

The Secret Life of the Red Fox

by Laurence Pringle

Follow a year in the life of a red fox named Vixen as she hunts, escapes threats, and raises her kits.

Create Successful Reading Habits

Research from the What Works Clearinghouse suggests that teaching students prefixes and suffixes will help them read and understand the meaning of multisyllabic words.* Knowing how to decode words using prefixes and suffixes supports students in determining the meaning of unknown words. When they can break apart a word, students are better able to learn the word and remember how to read and write it.

* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse. (n.d.). Practice Guides. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>

SCIENCE OF READING – ASSESSMENTS

Assessments measure what children have learned or are able to do. Assessments can be divided into two broad categories: **formal** and **informal** assessments.

- **Formal assessments** are usually standardized; that is, they have been administered to a large sample of different students in a uniform, consistent manner.
 - Norm-referenced tests compare students to their peers—how do they compare to other students their age or in the same grade?
 - Criterion-referenced tests indicate if students have accomplished certain formalized academic objectives or benchmarks, such as state standards—which learning goals have they met?
- Formal assessments are often used for **screening, diagnostic, or outcome/summative assessment** purposes.

Informal assessments are not standardized but can be used by teachers to make instructional decisions. Some examples of informal assessments include:

- running records
- timed readings
- teacher anecdotal records
- book logs
- informal reading inventories
- phonics surveys

Informal assessments can be used for **progress monitoring** or **formative purposes**. Teachers use these to decide the next steps for instruction. Teacher-created assessments are also often used as **outcome measures** to determine if students have learned instructional objectives.

WORD WORK – PREFIXES

Help your students identify prefixes to read and understand unfamiliar words. When a **prefix** is added to a base word, it changes its meaning. Base words are single words that cannot be broken into smaller word parts and still have meaning. For example, adding the **prefix** *re* (again) to the base word *read* creates a new word, *re-read*. Adding the prefix also changes the meaning of the word to *read again*.

Here are some examples of **prefixes** from the book and a description of what they mean.

Example from the Book	Prefix (Meaning)	Meaning
supersensitive (p. 4)	super (above and beyond)	above and beyond sensitive
underground (p. 18)	under (below)	below the ground
midsummer (p. 27)	mid (middle)	middle of summer

Explicitly teach students how to use **prefixes** to determine the meaning of unknown words.

- Point to the word *supersensitive*.
 - Say, "This is the word *supersensitive*. *Supersensitive* has the **prefix** *super* at the beginning. The prefix *super* means *above and beyond*."
 - Say, "When you add the **prefix** *super* to the base word, *sensitive*, the meaning of the word becomes *above and beyond sensitive*."
 - Say, "Canines, like wolves, foxes, and dogs have *supersensitive* noses and ears that help them smell and hear better than humans."
- Repeat with *underground* and *midsummer*.

Find more opportunities to practice identifying and analyzing words with **prefixes** as you read the book together.

ELA.4.F.1.3: Use knowledge of grade-level phonics and word-analysis skills to decode words.


- Apply knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology to read and write unfamiliar single-syllable and multisyllabic words in and out of context.**


ELL and SWD suggestion:


Provide students with two different colored highlighters or colored pencils. Students will use one color to highlight or underline the prefix and the second color to highlight or underline the base word. The variation in colors will provide students with an enhanced visual of the affix and the root word.


TALK ABOUT NEW AND INTERESTING WORDS

Tier 2 vocabulary words can be used for explicit vocabulary instruction. When teaching vocabulary, it is important to create and share student-friendly definitions that are appropriate for the level of your students. Help students make connections to the word by providing contextual information that relates to the text being read and builds upon their background knowledge. Here are some examples of Tier 2 vocabulary words from the book:

 **cautious** (p. 10): Someone who is **cautious** acts carefully to avoid danger. Vixen is **cautious** when she hunts at dawn and dusk to avoid people and other animals.

 **puzzled** (p. 11): If something **puzzles** someone, it confuses them and they do not understand it. The dog's owner is **puzzled** because he does not understand why the dog is barking.

 **emerges** (p. 20): If someone **emerges** from somewhere, they come out from that place. Vixen stays underground most of the time, but she **emerges** from her den to stretch her legs and get a drink of water.

 **wary** (p. 27): If someone is **wary**, they carefully look out for any threat or danger. Vixen's kits learn to be quiet and **wary** while they hunt and look for food.

Extension Activity: Create a vocabulary notebook with students to keep track of all the new vocabulary words they are learning. Students will use the notebook to record each word and draw a picture that represents the word. Teachers can also use the notebook to have students draw synonyms, antonyms, or other important vocabulary features. If you are able, provide a small incentive like a sticker or a classroom shout-out to encourage students to use the word in the correct context in their everyday language.

ELA.K.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Reinforce students' understanding of vocabulary by asking them to generate synonyms for the new words they are learning. This allows them to interact with new vocabulary in a meaningful way. Assist ELL students in recognizing cognates in their native language that correspond to the meaning of the word in English.

READ FOR MEANING – CENTRAL IDEA AND RELEVANT DETAILS

In this learning activity, students will examine sections of the text to identify the central idea and explain how the relevant details support the central idea.

ELA.4.R.2.2: Explain how relevant details support the central idea, implied or explicit.

ELA.4.R.3.2: Summarize a text to enhance comprehension.

b. Include the central idea and relevant details for an informational text.

Use the graphic organizer to scaffold thinking and learning.

Topic:			
Pages 7 - 9	Pages 14 - 17	Pages 18 - 20	Pages 22 - 25
Central Idea:	Central Idea:	Central Idea:	Central Idea:
Relevant Details: 1. 2.	Relevant Details: 1. 2.	Relevant Details: 1. 2.	Relevant Details: 1. 2.

Before:

- Say, "The central idea of a text is the most important information or what the author wants you to know about a topic. In a nonfiction text, sometimes the central idea is clearly stated in the text features or in a sentence. Other times, the central idea is implied, which means that it is not clearly stated. When you determine the central idea of a text, you can use the details as evidence to support the central idea. Today we are going to look at sections of the text *The Secret Life of the Red Fox* to determine the central idea and explain how the details support that central idea."
- Say, "First we are going to write the topic at the top of our graphic organizer. The topic can usually be described in just a few words. Many times in a nonfiction text, the topic is in the title. Looking at the title of this book, what is the topic? (red foxes) As we look for the central idea and details in each section, think about the question, 'What does the author want me to know about red foxes in this part of the text?'"

During:

- The text has been broken down into sections that students will read, determine the central idea, and identify two relevant details that support the central idea.
 - Section 1: I Do (p. 7 – 9)
 - Section 2: We Do (p. 14 – 17)
 - Section 3: We Do (p. 18 – 20)
 - Section 4: You Do (p. 22 – 25)
- Use the Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework in which you explicitly model the strategy, provide guided practice, and then allow students time to practice the skill on their own or in small groups.
- As the students work, remind them of the guiding question that will help them determine the central idea, “What does the author want you to know about red foxes in this section of the text?”
- Once they have determined the central idea, ask, “What are the most important details from the text that support the central idea of this section?”
- Additional questions that could be used to guide discussion are:
 - What details does the author use to support the central idea?
 - How do the details or the central idea relate to the topic?
 - Why would the author use these details to support the central idea?
 - Which of these details BEST supports the central idea?

After:

Writing activity: Summarize the Section

- Students will select a section of the text and use the information recorded on their graphic organizer to summarize the central idea and explain how the relevant details support the central idea.
- Their summary should include information about the topic, what the central idea of the section is, and what relevant details support the central idea.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Help students write a text structure summary by providing sentence stems for them to complete. Sentence stems help students learn the structure of a sentence and build understanding around how to construct sentences when writing. They also help students organize their thoughts in a logical and meaningful way.