

PRACTICAL PEDAGOGY:

Leveraging Word Families in Enhancing Lexical Acquisition for English Language and Multilingual Learners(C)

DESIGNED BY
Jasmin (Bey) Cowin, Ed.D.

Word families are groups of words that share a common base or stem and have related meanings. In the context of linguistics and language teaching, especially with English Language Learners (ELLs), they typically refer to groups of words that have a similar pattern or structure.

WORDFAMILY EXAMPLE:	Derivational Families: <small>These are words derived from the same root, often sharing a core meaning. (The root word is provided, followed by derivatives of that root.)</small>	Inflectional Families: <small>These are words that change form due to grammatical reasons like tense, plurality, or possession. (The base form of the verb, adjective, or noun is provided, followed by its inflected forms.)</small>	Onset and Rime Families: <small>This concept is often used with beginning readers. The onset is the initial phonological unit of any word (e.g., the "c" in "cat") and the rime is the string of letters that follow (e.g., "at" in "cat"). Rime therefore refers to the portion of a syllable that includes the vowel and any consonants that come after it within that syllable. (One member of the family is provided, followed by words that share the same rime.)</small>
	<p>➤ PLAY: player, playful, playfulness, replay, playing, playhouse, playroom, playwright, plaything, playtime</p> <p>➤ NATION: national, nationality, international, nationalist, nationalize, nationalistic, nationwide, unnational, denationalize, transnational</p> <p>➤ LEAD: leader, leadership, leading, leaderless, mislead, pleader, misleading, leaded, lead-free, bleed</p> <p>➤ INFORM: information, informative, informer, uninformed, informant, misinformation, informally, deinform, reinform, preinform</p> <p>➤ WRITE: writer, writing, written, rewrite, unwritten, handwritten, typewritten, writerly, outwrite, miswrite</p> <p>➤ ACT: actor, actress, react, action, activate, inactive, transaction, enact, counteract, interaction</p> <p>➤ COLOR: colorful, colorless, discolor, recolor, coloration, colored, colorist, precolor, uncolored, colorway</p> <p>➤ MUSIC: musician, musical, musicology, musically, unmusical, musicless, musicologist, nonmusical, premusical, postmusical</p> <p>➤ SPORT: sporty, sportsman, sportswoman, sportive, unsporting, sportsmanship, sportless, multisport, sportscast, sportswear</p> <p>➤ FRIEND: friendly, friendship, unfriendly, befriend, friendless, friendliness, boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-friend, friendlike</p>	<p>➤ TALK: talks, talked, talking, talker</p> <p>➤ JUMP: jumps, jumped, jumping, jumper</p> <p>➤ SING: sings, sang, sung, singer</p> <p>➤ CHILD: children</p> <p>➤ MAN: men, man's, men's</p> <p>➤ WOMAN: women, woman's, women's</p> <p>➤ HAPPY: happier, happiest</p> <p>➤ BIG: bigger, biggest</p> <p>➤ RUN: runs, ran, running, runner</p> <p>➤ DRIVE: drives, drove, driven, driving, driver</p>	<p>➤ -at: cat, bat, rat, mat, fat, sat, hat, chat, flat, spat</p> <p>➤ -ig: big, dig, wig, pig, rig, jig, fig, twig, brig, swig</p> <p>➤ -og: dog, log, frog, cog, jog, bog, smog, slog, flog, blog</p> <p>➤ -un: run, sun, fun, bun, gun, spun, stun, shun, pun, begun</p> <p>➤ -it: sit, bit, fit, kit, pit, lit, knit, split, admit, grit</p> <p>➤ -op: hop, pop, stop, mop, shop, chop, flop, prop, drop, atop</p> <p>➤ -an: man, ran, pan, can, fan, tan, clan, scan, plan, ban</p> <p>➤ -et: set, met, jet, pet, net, bet, get, vet, let, upset</p> <p>➤ -in: pin, win, kin, sin, bin, tin, grin, chin, thin, spin</p> <p>➤ -ot: hot, pot, got, lot, dot, knot, trot, shot, forgot, plot</p>

Benefits of Teaching Word Families to ELLs/MLs

PATTERN RECOGNITION:



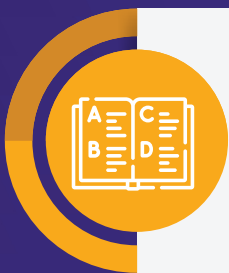
Understanding word families helps ELLs recognize patterns in the English language, which can be used as a strategy to decode unfamiliar words

INCREASED CONFIDENCE:



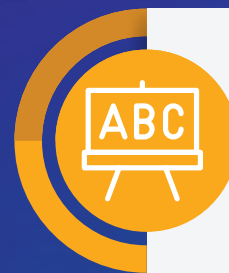
Recognizing and understanding patterns contributes to a sense of mastery and confidence. ELLs can make educated guesses about the pronunciation and meaning of new words, making reading and conversation less intimidating

VOCABULARY EXPANSION:



When ELLs/MLs learn one word in a word family, they can often guess or deduce the meanings of related words, thereby expanding their vocabulary more rapidly

GRAMMAR UNDERSTANDING:



With inflectional families, ELLs can grasp grammatical concepts like tenses (e.g., "jump," "jumped," "jumping") and plurals (e.g., "cat" vs. "cats")

IMPROVED READING SKILLS:



Recognizing word families can boost reading fluency, as learners don't have to sound out every part of every word. Instead, they can recognize chunks of words (like the "-at" in "bat" and "cat")

EFFICIENT TEACHING:



For educators, teaching word families can be an efficient way to cover multiple words and concepts at once. For instance, once an ELL understands the "-ook" pattern (as in "book," "look," "cook"), they can apply it to new contexts

