A FAMILY GUIDE FOR

KINDERGARTEN LITERACY

READING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Kindergarten is a big year for literacy! Children build the skills they need to read, understand, and communicate by working with letters and sounds, reading simple texts, talking about what they read, and using drawing and writing to share ideas. These skills grow through practice at school and meaningful experiences at home. Encourage practice, celebrate effort, and stay connected with your child's teacher throughout your child's literacy growth and development.

7 KEY AREAS OF KINDERGARTEN LITERACY

CONCEPTS OF PRINT

In kindergarten, students:

- Children learn how books and print work and that print carries meaning.
- Identify the front cover, back cover and title page
- Hold a book correctly and turn pages
- Follow words from left to right and top to bottom
- Notice letters, words, spaces and punctuation

HOME PRACTICE

- Make reading together a regular part of your day.
- Have your child find the front/back cover and title page.
- Use a finger or pointer to follow the words.
- Ask questions before, during and after reading.
- Talk about characters (who is in the story), setting (where the story takes place, problem and solution.

PHONOLOGICAL & PHONEMIC AWARENESS

In kindergarten, students:

- Learn that spoken words are made of smaller sound units that can be blended and separated.
- Recognize and make rhymes
- Clap or count syllables in words
- Identify individual sounds in simple words
- Blend sounds together to make words

HOME PRACTICE

- Help your child listen for parts of words.
- Make rhyming words together.
- Clap the syllables (parts) in a word. (e.g., trac-tor).
- Stretch out a simple word and listen for each sound.
- What sound do you hear at the beginning of the word? The end of the word? The middle?
- Change one sound to make a new word (e.g., log → dog ->dot.)

WRITING

In kindergarten, students:

- Children combine drawing, dictating, and writing to share stories, opinions, and information.
- Create stories or books.
- Draw and write facts about a topic.
- Dictate an idea or story to an adult.

HOME PRACTICE

- After reading multiple books on a topic, draw or write information about that topic.
- Fold four sheets of paper to make a book. Have your child create a story or text.

PHONICS & WORD RECOGNITION

In kindergarten, students:

- Connect letters and sounds to read and write words.
- Name and write uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Match letters to their sounds.
- Sound and spell simple words.
- Recognize some common high-frequency words.

HOME PRACTICE

- Connect letters, sounds, and familiar words.
- Make uppercase/lowercase matching cards.
- Use letter magnets or tiles to make familiar words.
- Say a letter and have your child say its sound.
- Find words that begin with a given sound.

FLUENCY

In kindergarten, students:

- Begin reading simple decodable texts with modeling, prompting and support.
- Read short, simple sentences.
- Reread familiar texts.
- Listen to a model and then try the same page.
- Build confidence through repeated reading.

HOME PRACTICE

- Model how to read a simple text provided by your child's teacher. Read a page aloud, then have your child read the same page aloud.

COMPREHENSION

In kindergarten, students:

- Understand, remember, and make sense of what they read.
- Ask and answer questions before, during and after reading.
- Talk about characters, setting, problem and solution.
- Use who, what, when, where, why and how questions.
- Predict what might happen next.

HOME PRACTICE

- Build comprehension through conversation.
- Ask: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? questions.
- Ask what your child thinks will happen next.
- Let your child answer by talking or pointing to a picture.
- Ask, "How did you figure that out?"

LANGUAGE

In kindergarten, students:

- Use oral language to connect sounds, letters, words and meaning.
- Talk about words and sounds.
- Connect letters to beginning or ending sounds.
- Practice writing letters while saying their sounds.
- Use their home language to strengthen learning.

HOME PRACTICE

- Name a letter for your child and have them respond with the sound that letter makes. Reverse the activity by saying a sound and having your child name the letter.
- Use picture flash cards. Have your child look at the picture and decide what sound and letter the picture starts with. You can also do this with the final sound of the picture.

The HCPS RELA Office has created a website with other valuable resources for parents. Scan the QR code to access information organized by grade level. You can also visit the HCPS website at: www.hcps.org/departments/curriculum/englishlanguagearts

Content condensed for families from the Maryland State Department of Education's Kindergarten Family Guide.
Source: Maryland State Department of Education, A Family Guide for Student Success: Kindergarten- Concepts of Literacy and Mathematics.

A FAMILY GUIDE FOR

FIRST GRADE LITERACY

READING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

First grade is a big year for literacy! Children strengthen the skills they need to read, talk about, and write about stories and informational texts. They will continue to learn the letters and sounds that make up words. Children will continue to build word-reading skills while growing their vocabulary and comprehension. Encourage practice, celebrate effort, and stay connect with your child's teacher throughout your child's literacy growth and development.

7 KEY AREAS OF FIRST GRADE LITERACY

CONCEPTS OF PRINT

In first grade, students:

- Understand how sentences are built and how print works.
- Tell capital from lowercase letters.
- Notice that sentences start with capital letters and end with punctuation.
- Find the beginning and end of a sentence.

HOME PRACTICE

- Highlight capital letters in a text
- Using any book, have your child "frame" a sentence using two fingers. Place one finger at the beginning of the sentence and one at the end of the sentence.

WRITING

In first grade, students:

- Children write with support to share opinions, stories, and information about a topic.
- Use drawing, talking, and writing to develop ideas.
- Share what they know in clear sentences.

HOME PRACTICE

- Have your child share what they know by writing clear sentences.

PHONOLOGICAL & PHONEMIC AWARENESS

In first grade, students:

- Work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
- Identify beginning, middle-vowel, and ending sounds.
- Blend sounds to make words.
- Segment words into sounds.
- Change one sound to make a new word.

HOME PRACTICE

- Give your child a simple C-V-C word (consonant-vowel-consonant words or other one syllable word (e.g., cat, hop, stop, jump). Have your child tell you the individual sounds in the word.
- Try giving your child the sounds of a C-V-C word (pausing one second between each sound). Have your child put the sounds together to produce a word.

LANGUAGE

In first grade, students:

- Build vocabulary by noticing how words can be grouped and related.
- Sort words into categories.
- Explain the "rule" used to group words.
- Talk about new words and ideas.

HOME PRACTICE

- Write words on index cards that could fit into 2-3 categories (animals, foods, colors). Have your child sort the cards into categories.

PHONICS & WORD RECOGNITION

In first grade, students:

- Connect letters and sounds to read (decode) and write (encode) words.
- Read one- and two-syllable words
- Work with digraphs, final -e, and vowel teams
- Read words with -s, -es, -ing, and -ed endings.



HOME PRACTICE

- Practice the sounds of digraphs. Have your child break apart the sounds in words with digraphs and write them.
- Give your child a word card with a simple C-V-C word (e.g., hat, cap, hop). Use a cut out letter “e” and place at the end of the word card. Say the new word with the long vowel sound (e.g., hat = hate, cap = cape, hop = hope)

FLUENCY

In first grade, students:

- Children read with accuracy, appropriate rate, expression and understanding.
- Reread familiar text to build accuracy and expression.
- Use content to confirm or self-correct.
- Read aloud with purpose and expression.

HOME PRACTICE

- Read texts aloud.
- Read a familiar text to build accuracy and expression.
- When reading aloud to your child, demonstrate the different voices and emotions of each character through your tone of voice and expressions.

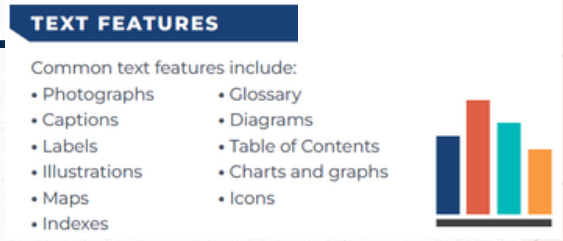
COMPREHENSION

In first grade, students:

- Make meaning from fiction and nonfiction text by asking questions and using details.
- Retell key ideas, details, characters, setting, problem and solution.
- Compare texts, make predictions, and use text features.

HOME PRACTICE

- Ask questions before, during and after reading. Ask questions such as: What do you think will happen next? What do you think the problem was in the story and was the problem solved?
- After reading a book, have your child tell the important details and events that happened in the order they happened.
- Predict what will happen next in a book. Predict means to guess at what you think will happen next, based on the information that you already know.
- Talk about characters, feelings, problems, and solutions.
- Read a non-fiction text. Non-fiction is a text that gives true information or facts. After reading, have your child tell what the book was about in one or two sentences (main idea).
- Give details from the text that support the main idea.



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Content condensed for families from the Maryland State Department of Education’s Kindergarten Family Guide.
Source: Maryland State Department of Education, A Family Guide for Student Success: First Grade- Concepts of Literacy and Mathematics.

A FAMILY GUIDE FOR

SECOND GRADE LITERACY

READING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

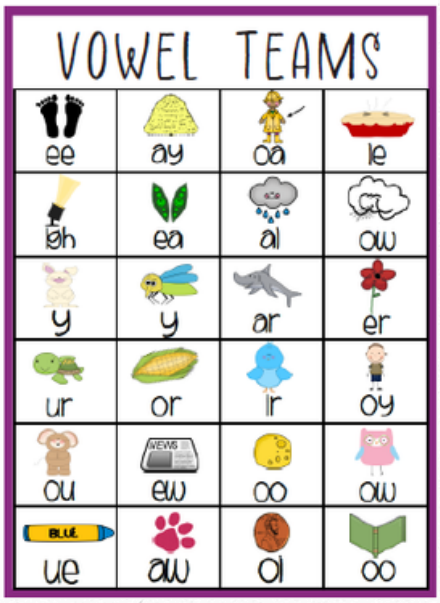
Second grade is a big year for growing readers and writers! Children read a wider variety of stories and informational texts, build stronger word-reading skills, and learn to explain their thinking. They also begin developing topics in their writing and revising their work. These skills grow through practice at school and everyday experiences at home.

5 KEY AREAS OF SECOND GRADE LITERACY

PHONICS & WORD RECOGNITION

In second grade, students:

- Use letter and sound patterns to read and spell words more independently.
- Break longer words into syllables (parts).
- Notice vowel teams such as ai, oa, er, and oo.
- Notice that some letter combinations result in one sound.
- Use word parts such as un- and re- to figure out meaning.
- Practice common words that do not follow usual spelling patterns.



HOME PRACTICE

- Provide your child with a vowel combination chart (shown to the right). Use this as a visual cue when they practice how to spell different vowel sounds.
- Print UFLI's "Heart" Word List. Use this list of words to practice reading and spelling irregular words. Scan the QR code for a printable version of the "Heart" Word Card

LANGUAGE

In second grade, students:

- Use word parts and clues in a sentence to understand new words.
- Add un- or re- to a familiar word and decode the new meaning.
- Use surrounding words to help figure out an unfamiliar word.
- Notice interesteing or new words while reading.



HOME PRACTICE

- Create verb cards (action words) and place them in a box. Then, create cards with un- and -re. Pull a verb out of the box and have your child identify its meaning. Then have your child put un- or re- at the beginning of the verb card and tell the new meaning.

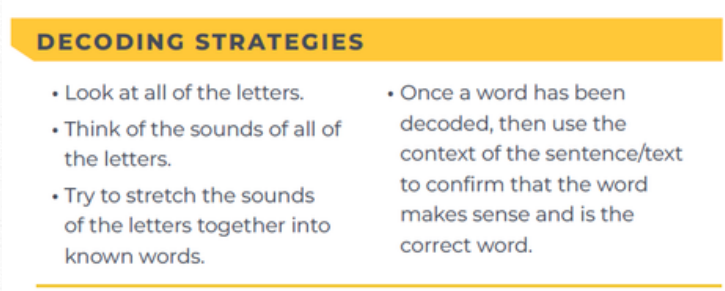
FLUENCY

In second grade, students:

- Work towards reading accurately, smoothly, and with expression.
- Read familiar books more than once.
- Try a word again when it does not look or sound right.
- Look at all the letters and blend the sounds together.

HOME PRACTICE

- Have your child read a familiar text to you. Encourage them to read smoothly and with expression.
- While reading, have your child practice using decoding strategies when encountering unfamiliar words.



COMPREHENSION

In second grade, students:

- Understand, remember, and explain what they read.
- Ask and answer who, what, when, where, why and how questions.
- Retell the important parts of the story.
- Find the main topic and important details of a topic.
- Compare two texts and notice what is the same and different.

HOME PRACTICE

- Ask who, what, when, where, why and how qustions before, during and after reading. Ask your child to explain how they know their answer.
- Use sequencing words (first, so, then, next, after that, finally) to describe the beginnig of a story to the end.
- Read an informational text with your child. Discuss why the author wrote the text and what details they used to support the main idea.

WRITING

In second grade, students:

- Write stories, opinions and information about a topic.
- Write a story with characters, events and an ending.

HOME PRACTICE

- After reading several books on a topic ask your child to tell you about it. Then, have them write about the topic.
- Create a cahracter together and build a story around them.

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A FAMILY GUIDE FOR

THIRD GRADE LITERACY

READING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Third grade readers and writers work with more complex texts and vocabulary. They learn to explain ideas, discuss texts, ask questions, use evidence and details, and communicate clearly in speaking and writing.

6 KEY AREAS OF THIRD GRADE LITERACY

PHONICS & WORD RECOGNITION

In third grade, students:

- Read longer words by breaking them into smaller parts or syllables.
- Use common word beginnings (prefixes) and word endings (suffixes) such as *un-, re-, -ful, and -less*.
- Identify a base word and explain how the added word parts help figure out what a new rod means.

HOME PRACTICE

- Look for words with beginnings such as *un- re- or dis-*. Talk about how the word's meaning changes with the beginning added.
- Try adding an ending such as *-ful, less, or -ly.* Talk about how the word's meaning changes.

FLUENCY

In third grade, students:

- Rread grade-level text accurately, smoothly and at a comfortable pace.
- Read aloud with expression that matches the meaning of the text.
- Reread when needed to make sure the words and sentences make sense.

HOME PRACTICE

- As you read, point out how punctation helps you know where to pause or stop (period = stop, comma = pause)

LANGUAGE

In third grade, students:

- Use capitalization, punctuation, and spelling pattners.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases in context.
- Recognize figurative language such as similies, metaphors, and personification.

HOME PRACTICE

- Read a variety of books with your child. Point out figurative language or words that convey feelings!

VOCABULARY

SIMILE Compares two different things using words such as "like" or "as." For example, "Her smile was as bright as the sun."

METAPHOR Compares two different things by saying one thing is another. For example, "My dad is a rock." or "You are my sunshine."

PERSONIFICATION Giving human qualities to non-human things such as animals, objects, or nature. For example, "The sun smiled down on us."; "The flowers danced in the breeze."

SPEAKING & LISTENING

In third grade, students:

- Express ideas clearly, ask quetsions, and build on other's ideas.
- Ask questions to better undrestand a topic or what someone else is saying.
- Build on another person's ideas and explain their own thinking.

HOME PRACTICE

- Take turns talking and listening.
- Try using frames such as "I think___ because..." or "Can you tell me more about ___?"
- Ask your child to describe their understanding of what another person said.

WRITING

In third grade, students:

- Write opinions, information, and narratives using approrpriate structures.
- Support opnions with reasons.
- Explain a topic clearly and share information.
- Write stories with descriptive details and a clear sequence of events.

HOME PRACTICE

- Before writing, have your child say their idea out loud.
- Practice an opinion with reasons, an explanation with details, or a story with characters, a setting, and events.

COMPREHENSION

In third grade, students:

- Ask and answer questions about a text and use details from the text to support answers.
- Retell important events.
- Find the main idea and important details in books and articles about science, history, and social studies.
- Use photographs, illustrations, maps, charts, headings, and captions to learn more.

HOME PRACTICE

- Ask Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Ask, "What in the text makes you think that?"
- Look at heading, captions, maps, charts, and diagrams. Discuss with your child what they learned from each of the text features.
- Read texts from a variety of genres with your child. Examples include fantasy, realistic fiction, mystery, historical fiction, science fiction, informational, biography, or poetry.

TEXT FEATURES

Common text features include:

- Photographs
- Captions
- Labels
- Illustrations
- Maps
- Indexes
- Glossary
- Diagrams
- Table of Contents
- Charts and graphs
- Icons



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Content condensed for families from the Maryland State Department of Education's Kindergarten Family Guide.
Source: Maryland State Department of Education, A Family Guide for Student Success: Third Grade- Concepts of Literacy and Mathematics.

A FAMILY GUIDE FOR

FOURTH GRADE LITERACY

READING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

In fourth grade, children continue building reading skills while reading more texts that provide facts and information in science and social studies. They learn to understand, summarize, discuss, and write about what they read using details from the text.

6 KEY AREAS OF FOURTH GRADE LITERACY

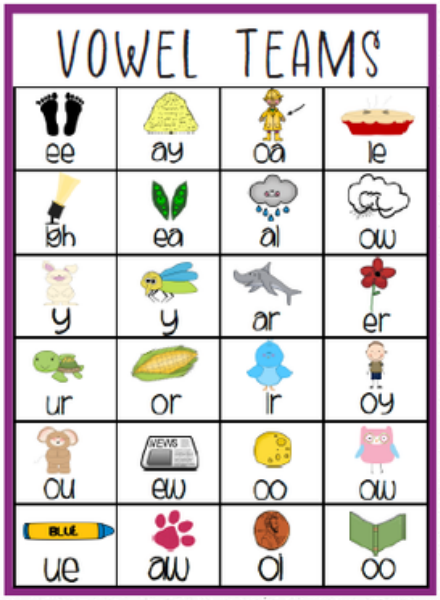
PHONICS & WORD RECOGNITION

In fourth grade, students:

- Break longer words into smaller parts to help read them.
- Read words with common vowel patterns, such as vowel teams.
- Notice that every syllable (word part) has a vowel sound.
- Recognize common word beginnings and endings, such as *un-, and -ful*.

HOME PRACTICE

- Look for words with beginnings such as *un-* or *re- or dis-*. Talk about how the word's meaning changes with the beginning added.



WRITING

In fourth grade, students:

- Share an opinion piece and support it with reasons and information.
- Write organized pieces that teach the reader about a topic.
- Write stories with characters, events, and a clear message or theme.
- Make writing clear and appropriate for the purpose and person who will read it.

HOME PRACTICE

- Write for a reason: Write an opinion and give reasons for it. Explain how to do something or teach someone about a topic. Create a short story with characters, events, and a message.
- Have your child read their writing to you. This will help them edit and revise their writing.

FLUENCY

In fourth grade, students:

- Read familiar books and passages accurately and smoothly.
- Read aloud at a comfortable pace and with expression.
- Pause to make sure the text makes sense before, during, and after reading.
- Reread familiar texts to build fluency.

HOME PRACTICE

- Listen for accurate, smooth reading and expression.
- Take a turn reading aloud so your child can hear fluent reading.

SPEAKING & LISTENING

In fourth grade, students:

- Build their discussion skills by sharing ideas clearly and listening respectfully when others are speaking.
- Use details from what they have read when explaining an idea.
- Add to another person's idea or ask questions to learn more.
- Explain the main points someone else shared.

HOME PRACTICE

- Take turns talking and listening.
- Try: "I think ____ becuase..." or "Can you tell me more about ____?"
- Ask your child to explain the main point someone else made.

LANGUAGE

In fourth grade, students:

- Build vocabulary through reading a wide variety of books and articles.
- Use clues around an unfamiliar word to figure out what it means.
- Use complete sentences and correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

HOME PRACTICE

- Provide your child with a wide variety of reading material.
- Create a family vocabulary list: When a family member finds a new or interesting word, they add it to the list and find the meaning.

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COMPREHENSION

In fourth grade, students:

- Find the message or lesson in a story, poem, or play and explain it in their own words.
- Describe how characters, settings (where the story takes place), and events shape a story.
- Figure out what a nonfiction text is mostly above and identify the important details that explain it.
- Notice how information in a text is organized.

HOME PRACTICE

- Ask your child questions: "What happened?" "Why do you think that?" or "What makes you think so?"
- Encourage your child to point to a detail in the text that supports their thinking.
- With piece of informational text, look for sections organized by time, cause and effect, problem and solution, or comparing two things. Ask: "Why do you think the author organized it this way?"

COMMON TEXT STRUCTURES

Text structures are the way in which a text is arranged. Common text structures include:

DESCRIPTION Tells or describes a specific thing. Signal words: for example or such as.

PROBLEM/SOLUTION States a problem and provides a solution. Signal words: challenge, solution.

CAUSE/EFFECT Shows why something happened and the result from it. Signal words: Because, since, as a result.

CHRONOLOGICAL/SEQUENTIAL Shows events or procedures in time order. Signal words: First, Second, before, after.

COMPARE/CONTRAST Shows how two or more things are alike and different. Signal words: However, but, alike, yet.

Content condensed for families from the Maryland State Department of Education's Kindergarten Family Guide.
Source: Maryland State Department of Education, A Family Guide for Student Success: Fourth Grade- Concepts of Literacy and Mathematics.

A FAMILY GUIDE FOR

FIFTH GRADE LITERACY

READING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

In fifth grade, your child will read more challenging stories, poems, and nonfiction texts. This includes texts connected to science and social studies. They will be asked to explain their thinking, use specific details from what they read, compare information, and find reliable information when researching a topic.

6 KEY AREAS OF FIFTH GRADE LITERACY

PHONICS & WORD RECOGNITION

In fifth grade, students:

- Read (decode) and write (encode) words using phonics and word analysis skills.
- Identify and know the meaning of common prefixes and suffixes.
- Break longer words into smaller parts to help read them.
- Notice common word beginnings and endings and the base word they belong to.

HOME PRACTICE

- Find a word with multiple syllables. Have your child underline the base, or main part of the work. Ask your child to read each part of the word, then blend each syllable together.

WRITING

In fifth grade, students

- Write opinions supported by reasons and facts, explain information clearly, and write organized stories.
- Write stories about things that have really happened, or things they have imagined.
- Write informative pieces that share ideas and information clearly.

HOME PRACTICE

- Write for a reason: Write an opinion and give reasons for it. Explain how to do something or teach someone about a topic. Create a short story with characters, events, and a message.
- Have your child read their writing to you. This will help them edit and revise their writing.

SPEAKING & LISTENING

In fifth grade, students:

- Come prepared to discuss something they have read or studied.
- Ask and answer questions, listen carefully, and build on others' ideas.
- Explain ideas clearly using details and information.
- Repeat the big ideas expressed in a discussion.

HOME PRACTICE

- Use "Talk Stems" to have discussions on interesting topics: *I think__ because, I agree with you and ____, can you say more about _____? Building on what (Name) said _____, I see things differently. I believe that ____,* etc.

FLUENCY

In fifth grade, students:

- Read grade-level text accurately and at a comfortable pace.
- Use expression to match the meaning and feeling of what is being read.
- Pause and check: "Does this make sense?" before, during, and after reading.

HOME PRACTICE

- Listen for accurate, smooth reading and expression.
- Take a turn reading aloud so your child can hear fluent reading.

COMPREHENSION

In fifth grade, students:

- Understand what they read and support their thinking with details.
- Use several details from a text to explain an idea or make a conclusion.
- Summarize a story and explain its message or “big idea.”
- Compare charactres, settings, and events and explain how they are alike and different.
- Use information from books, articles, and other sources to answer questions.
- Notice how pictures, video, sound, graphics, and other media add to a text.

HOME PRACTICE

- Ask your child to tell you the most important part of what they read. Then ask: “What details help explain that idea?”
- Practice summarizing without retelling every single detail.
- Talk about how characters are alike and different.
- Look for patterns such as events in order, comparing two things, cause and effect, or problem and solution. Ask : “How does this organization help you understand the text?”
- Read two short pieces about the same topic. Ask: What did both sources teach us? What did only one source teach us? Which details helped you decide?

LANGUAGE

In fifth grade, students:

- Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases.
- Use complete, well-formed sentences when speaking and writing. Use words such as and, but, either/or and location words such as under, across, through to connect ideas.
- Use past, present, and future tense to show when things happen.
- Use common Greek and Latin roots as clues to the meaning of a word.

HOME PRACTICE

- When your child comes across a new word while reading, look at the words around it for clues.
- Look for familiar word parts to determine meaning of words.

COMMON GREEK & LATIN ROOTS

GREEK	LATIN
auto (self)	**aqua** (water)
bio (life)	**form** (shape
graph (writing)	**fract** (to break)
-logy (study of)	**multi** (many)

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