

Lesson 8: The Building Blocks of Language

Chapter 2 — Word Parts

Primary Review Word: SUNFLOWER

Root/History Word: HIPPOPOTAMUS

New Organizing Handle: WORD PARTS / ROOTS

Closing Payoff: SIX SEVEN

After the Morning Routine

Begin after the class's established morning routine. Use the classroom routines, song, movement, visual supports, worksheet, and participation structures that are already working for your class.

Tell the class: "Investigators, today we are going to look at some of the tools we have been building."

The goal is not to test whether students can recite definitions. Let them use the tools, recognize what each one does, and begin organizing them into a language toolbox.

1. First Pass — SUNFLOWER: Clap It

Write only: **SUNFLOWER**. Ask, "Can anyone tell us this word?" Say it together: **SUNFLOWER**.

Then ask, "If we want to hear the spoken parts, what tool do we use?" Let the class answer: **CLAP IT**. Clap together: **SUN | FLOW | ER**.

Ask, "How many syllables?" Students answer: **three**. Then ask, "What kind of parts did we just find?" Bring forward: **SYLLABLES**. Remind the class: "Syllables are the spoken beats we hear in a word."

Let students clap, point to the breaks, mark the board, or explain what they hear. Then erase **SUNFLOWER** and the syllable work.

2. Second Pass — SUNFLOWER: Break It

Write the whole word again: **SUNFLOWER**. Ask, "Now what if we want to break it? What can we find that we know?" Give the class time.

Let students find **SUN** and **FLOWER**. Write: **SUN + FLOWER**. Ask, "What kind of word is SUNFLOWER?" Bring forward: **COMPOUND WORD**.

Ask, "Why?" Let students explain. If needed, restate: "A compound word is two words put together to make one new word."

Remind the class: "A minute ago, we clapped SUNFLOWER as **SUN | FLOW | ER**." Point to **SUN + FLOWER**. Ask, "Did we break the word the same way both times?" No. Then ask, "Why not?" Bring the class toward: "We were using different tools to look for different things."

Clap It helped us hear syllables. **Break It** helped us find the words inside the compound word. Then erase **SUNFLOWER** again.

3. Bring Back HIPPOPOTAMUS

Write: **HIPPOPOTAMUS**. Ask, “We just used two tools on **SUNFLOWER**. Did we learn another way to look inside **HIPPOPOTAMUS**?” Let students remember what they can from Lesson 7.

Bring forward: **HIPPOS** and **POTAMOS**. Ask, “What did **HIPPOS** tell us?” Students answer: **HORSE**. Ask, “What did **POTAMOS** tell us?” Students answer: **RIVER**.

Then ask, “What kind of word parts were we investigating?” Bring forward: **ROOTS**. Remind the class: “Words have history. These older Greek words carried meaning into **HIPPOPOTAMUS**.” Keep this review short; today the word is being used to recover another tool.

Then erase **HIPPOPOTAMUS**, **HIPPOS**, **POTAMOS**, **HORSE**, and **RIVER**. Clear the board.

4. Today’s Investigation — WORD ROOTS

Write: **WORD ROOTS**. Tell the class, “We have been using word roots. Now let’s investigate what that idea gives us.” Begin with the established classroom move: **Find what we know**.

Ask, “What do we already know about roots?” Do not immediately give a definition. Let students bring ordinary knowledge into the room. Suggested prompts include: “Where have you seen roots?” “Where do roots go?” “What do roots belong to?” “What picture comes into your mind when you hear root?” “What does a root do?”

Let the class talk. Accept useful observations and carry them on the board through words or quick drawings.

5. Let the Students Return What They Understand

Ask students to show the class what **WORD ROOTS** makes them think about. Say, “Show us what you understand.”

- draw a picture
- write a sentence
- give one idea
- explain aloud
- work with a partner
- come to the whiteboard
- point to or build on another student’s idea

Suggested prompts: “Draw me a picture of word roots.” “What would word roots look like if you could see them?” “Give us one sentence about roots.” “What do roots tell you?” “What did **HIPPOS** and **POTAMOS** teach us about word roots?”

The goal is not one identical drawing or one memorized definition. The class has already been given examples and history. Now they are returning what they understand.

6. Roots Go Down

As students’ ideas develop, draw a simple ground line on the board and draw roots underneath it. Ask, “Where do roots go?” Let the class answer: **down**.

Then ask, “If roots are going down, what is usually happening above them?” Let students answer. Something is growing: a plant, a flower, a tree, a stem, branches, leaves, or another reasonable image. Use their answers.

Return to **WORD ROOTS**. Explain: “We use root as a language word too. A word root carries an important piece of meaning into a word or into words that grow from it.” Then return verbally to the familiar example: **HIPPOS** carried **HORSE**. **POTAMOS** carried **RIVER**.

Leave the class with the visual handle: **Roots go down. Something grows up.** The picture is a handle for understanding. Students do not need to master every kind of root today.

7. Build Our Language Toolbox

Write: **OUR LANGUAGE TOOLBOX**. Tell the class, “Look at the different tools we have already been using.” Build the toolbox with them.

TOOL	WHAT IT HELPS US SEE
SYLLABLES	spoken beats
COMPOUND WORDS	whole words put together
WORD ROOTS	meaning and word history

Keep the toolbox simple. The purpose is for students to begin recognizing that these are different tools with different jobs.

8. Which Tool Are We Using?

Let the class practice choosing among the tools. Ask, “If I want to hear the beats in a word, which tool should I reach for?” Students answer: **syllables / Clap It.**

Ask, “If I want to know whether two whole words were put together, which tool should I use?” Students answer: **compound words / Break It.**

Ask, “If I am looking underneath a word for meaning and history, what might help me?” Students answer: **word roots.**

Say: **Different tools help us look for different things.** Then say: **Words can be broken in different ways for different reasons.** Students do not need to recite these lines from memory. They should experience the rule by using the tools.

9. Use the Lesson 8 Worksheet

Use the student packet alongside the whiteboard work. The worksheet should support the toolbox investigation rather than turn it into a vocabulary test. Students may match, sort, draw, circle, write, or explain which tool fits the work in front of them.

- **SUN | FLOW | ER** belongs with **SYLLABLES**.
- **SUN + FLOWER** belongs with **COMPOUND WORDS**.
- **HIPPOS / POTAMOS** belongs with **WORD ROOTS**.

Let students use the page independently, with a partner, at the table, or as part of the whole-class investigation. The paper supports the tool use. It does not need to overtake the classroom work.

10. Return to the Toolbox

Before closing, bring attention back to **OUR LANGUAGE TOOLBOX**. Read the three tools together: **SYLLABLES**, **COMPOUND WORDS**, and **WORD ROOTS**.

Ask, “Do all three tools tell us the same thing?” No. Ask, “Can the same word sometimes be investigated with more than one tool?” Yes.

Return briefly to **SUNFLOWER** if needed: **SUN | FLOW | ER** and **SUN + FLOWER**. Same word. Different tool. Different information. Return briefly to **HIPPOPOTAMUS**: **HIP | PO | POT | A | MUS** and **HIPPOS / POTAMOS**. Again: same word, different kind of break, different information.

11. Closing Investigation — SIX SEVEN

Keep this part playful. Write on the board: **6**. Ask seriously, “What is this?” Then ask, “What do we know?” Let the class answer however they answer.

If a student immediately calls out “Seven!” or “Six Seven!” go with it. Put the **7** on the board and let that student’s recognition open the discussion. If nobody makes the connection yet, write **7** and ask the same serious questions: “What is this?” “What do we know?” Give the class another moment.

The teacher is setting up the joke. If the class still has not supplied it, the teacher can finally call out, “Six Seven!” in the way the children are used to hearing it. Let the joke land. If the class already knows it, let them take over the moment.

The point is engagement. There is no need to force a particular answer before the expression has been established. Once **SIX SEVEN** is alive in the room, shift back into investigation.

Ask, “Okay. Where did that come from?” “Where did you first hear it?” “Did somebody explain it to you?” “Did you hear somebody else saying it?” “How did it get from wherever it started into this classroom?”

Then return to the root image from earlier: **Roots go down. Something grows up.** Ask, “Does SIX SEVEN have roots?” Let the class reason from what they already know.

Something people say came from somewhere. It spread. People repeated it. People changed or extended how they used it. It grew.

The class does not need to memorize the documented history of the expression. The payoff is the larger idea: **Language has roots too. Language can grow.**

12. Close the Lesson

Return one last time to **OUR LANGUAGE TOOLBOX: SYLLABLES, COMPOUND WORDS, and WORD ROOTS**. Ask, “What did our tools help us do today?” Let the investigators answer.

Close with the larger discovery: **Different tools help us see different things. Words can be broken in different ways for different reasons.**

Return to the familiar classroom handle: **See it. Say it. Clap it. Break it. Find what we know. Read it. Write it.**

The toolbox is growing. The children do not need to know every language tool yet. They are learning how to reach for the tools they have, use them, and see what each one can help them understand.