



## DISSECT

DISSECT is a mnemonic acronym that offers a step-by-step approach for assisting struggling readers identify unknown words.

**Discover the Context.** Use the context of the sentence to guess the unknown word.

**Isolate the prefix.** Look at the first few letters of the word to see if there is a phoneme you can pronounce. Use a list of prefixes.

**Separate the suffix.** After isolating the prefix, the next step is to separate the suffix in a similar manner.

**Say the stem.** Pronounce the stem of the word. If the stem is recognized, say the prefix, stem, and suffix together. If the stem cannot be named, move on to the next step.

**Examine the stem.** In this step divide the stem into small, pronounceable word parts, using specific rules noted below.

- Rule 1: If the stem or part of the stem begins with a vowel, separate the first two letters and pronounce. If it begins with a consonant, separate the first three letters and pronounce. Continue to apply the rule until the end of the stem is reached.
- Rule 2: If the stem is still not identifiable after using Rule 1, take off the first letter of the stem and use Rule 1 for the remainder of the stem.
- Rule 3: When two vowels are together, use what you know about pronunciation and try the different possibilities.

**Check with someone.** Consult a friend or classmate to see if the word can be identified.

**Try the dictionary.** Look up the word, use pronunciation information to pronounce the word, and read the definition.



## DISSECT ACTIVITY

Name:	Date:
Word:	
Discover the Context	
Isolate the Prefix	
Separate the suffix	
Say the stem	
Examine the stem	
Check with someone	
Try the dictionary	
Word Definition:	