is determined by whatever words are encountered in text, then the program is not systematic or explicit.</p> <p><i>Onset-rime phonics instruction</i> In this approach, children learn to break monosyllabic words into their onsets (consonants preceding the vowel) and rimes (vowel and following consonants). They read each part separately and then blend the parts to say the whole word.</p> <p><i>Phonics through spelling</i> In this approach, children learn to segment words into phonemes and to make words by writing letters for phonemes.</p> <p><i>Synthetic phonics</i> In this instructional approach, children learn how to convert letters or letter combinations into a sequence of sounds, and then how to blend the sounds together to form recognizable words.</p> <p><i>Systematic and explicit phonics instruction</i> The most effective way to teach phonics. A program is systematic if the plan of instruction includes a carefully selected set of letter-sound relationships that are organized into a logical sequence. Explicit means the programs provide teachers with precise directions for the teaching of these relationships.</p>
Phonogram	A succession of letters that represent the same phonological unit in different words, such as “igh” in flight, might, tight, sigh, and high.
Phonological Awareness	Phonological awareness covers a range of understandings related to the sounds of words and word parts, including identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes. It also includes phonemic awareness as well as other aspects of spoken language such as rhyming and syllabication.
Phonological Recoding	Translation of letters to sounds to words and allows for gaining understanding of the word.
Prefix	A morpheme that precedes a root and that contributes to or modifies the meaning of a word as “re” in reprint.
Print Awareness	Print awareness is basic knowledge about print and how it is typically organized on a page. For example, print conveys meaning, print is read left to right, and words are separated by spaces.
Print Concepts	The ability of a reader to know and recognize the ways in which print “works” for the purposes of reading, particularly with regard to books: directionality, capital letters begin sentences, ending punctuation, etc.

Prosody	Reading with expression, proper intonation, and phrasing. This helps readers to sound as if they are speaking the part they are reading. It is also this element of fluency that sets it apart from automaticity.
Rate	The speed at which a person reads.
Receptive Language	Language that is heard.
Regular Word	A word in which all the letters represent their most common sounds and can be decoded.
Rhyming	Words that have the same ending sound.
Rime	The rime is the part of a syllable that contains the vowel and all that follows it (the rime of bag is -ag; of swim is -im).
Root	A bound morpheme, usually of Latin origin, that cannot stand alone but is used to form a family of words with related meanings.
Schwa	The vowel sound sometimes heard in an unstressed syllable and is most often sounded as /uh/ or as the short /u/ sound as in cup or /a/ in assign.
Segmentation	Separating the individual phonemes, or sounds, of a word into discrete units.
Sight Words	These are words that are recognized immediately. Sometimes sight words are thought to be irregular, or high frequency words (e.g., the Dolch and Fry lists). However, any word that is recognized automatically is a sight word. These words may be phonetically regular or irregular.
Sound to Symbol	Phonics instruction that matches phoneme to grapheme.
Spelling Patterns	Refers to digraphs, vowel pairs, word families, and vowel variant spellings.
Stop Sounds	A stop sound can only be said for an instant, otherwise its sound will be distorted (i.e., / b/, /c/ /d/, /g/, /h/, /j/, /k/, /p/, /q/, /t/, /x/). Words beginning with stop sounds are more difficult for students to sound out than words beginning with a continuous sound.
Structural Analysis	A procedure for teaching students to read words formed with prefixes, suffixes, or other meaningful word parts.
Suffix	An affix attached to the end of a base, root, or stem that changes the meaning or grammatical function of the word, as “en” in oxen.
Syllable	A syllable is a word part that contains a vowel or, in spoken language, a vowel sound (e-vent, news-pa-per). <i>Syllable types</i> There are six syllable types: Closed: cat, cobweb Open: he, silo Vowel-consonant-e (VCE): like, milestone Consonant-l-e: candle, juggle (second syllable) R-controlled: star, corner Vowel pairs: count, rainbow
Syllabication	Syllabication is the act of breaking words into syllables.
Symbol to Sound	Matching grapheme to phoneme.
Synonym	Words that have similar meanings.

Useful Letter Sounds	Letters that appear frequently in words. Beginning readers can decode more words when they know several useful letters. Knowing the sounds of /m/, /a/, /t/, and /i/ is more advantageous than the sounds /x/, /q/ /y/, and /z/. Other useful letter sounds are /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, /b/, /c/, /d/, /f/, /g/, /h/, /k/, /l/, /n/, /p/, and /r/.
Variant Correspondences	Various corresponding spelling patterns for a specific sound or a variety of spelling patterns for one sound (e.g., long a spelled a, a_e, ai, _ay).
Vocabulary	Vocabulary refers to the words a reader knows. Listening vocabulary refers to the words a person knows when hearing them in oral speech. Speaking vocabulary refers to the words we use when we speak. Reading vocabulary refers to the words a person knows when seeing them in print. Writing vocabulary refers to the words we use in writing.
Vowel Digraph (Vowel pairs)	Two vowels together that represent one phoneme, or sound (e.g., ea, ai, oa).
Word Attack	Word attack is an aspect of reading instruction that includes intentional strategies for learning to decode, sight read, and recognize written words.
Word Learning Strategies	Strategies students use to learn words such as: decoding, analyzing meaningful parts of words, using analogy, using context clues, using a dictionary (student friendly definitions), glossary, or other resources.
Word Parts	Letters, onsets, rimes, syllables that, when combined, result in words. Word parts include affixes (prefixes and suffixes), base words, and word roots. The ability to recognize various word parts in multisyllabic words is beneficial in decoding unfamiliar words.
Word Roots	Word roots are words from other languages that are the origin of many English words. About 60 percent of all English words have Latin or Greek origins.
Word Study	The act of deliberately investigating words (e.g., vocabulary-building exercises, word-identification practice, and spelling).