



PODCAST LISTENING GUIDE:

vocabulary



Hi Teacher Friends!

Welcome to the Podcast Listening Guide!

We know the Science of Reading can sometimes feel big and overwhelming. That's why we started the Melissa & Lori Love Literacy podcast. Each week, we talk with researchers, teachers, and literacy experts who break down the research and share ideas you can try right away.

This guide pulls those conversations together around one focused topic. Use it for:

- **your own learning**
- **team discussions**
- **school-wide PD**

You'll find:

- **episodes grouped by theme**
- **conversation starters and classroom takeaways**
- **space to jot down notes or next steps**

There is never enough time in a teacher's day. Between lessons, kids who need you, and stacks of grading, it is a lot. Podcasts make learning feel doable. You can listen in the car, while setting up your room, or when you finally have a quiet moment to yourself at home.

However you use it, we hope this guide helps you feel encouraged, supported, and ready to try something new.

We can't wait to keep learning with you,

♥ *Melissa & Lori*



Vocabulary

Why is vocabulary important?

As we like to say on the podcast, you can't comprehend what you don't understand, and that starts with vocabulary. Vocabulary is part of the language comprehension strand in Scarborough's Reading Rope. Students may read accurately and fluently, but if they don't know what words mean, they can't make sense of what they read. The more words kids know, the more they understand, and the more they want to keep reading. That's the power of vocabulary instruction.

THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

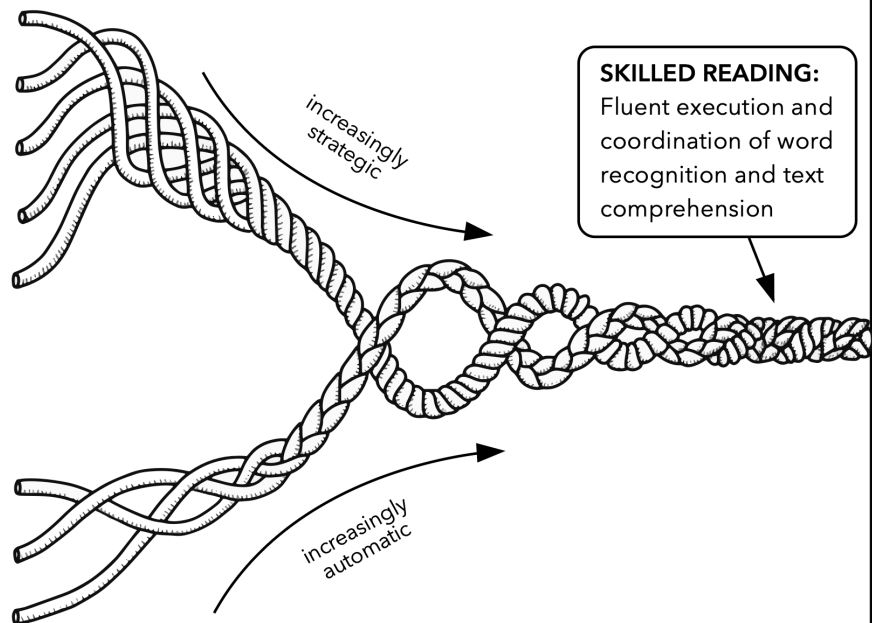
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING (alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)



LISTEN: [Ep. 178: The Simple View and Scarborough's Reading Rope with Hugh Catts](#)

Vocabulary

Here are three big takeaways about vocabulary instruction straight from the voices of researchers and real classrooms:



Make it Stick

Hearing a word once will not do the trick. Kids need a routine that brings the word back again and again: introducing it, defining it, talking about it, and using it in different contexts. Think kid-friendly definitions, meaningful examples, and plenty of chances to play with the word.



Teach Word Parts

Roots, prefixes, and suffixes open doors to entire families of words. When kids learn that *struct* means “build,” words like *construct*, *instructor*, and *destruction* suddenly click into place. Morphology gives them tools that grow with them.



Choose the Right Words

Tier 2 words make the biggest impact. These are high-utility words that appear across many texts and stretch just beyond what students already know (like *reluctant* or *predict*). Teaching these words gives students real traction for comprehension.



Together, these practices help students not only learn new words but also use them in reading, writing, and conversation. The episodes in this guide highlight ideas from researchers and classroom teachers, including Blythe Anderson, Lyn Stone, and educators from grades 1–5. From vocabulary talk moves to morphology, you will find strategies you can try tomorrow.

**MELISSA
& LORI
LOVE
LITERACY**

A portrait of a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a bright red top under a dark blue blazer. She is smiling warmly at the camera. The background is a solid light orange color. To the left of the portrait, the text 'ch' and 'on' are visible in a large, bold, dark blue font, likely part of the word 'Children'.

Ten Vocabulary Moves Backed by Research

 LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

Episode Resources

"Flood, Fast, Focus:"

Integrated Vocabulary

Instruction in the Classroom"

[illegible]

Teacher-Tested Vocabulary Strategies

with Kirsten Taylor & Kory Jensen



EPISODE 220

Teacher-Tested Vocabulary Strategies

with Kirsten Taylor and Kory Jensen

 LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

Two amazing teachers share how they are making vocabulary and morphology instruction come alive in their classrooms. First-grade teacher, Kirsten Taylor shares a **simple, explicit routine for teaching new words** that keeps students engaged and helps you know what they really understand. Then, fourth-grade teacher, Kory Jensen dives into how he brings **morphology into everyday lessons** by breaking words apart through hands-on activities and cross-curricular connections. You'll walk away with easy-to-use strategies to boost your students' word knowledge!

Episode Resources

Explore the **Five Step Explicit Vocabulary Routine** from *The Literacy 50*, and [watch teacher Kirsten Taylor](#) bring a similar routine to life in her classroom.

How could you use Kirsten's explicit vocabulary routine for your own grade level or content area?

How could you use Kory's morphology strategies for your own grade level or content area?

What are a few Tier 2 or Tier 3 words you plan to intentionally highlight and use in upcoming lessons? Why?	Write some specific examples of how you will use these words.

Science of Reading Beyond Phonics

Episode 155

Language for Life

with Lyn Stone



EPISODE 155

Science of Reading Beyond Phonics: Language for Life

with Lyn Stone



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

We chat with linguist and author, Lyn Stone, about how words work and why that matters for your teaching. You'll hear practical tips for bringing **morphology and etymology** into your classroom, plus ideas for helping students build word knowledge in ways that stick. Lyn also breaks down **grammar and syntax** in a super approachable way and shares why these often-overlooked pieces are key to literacy success. It's a fascinating, fun conversation that will leave you thinking differently about language and excited to teach it!

Episode Resources

This **Morpheme Matrices resource** includes visual grids that help teachers and students explore and manipulate prefixes, roots, and suffixes.

What's one way you could start incorporating morphology or etymology discussions into your existing vocabulary instruction, even just once a week?

Why Morphology Matters for Word Reading and More

with Melissa Orkin and Alex Osburn



EPISODE 238

Why Morphology Matters for Word Reading and More

with Melissa Orkin and Alex Osburn

 LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

Melissa Orkin and Alex Osburn remind us that multisyllabic word reading is about understanding as much as decoding. As Melissa explains, “**Morphology bridges decoding and comprehension.**” By grades 3–6, most new words are morphologically complex, built from roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Recognizing these parts helps students unlock meaning and pronunciation. Alex shares a quick routine using a teacher-led Frayer Model to teach prefixes, showing how morphology deepens both word reading and understanding.

Episode Resources

Watch a video of the classroom lesson from the podcast featuring the Frayer Model in action: [From Morphology Anthology: Volume 3, Lesson 3: The Secret Lives of Rainforest Insects.](#)

Definition: to view before something is finished or released

Examples: movie trailer, sneak peek of a new product

PREVIEW

Non-examples: watching the full movie, finished product

Sentence: Our class watched a *preview* of the new movie to get ready for our unit on space.

Bringing It All Together...



1 What's one new thing you learned about vocabulary instruction that surprised or challenged you?

2 Which routine, strategy, or idea feels most doable for your students right now? How might you try it this week?

3 How can you make vocabulary instruction more intentional across your day?

Learn More: Vocabulary



Melissa & Lori Blogs

- Top Vocabulary Talk Moves
- The Best Books to Boost Vocabulary

Great Minds Blogs

- Examining Scarborough's Rope: Vocabulary
- Solidifying Academic Vocabulary Through Complex Texts and Hands-On Experiences

Resources We Love

- Five Things Every Teacher Should Know About Vocabulary Instruction
- Which Words Do I Teach and How?



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[The Literacy 50 Book](#)