

GED & HiSET

RLA Foundations



- ✓ Read Faster,
- ✓ Understand
More,
- ✓ Score Higher

A Step-by-Step Guide for Struggling Readers

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Chapter 1: Understanding Words

Understanding words is a key part of becoming a strong reader. Recognizing words quickly, sounding them out, and understanding their meanings will help with reading fluency and comprehension. This chapter will focus on three important skills:

- **Recognizing sight words** to improve reading speed
- **Using phonics** to break down unfamiliar words
- **Understanding prefixes, suffixes, and root words** to determine word meanings

These skills will help you build confidence and read more effectively.

Recognizing Sight Words Sight words are common words found in everyday reading. Because they do not always follow standard spelling rules, they should be memorized for easy recognition.

Examples of Sight Words:

- **Basic words:** the, and is, was, were
- **Pronouns:** he, she, they, we, you
- **Action words:** have, said, do, does, can

Why Are Sight Words Important? Sight words appear often in texts. Learning them will make reading easier because you will not need to stop and sound them out every time you see them.

Practice Activity Read the sentence below aloud. Try to recognize the sight words without pausing.

"They were happy because she had a fun day."

Using Phonics to Sound Out Words Phonics helps readers decode unfamiliar words by matching letters to sounds. Recognizing phonetic patterns can improve reading accuracy and fluency.

Common Phonetic Patterns:

- **Short vowel sounds:** cat, dog, sit, jump
- **Long vowel sounds:** bike, tree, blue, hope

- **Two-letter sounds (digraphs):** ship, chat, thin, phone
- **Blended consonants:** stop, bring, climb, trust

Practice Activity Break the following words into individual sounds:

1. **train** _____ / _____ / _____ / _____
2. **bright** → _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____
3. **shadow** → _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Understanding Word Parts Breaking words into smaller parts can help readers understand their meanings. Learning how prefixes, suffixes, and root words work will help with vocabulary building.

Key Word Parts:

- **Prefixes:** Added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning (**example:** re- in *rewrite* means "again")
- **Suffixes:** Added to the end of a word to change its meaning (**example:** -ing in *running* means "ongoing")
- **Roots:** The main part of the word that carries its meaning (**example:** help in *helper* means "to assist")

Practice Activity Complete the words below using the correct prefix or suffix:

1. **re-** + **start** → _____
2. **un-** + **happy** → _____
3. **-er** + **teach** → _____
4. **dis-** + **agree** → _____
5. **-ful** + **hope** → _____

Real-World Application Recognizing words quickly helps in everyday life, such as reading job descriptions, contracts, forms, and instructions. It also makes reading more enjoyable.

Example A job posting states:

"Candidates must have experience working in customer service."

If you recognize words like **must**, **experience**, and **working**, you will understand the requirements without difficulty.

Practice Questions

1. Which of the following is a sight word? a) running b) can c) teacher d) exciting
2. What is the correct way to blend "ship"? a) /s/ /h/ /i/ /p/ b) /sh/ /i/ /p/ c) /s/ /hi/ /p/ d) /sh/ /ip/
3. Which word contains a prefix? a) teacher b) helpful c) restart d) running
4. What does "unhappy" mean? a) Happy again b) Not happy c) Happier than before d) Without help
5. What does "rewrite" mean? a) To write for the first time b) To write again c) To stop writing d) To change letters

Quiz Questions

1. What is the root word in "unhappiness"? a) un- b) happy c) -ness d) none
2. Which sight word appears in this sentence: "They had a good day"? a) good b) they c) day d) had
3. How would you sound out "tree"? a) /t/ /r/ /ee/ b) /tr/ /ee/ c) /t/ /re/ /e/ d) /t/ /er/ /ee/
4. Which suffix means "a person who does an action"? a) -ing b) -er c) -ly d) -un
5. What does "redo" mean? a) To stop doing b) To do again c) To change meaning d) To move forward

Answer Key

Practice Questions

1. b) can
2. b) /sh/ /i/ /p/
3. c) restart
4. b) Not happy
5. b) To write again

Quiz Questions

1. b) happy
2. b) they
3. a) /t/ /r/ /ee/
4. b) -er
5. b) To do again

Chapter 2: Sentence Basics

A sentence is the basic unit of communication in writing. A strong sentence conveys meaning clearly and effectively. To construct a proper sentence, you must ensure that it is complete, contains all necessary parts, and is punctuated correctly.

This chapter will focus on three key areas:

- **Identifying subjects, verbs, and objects**
- **Understanding complete vs. incomplete sentences**
- **Using punctuation for clarity**

Identifying Subjects, Verbs, and Objects Every sentence has essential components that provide structure and meaning.

- **Subject:** The person, place, or thing that performs an action
- **Verb:** The action or state of being in the sentence
- **Object:** The recipient of the action

Examples:

1. **She reads books.**
 - Subject: She
 - Verb: reads
 - Object: books
2. **The teacher gave homework.**
 - Subject: The teacher
 - Verb: gave
 - Object: homework

Practice Activity Identify the subject, verb, and object in the following sentences:

1. John plays soccer.
2. The dog chased the ball.
3. We watched a movie.

Understanding Complete vs. Incomplete Sentences A complete sentence expresses a full thought and includes both a subject and a verb. It can stand alone and make sense.

An **incomplete sentence**—also called a **sentence fragment**—is missing a subject, a verb, or a complete thought. Fragments do not make sense on their own.

Common Errors That Cause Sentence Fragments

1. Missing Subject

- Fragment: "Runs quickly down the road."
- Complete Sentence: "The dog runs quickly down the road."

2. Missing Verb

- Fragment: "The girl with long hair."
- Complete Sentence: "The girl with long hair is smiling."

3. Dependent Clause Without an Independent Clause

- Fragment: "Because it was raining."
- Complete Sentence: "Because it was raining, we stayed inside."

Practice Activity Decide if the following are complete sentences or fragments:

1. Walked through the door.
2. The teacher explained the lesson.
3. Because they were late.
4. The car stopped suddenly.
5. After the movie ended.

Fixing Incomplete Sentences To fix a sentence fragment, add the missing subject, verb, or complete thought.

- Fragment: "Because I was tired."
- Fixed Sentence: "Because I was tired, I went to bed early."
- Fragment: "Went to the store."
- Fixed Sentence: "She went to the store."

Using Punctuation for Clarity Punctuation ensures that sentences are structured properly and that meaning is conveyed accurately.

- **Period (.)**: Ends a statement.
- **Question mark (?)**: Ends a question.
- **Exclamation mark (!)**: Shows strong emotion or emphasis.
- **Comma (,)**: Separates ideas within a sentence.

Examples:

1. **I like apples.** (Statement)
2. **Do you want coffee?** (Question)
3. **Wow, that was amazing!** (Exclamation)
4. **We bought apples, bananas, and oranges.** (Comma for a list)

Practice Activity Add the correct punctuation to the following sentences:

1. What time is it
2. I love ice cream
3. Stop that
4. She packed her bag put on her shoes and left

Real-World Application Sentence structure and punctuation are essential in everyday communication, from emails and messages to job applications and legal documents.

Example: Consider the difference between these two sentences:

1. **Let's eat, Grandma!** (The comma makes it clear that the speaker is talking to Grandma.)
2. **Let's eat Grandma!** (Without the comma, it sounds like the speaker wants to eat Grandma.)

Practice Questions

1. Which part of the sentence tells who or what performs the action? a) Object b) Verb c) Subject d) Punctuation
2. Which of the following is a complete sentence? a) The dog barking. b) She walked to the park. c) Runs quickly. d) Under the table.
3. What punctuation mark should be used at the end of a question? a) Period b) Comma c) Exclamation mark d) Question mark
4. Which sentence contains a correctly placed comma? a) She bought apples bananas oranges. b) She bought apples, bananas, oranges. c) She bought apples bananas, and oranges. d) She bought apples, bananas, and oranges.
5. What is the object in the sentence "She wrote a letter"? a) She b) Wrote c) A d) Letter

Quiz Questions

1. What is missing in this sentence: "Went to the store"? a) Object b) Verb c) Subject d) Punctuation

2. Which punctuation mark should be used in a list? a) Period b) Comma c) Question mark d) Exclamation mark
3. What is the subject in the sentence "Tom reads books"? a) Tom b) Reads c) Books d) None of the above
4. Which sentence is a fragment? a) She enjoys music. b) The dog ran outside. c) The children playing. d) They finished their homework.
5. What does a period do in a sentence? a) Shows excitement b) Separates ideas c) Ends a statement d) Asks a question

Answer Key

Practice Questions

1. c) Subject
2. b) She walked to the park.
3. d) Question mark
4. d) She bought apples, bananas, and oranges.
5. d) Letter

Quiz Questions

1. c) Subject
2. b) Comma
3. a) Tom
4. c) The children playing.
5. c) Ends a statement

Chapter 3: Reading Comprehension Essentials

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand, interpret, and analyze written text. Strong comprehension skills help readers identify important information, make connections, and evaluate meaning. This chapter will focus on three key areas:

- **Finding the main idea and supporting details**
- **Identifying explicit vs. implied meaning**
- **Recognizing the author's purpose and tone**

Finding the Main Idea and Supporting Details The **main idea** is the central point or message of a passage. It tells what the text is mostly about. The **supporting details** provide facts, explanations, or examples to back up the main idea.

How to Identify the Main Idea:

1. Look at the title—does it hint at the topic?
2. Read the first and last sentences of a paragraph—these often contain the main idea.
3. Ask, "**What is this passage mostly about?**"

Examples:

- **Passage:** "Regular exercise improves heart health, strengthens muscles, and boosts energy levels."
 - **Main Idea:** Exercise has many health benefits.
 - **Supporting Details:** Improves heart health, strengthens muscles, boosts energy.
- **Passage:** "The library offers free resources, including books, computers, and workshops for all ages."
 - **Main Idea:** The library provides valuable services.
 - **Supporting Details:** Free resources like books, computers, workshops.

Practice Activity Read the following sentence and identify the **main idea** and **supporting details**:

1. Eating fruits and vegetables provides essential vitamins for a healthy body.

2. The invention of the telephone changed how people communicate over long distances.
3. Animals adapt to their environments to survive in harsh conditions.

Identifying Explicit vs. Implied Meaning Some information in a passage is **explicit**, meaning it is **clearly stated** in the text. Other information is **implied**, meaning the reader must **infer or conclude** the meaning based on clues.

Explicit Meaning Example:

- **Text:** "The sun sets in the west."
- **Explicit Fact:** The direction of sunset is west.

Implied Meaning Example:

- **Text:** "He grabbed his umbrella before stepping outside."
- **Implied Meaning:** It is likely raining or about to rain.

How to Identify Implied Meaning:

1. Look for **hints in the words**—do they suggest something deeper?
2. Use **prior knowledge**—what do you already know about the topic?
3. Ask, "**What does this sentence suggest, even if it's not directly stated?**"

Practice Activity Determine if the following sentences contain **explicit information** or an **implied meaning**:

1. The store is closing at 8 p.m. tonight.
2. She shivered and pulled her jacket tighter.
3. The teacher smiled as she handed back the graded tests.

Recognizing the Author's Purpose and Tone An author writes with a **specific purpose** in mind. Understanding this helps readers interpret the message correctly.

Common Author Purposes:

- **To inform:** Provides facts or explanations (Example: A science textbook)
- **To persuade:** Convince the reader to agree (Example: A political speech)
- **To entertain:** Tell stories or create emotion (Example: A novel or poem)

Tone is the **attitude or feeling** the author expresses. Recognizing tone helps readers understand **how the message is being delivered**.

Examples of Tone:

- **Neutral:** "The instructions state that users must register online." (Formal and factual)
- **Excited:** "This is the most amazing discovery of the century!" (Enthusiastic and positive)
- **Serious:** "If action isn't taken, the consequences will be severe." (Urgent and concerned)

Practice Activity Identify the **purpose** and **tone** of the following sentences:

1. "Save money today—shop our huge sale!"
2. "During World War II, millions of soldiers fought in battle."
3. "Her heart pounded as she stepped onto the dark path."

Real-World Application Reading comprehension is essential for everyday life. Whether reading **work emails, news articles, contracts, or instructions**, strong comprehension skills help people understand information clearly.

Example: Consider this statement from a job application: "*Candidates must have experience in customer service.*"

- **Explicit meaning:** The company requires prior experience.
- **Implied meaning:** If someone applies without customer service experience, they may not qualify.

Practice Questions

1. What is the main idea of this sentence? "Rainforests provide habitat for thousands of plant and animal species." a) Some animals live in rainforests. b) Rainforests are important ecosystems. c) People should visit rainforests. d) Trees grow in rainforests.
2. Which sentence contains **implied** meaning? a) The train arrives at 4 p.m. b) He rushed to catch the train, glancing at his watch. c) The train schedule is posted online. d) Tickets for the train cost \$5 each.
3. Which sentence **persuades** the reader? a) Many scientists believe climate change is a serious issue. b) The effects of climate change can be seen

worldwide. c) We must take action today to stop climate change! d) Climate change has impacted global temperatures.

4. What is the **tone** of this sentence? "The devastating storm left hundreds of families without shelter." a) Playful b) Humorous c) Sad and serious d) Encouraging
5. What is the **author's purpose** in this passage? "The government should increase funding for schools to improve education nationwide." a) To entertain b) To persuade c) To inform d) To confuse

Quiz Questions

1. Which sentence contains **explicit meaning**? a) She pulled her jacket tighter as the wind howled. b) The store closes at 9 p.m. c) He stepped outside and saw puddles everywhere. d) She suddenly gasped and covered her mouth.
2. Which sentence is an example of **an author informing** the reader? a) The team won because they played well together. b) Research shows that exercise reduces stress. c) You should vote for my candidate this election. d) This book will make you laugh out loud!
3. Which is an example of **a persuasive tone**? a) Studies show smoking is bad for your health—stop today! b) There are many restaurants in the city. c) The library has a collection of old books. d) Birds migrate south in winter.
4. Which statement has **an implied meaning**? a) He put on his sunglasses before stepping outside. b) The sun rises in the east. c) The restaurant opens at noon. d) The speed limit is 65 mph.
5. What is the **main idea** in this passage? "Regular exercise strengthens muscles, improves heart health, and boosts energy." a) Exercise has multiple health benefits. b) People should exercise every day. c) Heart health is important. d) Muscles get stronger with exercise.

Answer Key

Practice Questions

1. b) Rainforests are important ecosystems.
2. b) He rushed to catch the train, glancing at his watch.
3. c) We must take action today to stop climate change!
4. c) Sad and serious.
5. b) To persuade.

Quiz Questions

1. b) The store closes at 9 p.m.
2. b) Research shows that exercise reduces stress.
3. a) Studies show smoking is bad for your health—stop today!
4. a) He put on his sunglasses before stepping outside.
5. a) Exercise has multiple health benefits.

Chapter 4: Vocabulary Building

Expanding your vocabulary helps improve reading comprehension, writing skills, and communication. A strong vocabulary allows readers to understand complex texts and express themselves clearly. This chapter will focus on three key areas:

- **Common GED & HiSET words**
- **Using context clues to determine word meaning**
- **Understanding synonyms, antonyms, and figurative language**

Common GED & HiSET Words Standardized tests like the GED and HiSET often include academic and professional vocabulary. Learning these words will help test-takers understand passages and answer questions accurately.

Examples of Common Test Words:

1. **Analyze** – To examine in detail
2. **Infer** – To make an educated guess based on information
3. **Evaluate** – To judge the value or importance of something
4. **Summarize** – To briefly explain the main points
5. **Significant** – Important or meaningful

Practice Activity Match the vocabulary words with their meanings:

1. Infer
2. Evaluate
3. Summarize
4. Analyze
5. Significant

a) To examine something carefully b) To make an informed guess c) To judge something's worth d) To briefly explain key points e) Important or meaningful

Using Context Clues to Determine Word Meaning Context clues help readers figure out the meaning of unknown words by looking at surrounding sentences.

Types of Context Clues:

- **Definition Clues:** The sentence directly defines the word.
 - Example: "An **entrepreneur**, or business owner, must take risks to succeed."
 - Meaning: An entrepreneur is a business owner.
- **Synonym Clues:** A similar word appears in the sentence.
 - Example: "The path was **serpentine**, winding like a snake."
 - Meaning: **Serpentine** means winding.
- **Antonym Clues:** The sentence includes a contrasting word.
 - Example: "Unlike the **hostile** crowd, the protestors remained peaceful."

- Meaning: **Hostile** means aggressive or unfriendly.

Practice Activity Use context clues to determine the meaning of the bold words:

1. The factory was **dormant**, meaning it had shut down temporarily.
2. He was **elated** after winning the championship, feeling extreme happiness.
3. The detective was **meticulous**, paying close attention to every small detail.

Understanding Synonyms, Antonyms, and Figurative Language Synonyms and antonyms help expand vocabulary, while figurative language adds depth to reading and writing.

Synonyms: Words with similar meanings

- Example: **Happy** → **Joyful, Ecstatic, Content**

Antonyms: Words with opposite meanings

- Example: **Fast** → **Slow, Delayed, Sluggish**

Figurative Language: Words or phrases that mean something beyond their literal definition

- **Simile:** Compares two things using "like" or "as"
 - Example: "Her smile was **as bright as the sun**."
- **Metaphor:** Directly compares two things without "like" or "as"
 - Example: "Time is a **thief**, stealing away moments."
- **Personification:** Gives human qualities to non-human things
 - Example: "The wind **whispered** through the trees."

Practice Activity

1. Identify a **synonym** for "difficult": a) Easy b) Hard c) Simple d) Quick
2. Which sentence contains **figurative language**? a) The mountain was tall. b) The clouds danced across the sky. c) She walked to the store. d) He opened the door.
3. Find the **antonym** for "generous": a) Kind b) Selfish c) Giving d) Helpful

Real-World Application A strong vocabulary is essential for daily life, including **work emails, reports, news articles, instructions, and conversations**.

Example: Consider this sentence in a job description: *"The candidate must demonstrate strong analytical skills."*

- **Understanding vocabulary:**
 - **Demonstrate** means **show**
 - **Analytical** means **examining details carefully**
- **Meaning of the sentence:** The employer wants someone who can think critically and solve problems.

Practice Questions

1. Which word means **"to carefully study"**? a) Analyze b) Ignore c) Hasten d) Discuss
2. What is a synonym for **"excited"**? a) Sad b) Thrilled c) Bored d) Silent
3. What is an antonym for **"weak"**? a) Fragile b) Strong c) Small d) Uncertain
4. Identify the type of figurative language: "The stars winked in the night sky." a) Simile b) Metaphor c) Personification d) Hyperbole
5. What does **infer** mean? a) To state directly b) To guess based on evidence c) To ignore information d) To ask a question

Quiz Questions

1. Which sentence uses **context clues**? a) The word "feline" means cat. b) Unlike the quiet dog, the cat was very loud. c) Cats are animals. d) She has a pet cat.
2. Which sentence contains an **antonym** clue? a) The company was profitable, unlike last year when it lost money. b) He enjoyed the book. c) She borrowed a pencil. d) The novel was long.
3. What type of figurative language is in this sentence? "The classroom was a zoo." a) Simile b) Metaphor c) Personification d) Hyperbole
4. Which word means **"important or meaningful"**? a) Analyze b) Significant c) Weak d) Ignore
5. Which sentence **persuades** the reader? a) Studies show that recycling helps the planet. b) Recycling is important—start today! c) The store is open until 7 p.m. d) He finished reading a book.

Answer Key

Practice Questions

1. a) Analyze
2. b) Thrilled
3. b) Strong
4. c) Personification
5. b) To guess based on evidence

Quiz Questions

1. b) Unlike the quiet dog, the cat was very loud.
2. a) The company was profitable, unlike last year when it lost money.
3. b) Metaphor
4. b) Significant
5. b) Recycling is important—start today!