

Word-Attack Strategies

Word-attack strategies help students decode, pronounce, and understand unfamiliar words. They help students attack words piece by piece or from a different angle.

Model and instruct students:

Use Picture Clues

- Look at the picture.
- Are there people, objects, or actions in the picture that might make sense in the sentence?

Sound Out the Word

- Start with the first letter, and say each letter-sound out loud.
- Blend the sounds together and try to say the word. Does the word make sense in the sentence?

Look for Chunks in the Word

- Look for familiar letter chunks. They may be sound/symbols, prefixes, suffixes, endings, whole words, or base words.
- Read each chunk by itself. Then blend the chunks together and sound out the word. Does that word make sense in the sentence?

Connect to a Word You Know

- Think of a word that looks like the unfamiliar word.
- Compare the familiar word to the unfamiliar word. Decide if the familiar word is a chunk or form of the unfamiliar word.
- Use the known word in the sentence to see if it makes sense. If so, the meanings of the two words are close enough for understanding.

Reread the Sentence

- Read the sentence more than once.
- Think about what word might make sense in the sentence. Try the word and see if the sentence makes sense.

Keep Reading

- Read past the unfamiliar word and look for clues.
- If the word is repeated, compare the second sentence to the first. What word might make sense in both?

Use Prior Knowledge

- Think about what you know about the subject of the book, paragraph, or sentence.
- Do you know anything that might make sense in the sentence? Read the sentence with the word to see if it makes sense.