



Facilitator's Guide

EPISODE 6

Reading Multisyllabic Words with Xavier (Grade 3)

Video length: 13.5 minutes

Watch the video here: <https://www.readingrockets.org/shows/reading-interventions/reading-multisyllable-words-with-xavier-third-grade>

Contents

Section 1: Purpose of This Guide

Use in Conjunction with the Viewer's Guide	2
Using this Guide for Professional Development	2
Using the Answer Keys	3

Section 2: Questions for Guiding the Second Viewing of the Video

Short Session A: Preparing for Multisyllabic Word Reading Lesson	4
Short Session B: Learning to Break Words into Syllables	4
Short Session C: Spelling a Multisyllabic Word	5
Short Session D: Removing the Scaffolds	5
Short Session E: Next Steps	6

Section 3: Summary Questions

6

Section 4: Answer Keys

Answer Key for Viewer's Guide	7
Answer Key for Section 2: Questions for Guiding the Second Viewing of the Video.....	8
Answer Key for Section 3: Summarizing Questions	15

Watch the whole "Looking at Reading Interventions" series here:
<https://www.readingrockets.org/shows/reading-interventions>



Section 1: Purpose of this guide

This facilitator's guide for professional development (the Guide) is intended to provide suggestions for reading coaches, principals, team leaders, or other facilitators to use for professional development (PD) sessions.

The Guide is organized to facilitate discussion about the video, not for the facilitator to lecture. PD facilitators may find insight about the videos by reading the Guide before leading PD about the video.

Use in conjunction with the Viewer's Guide

A separate Viewer's Guide intended for anyone to use during a first viewing of the video. Find it here:

- [Episode 6 Viewer's Guide](#) (printable PDF)
- [Episode 6 Viewer's Guide](#) (fillable PDF)

The Viewer's Guide includes the following:

1. Xavier's profile
2. Video overview
3. What to notice while watching the video
4. Questions to consider while watching the video the first time

PD participants should use the Viewer's Guide as they watch the entire video as the initial step in PD, either on their own or in a group.

Using this guide for professional development

General guidelines for using the guide

PD should start with all participants watching the entire video and using the Viewer's Guide to guide their watching.

The Guide organizes the video into short clips for the group to view before discussing the clips. The short clips are organized around the following themes:

- A. Preparing for Multisyllabic Word Reading Lesson
- B. Learning to Break Words into Syllables
- C. Spelling a Multisyllabic Word
- D. Removing the Scaffolds
- E. Next Steps

Each theme includes one to three short video clips for viewing, and one to five discussion questions for immediate discussion after each clip is viewed.



A PD facilitator may elect to offer several shorter sessions as part of ongoing shorter PD sessions, such as for a Professional Learning Community (PLC), or to have one half-day session to discuss the video.

Use the guide for a series of shorter PD sessions

1. Ask participants to read the Viewer's Guide before viewing the entire video. As they view the video, participants should answer the questions in the Viewer's Guide.
 - Facilitators might want to use the first short session to view the video and discuss the questions.
 - Alternatively, facilitators might ask participants to view the video and answer the questions in the Viewer's Guide before the first session, then discuss the questions during the first session.
2. Before each PD session, select video clips and the discussion questions that will fit into the time frame for the session.
 - Facilitators may want to make a copy of the discussion questions for each participant so they can write notes during the session.
3. During the PD session, show the video clips and discuss each clip, using the questions in the Guide.
4. Consider using one or more questions from Section 4: Summarizing Questions before the session ends.

Use the guide for a half-day session

Preparation: Make copies of the Viewer's Guide and the questions in Section 2 for each participant.

Consider an agenda as follows:

1. View the entire video.
 - Read the Viewer's Guide.
 - Answer questions in the Viewer's Guide while viewing the video.
 - Discuss the answers to the questions and other questions participants may have.
2. View short clips and ask discussion questions for each section listed in Section 2.
3. Discuss the questions from Section 4: Summarizing Questions before the session ends.

Using the answer keys

Answer keys provide facilitators with suggestions for answers to each question in the Viewer's Guide and this Guide. Of course, facilitators will adapt their answers to the questions to their particular audiences.



Section 2: Questions for guiding the second viewing of the video

Note about time stamps: The location for the part of the video related to the question is in parentheses. The start and stop times are shown as minutes:seconds. For example, the first question starts at 30 seconds and ends at 1 minute, 8 seconds in the video. The total time for each clip is also shown in minutes and seconds.

Short session A: preparing for multisyllabic word reading lesson

2.1 Habits of students who misread multisyllabic words (0:38 – 1:08) 0:30 total time

1. Ms. Farrell says that students who misread multisyllabic “guess the most common word that has the configuration” of the word they are trying to read. What types of guesses do you see students make when they misread a multisyllabic word?
2. What skill does Ms. Farrell say these students are missing?

2.2 Preparation for teaching Xavier to read multisyllabic words (5:50 – 7:50) 2:00 total time

Note: This is the only section that is out-of-order.

3. Ms. Farrell says that she selected the multisyllabic words carefully to prepare for teaching Xavier. Describe the words she chose.
4. What two questions can Xavier ask to break the word into syllables?
5. How do the questions help Xavier know how to break the word into syllables?

2.3 Checking if Xavier has the necessary prerequisite skills (1:09 – 3:10) 2:01 total time

6. What three things does Ms. Farrell have Xavier do to show that he has the necessary skills to be ready for reading multisyllable words?

Short session B: learning to break words into syllables

2.4 Xavier learns to break a written nonsense word into syllables (3:11 – 4:30) 1:19 total time

7. Why do you think Ms. Farrell uses a nonsense word (*jodpum*) and tells Xavier it is a nonsense word?
8. What two questions does Ms. Farrell ask Xavier to help him read *jodpum*?
9. How does asking these questions help Xavier?
10. Why do you think Ms. Farrell asks Xavier to read one syllable at a time before she asks him to read the whole word?



2.5 Xavier Uses His New Strategy to Read 'Volcanic' (4:31 – 5:49) 1:19 total time

11. Why do you think Xavier read the word *volcanic* as *volcano* when he saw it, before he tried using the strategy he had just learned?
 12. How does Ms. Farrell first respond when Xavier reads *volcano*?
 13. Why does Ms. Farrell ask Xavier to read the second syllable again, and what does he read the second time?
 14. How do we know the last syllable was difficult for Xavier?
 15. What does Ms. Farrell do after she coaches Xavier to read the last syllable 'ic' correctly?
 16. Even though Xavier reads *volcanic* correctly, she asks him to read the syllables and the word again. Why do you think she does this?
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Short session C: spelling a multisyllabic word

2.6 Xavier Spells 'Volcanic' (5:50 – 6:39) 0:49 total time

17. What are the steps Ms. Farrell takes to guide Xavier to spell the word *volcanic* correctly?
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Short session D: removing the scaffolds

2.7 Xavier Reads 'Continental' (7:50 – 9:18) 1:29 total time

18. The word *continental* has four vowel letters. What does Ms. Farrell do when Xavier says it has three vowels?
19. Why do you think Ms. Farrell asks Xavier to move the letter 'n' to a different syllable?
20. Xavier initially reads the second syllable 'ti' as 'tic', then he reads 'tin'. How does Ms. Farrell help Xavier read the syllable correctly?
21. The word *continental* has a schwa in the last syllable and, arguably, a schwa in the second syllable. Why can Xavier read this word without specifically learning about the schwa?

2.8 Xavier Reads 'Accomplishment' (9:19 – 10:13) (0:54 total time)

22. After Xavier underlines the vowels, what step does Ms. Farrell drop from the routine?
23. When Xavier reads *accomplishment*, he pronounces the first syllable with a long a sound, when it actually has a schwa sound. What does this likely indicate about Xavier's knowledge the word?



Short session E: next steps

2.9 Xavier Reads 'Wilmington' (10:13 – 10:35) 0:22 total time

24. Ms. Farrell has told Xavier that he can read the word without going through the steps before this part of the video begins. Xavier does not underline the vowels, draw lines for each syllable, or write each syllable in the word. Why do you think Xavier reads each syllable before reading the whole word, even though he doesn't have to?

2.10 Instruction and Practice Xavier Will Need after the Lesson (10:35 – 11:09) 0:34 total time

25. Has Xavier learned enough to move on to learning how to read multisyllabic words with different vowel patterns?

26. What more will Xavier have to learn to read multisyllabic words accurately and effortlessly?

2.11 Xavier Reads 'Electrical' (11:10 – 11:30) 0:20 total time

27. What does Ms. Farrell do when Xavier reads *electric* and pauses before adding the last syllable?

Section 3: Summary questions

1. Do you have any students who might benefit from the strategy Xavier learns?
2. What did you learn?
3. How do you plan to use what you learned in your instruction?
4. How can you use what you learned with a small group?



Section 4: Answer keys

Answer key for Viewer's Guide

1. At the beginning of the video, how does Xavier read the one-syllable nonsense words?

Accurately and easily.

2. Why does Ms. Farrell ask Xavier to read one-syllable nonsense words?

Xavier needs to be able to decode one-syllable words accurately because the syllables in longer words are often nonsense words.

3. What kind of words has Ms. Farrell chosen to begin teaching Xavier how to read multisyllabic words?

All the syllables in the words have short vowels. A few have a schwa.

4. What two questions can Xavier ask himself in order to break the words into syllables?

1. How many vowels are in the word?
2. Are they together or apart?

5. When Xavier counts only three vowels in the word *accomplishment*, how does Ms. Farrell help him count the correct number of vowels?

She asks him to underline the vowels.

6. At the end of the video, how does Ms. Farrell respond when Xavier reads *electrical* as *electric*?

She doesn't say anything and gives Xavier time to look at the word and read the last syllable.



Answer key for Section 2: questions for guiding the second viewing of the video

Short session A: preparing for multisyllabic word reading lesson

2.1 Habits of Students Who Misread Multisyllabic Words (0:38 – 1:08)

1. Ms. Farrell says that students who misread multisyllabic “guess the most common word that has the configuration” of the word they are trying to read. What types of guesses do you see students make when they misread a multisyllabic word?

Students guess words that have some similar words parts:

- A word that starts with the same syllable
- A word that starts with the same letter
- A word that is about as long as the word they are supposed to read
- A word that has similar letters as the word they are supposed to read
- Sometimes this word will fit the context and other times it will be a pure guess that is a word that looks similar.

Students guess a word that they think fits the context but may not look like the word they are supposed to read.

2. What skill does Ms. Farrell say these students are missing?

These students don't know how to break a word into syllables.

Summary statement: Students who misread multisyllabic words need to learn a strategy for breaking long words into syllables and looking at every letter in the word so they don't have to guess.

2.2 Preparation for Teaching Xavier To Learn to Read Multisyllabic Words (5:50 – 7:50)

3. Ms. Farrell says that she selected the multisyllabic words carefully to prepare for teaching Xavier. Describe the words she chose.

The words have one vowel letter that spells a short vowel sound in each syllable. (Some people call these 'closed syllables'.)



4. What two questions can Xavier ask to break the word into syllables?

1. How many vowel letters do I see in the word?
2. Are the vowels together or apart?

5. How do the questions help Xavier know how to break the word into syllables?

Xavier knows that if the vowel letters are apart, there will be the same number of syllables as vowel letters. He can then break the word into syllables, read each syllable, and blend the syllables to read the correct word.

Summary statement: Carefully plan teaching students to read multisyllabic words. Start with words that have syllables with one vowel that spells the short sound. In these words, the vowels will always be apart, and the syllables are easy to identify and read.

2.3 Checking Whether Xavier Has the Necessary Prerequisite Skills (1:09 – 3:10)

6. What three things does Ms. Farrell have Xavier do to show that he has the necessary skills to be ready for reading multisyllable words?

1. Ms. Farrell checks whether Xavier can read one-syllable nonsense words with short vowels.

Because she will only use multisyllabic words with short vowels in his first instruction, Ms. Farrell checks with short vowel nonsense words. When Xavier learns to break written words into syllables, he will need to be able to read each syllable separately and then blend the syllables into a word. Many of the syllables will be nonsense words.

2. Ms. Farrell has Xavier count syllables in spoken words. Xavier will need to understand what the word 'syllable' means. Ms. Farrell will use the word 'syllable' when she teaches him a strategy to read words with more than one syllable.

It is difficult to describe a syllable in words, and it is not necessary that Xavier can describe a syllable. By asking Xavier to count syllables, Ms. Farrell learns whether he knows what a syllable is or not. If Xavier hadn't known how to count syllables, Ms. Farrell would have taught him.

3. Ms. Farrell ask Xavier to name the vowel letters. Essentially every syllable has a vowel sound and at least one vowel letter. Xavier will need to be able to count the vowel letters in order to use the strategy to read multisyllabic words.

If Xavier could not easily say what the vowel letters are, Ms. Farrell would teach the vowel letters to him. She also might post the vowel letters where he can reference them until he no longer needs a scaffold.



Summary statements:

- Teach students to read multisyllabic words systematically. Start with teaching students to read only words with short vowels (easiest and most frequent vowel pattern). Check to make sure students can read single syllable nonsense words with short vowels before teaching them to read multisyllabic words with short vowels. If a student cannot read nonsense words accurately and easily, the student needs more instruction in reading one-syllable words before learning to read multisyllabic words.
- If students cannot count syllables in a spoken word, it means that they do not understand what a syllable is. Teach the student to count syllables.
- If students cannot say what the vowel letters are, teach the vowel letters until they can recite them. If they do not learn the vowels quickly, post the vowel letters where the student can easily see them when they are practicing breaking words into syllables.

Short session B: learning to break words into syllables

2.4 Xavier Learns to Break a Written Nonsense Word into Syllables (3:11 – 4:30)

7. Why do you think Ms. Farrell uses a nonsense word (*jodpum*) and tells Xavier it is a nonsense word?

So that Xavier knows he can't guess the word.

8. What two questions does Ms. Farrell ask Xavier to help him read *jodpum*?

1. How many vowel letters do you see in the word?

2. Are the vowels together or apart?

9. How does asking these questions help Xavier?

Because each syllable has a vowel letter, it helps Xavier see that the word has two syllables. Once he puts them on the two lines, he reads each syllable independently. Next, he blends the two syllables to read the whole word.

10. Why do you think Ms. Farrell asks Xavier to read one syllable at a time before she asks him to read the whole word?

So that he learns to read each syllable accurately before he attempts to read the word. She is helping him understand that he has to read every letter in each syllable.



2.5 Xavier Uses His New Strategy to Read 'Volcanic' (4:31 – 5:49)

11. Why do you think Xavier read the word *volcanic* as *volcano* when he saw it, before he tried using the strategy he had just learned?

Volcano is a word that is familiar to Xavier. He saw the first part of the word and guessed.

12. How does Ms. Farrell first respond when Xavier reads *volcano*?

She tells him he got the first syllable right. She does this so that he knows he got part of the word right and doesn't get discouraged.

13. Why does Ms. Farrell ask Xavier to read the second syllable again, and what does he read the second time?

Xavier writes 'can', but the first time he reads 'cay'. She quickly stops him and asks him to read the syllable again because she wants to make sure that Xavier learns he has to read the syllable, not just take a quick guess.

Xavier easily reads the syllable 'can' correctly when he pays attention to what he has written.

14. How do we know the last syllable was difficult for Xavier?

Xavier is slow to read the final syllable 'ic'. When he does read the syllable, he slowly reads it as /iks/.

15. What does Ms. Farrell do after she coaches Xavier to read the last syllable 'ic' correctly?

She responds, "Those are vowels. What's the first syllable?" She gives this response because she realizes he has confused vowels and syllables and just needs a gentle hint to know he is supposed to name syllables.

16. Even though Xavier reads *volcanic* correctly, she asks him to read the syllables and the word again. Why do you think she does this?

To give Xavier more practice reading the syllables and the word because the word was difficult for him at first.

Xavier easily reads the syllable 'can' correctly when he pays attention to what he has written.

Summary statement: When helping a student read a word the first time by himself ("You Do"), coach to correct any mistakes. Correct gently, but immediately. Guide the student to correct mistakes as opposed to giving the answer.



Short session C: spelling a multisyllabic word

2.6 Xavier Spells 'Volcanic' (5:50 – 6:39)

17. What are the steps Ms. Farrell takes to guide Xavier to spell the word volcanic correctly?
- Repeat the word volcanic.
 - Say how many syllables are in volcanic.
 - Draw lines for each syllable.
 - Spell each syllable on a line.
 - Spell the whole word.

Summary statement: Students can spell multisyllabic words easily if they think about spelling the words by syllable as opposed to trying to spell the whole word by recalling a string of letters. Just like there are steps to reading a multisyllabic word, there are steps to spelling a multisyllabic word.

Short session D: removing the scaffolds

2.7 Xavier Reads 'Continental' (7:50 – 9:18)

18. The word continental has four vowel letters. What does Ms. Farrell do when Xavier says it has three vowels?

She asks Xavier to underline the vowels. She does not tell Xavier he is wrong, and she does not give him the right answer. He discovers it himself.

19. Why do you think Ms. Farrell asks Xavier to move the letter 'n' to a different syllable?

Although Xavier might be able to read the word with the syllables Xavier wrote, Ms. Farrell feels it will be easier for him to blend the syllables if the second syllable is 'ti' instead of 'tin' and the third syllable is 'nen' instead of 'en'.

20. Xavier initially reads the second syllable 'ti' as 'tic', then he reads 'tin'. How does Ms. Farrell help Xavier read the syllable correctly?

First, she prompts him to read the syllable again.

When he still misreads, it she reads each sound while pointing at the letters and asks him to blend and say the syllable.



21. The word *continental* has a schwa in the last syllable and, arguably, a schwa in the second syllable. Why can Xavier read this word without specifically learning about the schwa?

The word is in his speaking vocabulary, so he automatically reads the word with schwa that matches the pronunciation he knows.

2.8 Xavier Reads 'Accomplishment' (9:19 – 10:13)

22. After Xavier underlines the vowels, what step does Ms. Farrell drop from the routine?

She does not ask him to write each syllable and read them aloud before reading the word.

23. When Xavier reads *accomplishment*, he pronounces the first syllable with a long a sound, when it actually has a schwa sound. What does this likely indicate about Xavier's knowledge the word?

Unlike automatically reading the word *continental* with a schwa in the last syllable, Xavier does not automatically read the first syllable in *accomplishment* as a schwa. It is likely that this is not a familiar word for Xavier.

Although Ms. Farrell repeated the word correctly after Xavier read it with a long a instead of a schwa, the lesson would have been stronger if she had asked Xavier to pronounce the word correctly after she said it. Then she could ask Xavier to read *accomplishment* with the correct pronunciation while looking at the word.

Summary statement: Students can be encouraged to drop steps as they get stronger at reading multisyllabic words. Eventually, students will learn to read the words automatically without conscious thought of the process they have learned.

Short session E: next steps

2.9 Xavier Reads 'Wilmington' (10:13 – 10:35)

24. Ms. Farrell has told Xavier that he can read the word without going through the steps before this part of the video begins. Xavier does not underline the vowels, draw lines for each syllable, or write each syllable in the word. Why do you think Xavier reads each syllable before reading the whole word, even though he doesn't have to?

Reading each syllable probably gives Xavier more confidence that he can read the word correctly.

Summary statement: Students often go through a short stage of reading each syllable before they begin reading longer words automatically.



2.10 Instruction and Practice Xavier Will Need after This Lesson (10:35 – 11:09)

25. Has Xavier learned enough to move on to learning how to read multisyllabic words with different vowel patterns?

Definitely not. Xavier still needs lots of coaching to read most words accurately. When he does read a word accurately without coaching, he is slow and far from automatic.

26. What more will Xavier have to learn to read multisyllabic words accurately and effortlessly?

Xavier will learn to read multisyllabic words with r-controlled vowels, vowel teams, silent e, and eventually prefixes and suffixes. A video explaining these next steps is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEaA9i9NJIA>. The presenter of this workshop, Michael Hunter, is Ms. Farrell's business partner.

Summary statement: Students need to practice reading multisyllabic words with short vowels until they can read words easily, effortlessly, and accurately. The next steps are to learn to read words with other vowel patterns.

2.11 Xavier Reads 'Electrical' (11:10 – 11:30)

27. What does Ms. Farrell do when Xavier reads electric and pauses before adding the last syllable?

She is quiet and waits for Xavier to finish reading the word.

Summary statement: When teachers are patient and don't respond to an incomplete reading of a word, the student will correct himself.



Answer key for Section 3: summarizing questions

1. Do you have any students who might benefit from the strategy Xavier learns?

Use this question to have participants discuss their students who might be struggling with reading multisyllabic words.

Thoughts for teachers to consider:

- What student behaviors do they observe that might be clues to difficulty with multisyllabic words?
- Do teachers have any data from assessments that might indicate a student's difficulty with multisyllabic words?
- Do the students they are thinking about have the prerequisite skills for reading multisyllabic words?
- If students not do not have all the prerequisite skills, what will they need to learn and practice before moving to multisyllabic words?
- How will teachers go about teaching the missing skills and having students practice them?

2. What did you learn?

Use this question to have participants reflect on and consolidate their learning by expressing it aloud.

3. How do you plan to use what you learned in your instruction?

Use this question to have participants develop and express specific action plans for teaching their students: Who? What? When? How will you measure student progress?

4. How can you use what you learned with a small group?

Teaching the strategy to use when reading multisyllabic words is easy in small groups with 2–5 students who are similar in their instructional needs. It will not work if all the students have not mastered, or almost mastered, reading real and nonsense words with short vowels.

Step 1. I DO — The teacher demonstrates how to use the strategy (I Do) for the group.

Step 2. WE DO — The teacher and all the students use the strategy for one or two words.

Step 3. YOU DO — The teacher gives students a list of words to read. The teacher calls on one student at a time to break a word into syllables then blend the syllables to read the word. As students become more proficient using the strategy, the teacher moves to having students read the syllables without writing them, and finally to reading the word without any scaffolds.



Notes for YOU DO:

1. Each student reads a different word on the list. The other students are to be silent while the student uses the strategy to read the word. They can write the syllables, but they do not read syllables or the word aloud.
2. To keep all students engaged, after a student divides his/her word into syllables and reads it, the teacher can randomly call on a different student to read each syllable and the whole word. Some teachers call on all students to chorally read the syllables and the whole word, but only after the individual student has read the word correctly.