**PHONOLOGY AND MORPHOLOGY**

**PHONOLOGY**

**DEFINITION:**

Phonology is the study of the patterns of sounds in a language and across languages. Put more formally, phonology is the study of the categorical organisation of speech sounds in languages; how speech sounds are organised in the mind and used to convey meaning

**PHONEMES AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN WRITING**

**DEFINITION:**

The definition of a **phoneme** is a sound in a language that has its own distinct sound. An **example of a phoneme** is "c" in the word "car," since it has its own unique sound.

There are a total of 44 phonemes in the English language, which include consonants, short vowels, long vowels, diphthongs, and triphthongs. Phonemes have distinct functions in the English language, such as the /b/, /t/, and /d/ consonant sounds that are missing in some languages. The written representation of a sound is placed in slashes, as in this example where /b/ is placed in slashes on both sides.

***EXAMPLE:***

When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow. When it healed, and Jem’s fears of never being able to [play](https://literarydevices.net/play/) football were assuaged, he was seldom self-conscious about his injury. His left arm was somewhat shorter than his right; when he stood or walked, the back of his hand was at right angles to his body, his thumb parallel to his thigh. He couldn’t have cared less, so long as he could pass and punt.”

A few of the letters in this passage have been underlined for understanding. The first three underlined examples of phonemes are the sounds /wh/ /th/ and /j/ respectively.

***SYLLABLE***

A syllable is one unit of sound in English. Syllables join consonants and vowels to form words.

Syllables can have more than one letter; however, a syllable cannot have more than one sound.

Syllables can have more than one consonant and more than one vowel, as well. However, the consonant(s) and vowel(s) that create the syllable cannot make more than one sound.

A syllable is only one sound.

**OPEN SYLLABLE**

An open syllable is a syllable that has only one vowel and only one vowel sound. The single vowel in the open syllable occurs at the end of the word.

**Examples of Open Syllables:**

* wry
* try
* no
* go
* a
* chew
* brew

**CLOSED SYLLABLE**

A closed syllable is a syllable that has only one vowel and only one vowel sound. A closed syllable ends in a consonant.

**Examples of Closed Syllables:**

* clock
* truck
* ask
* bin
* trim
* gym
* neck
* if

**Monosyllabic Words**

Words with one syllable (monosyllabic)

**Single vowel sound**

* man
  + This word has two consonants and one vowel
  + The one vowel sound (the short “a”) joins with the two consonants to create one syllable
* cry
  + This word has two consonants and one vowel
  + The one vowel (the long “i” sound formed by the “y”) joins with the two consonants to create one syllable

**Double vowels with single sound**

* brain
  + This word has three consonants and two vowels
  + The two vowels create one vowel sound (a long “a” sound)
  + The single vowel sound joins with the three consonants to make one syllable
* tree
  + This word has two consonants and two vowels
  + The two vowels create one vowel sound (a long “e” sound)
  + The single vowel sound joins with the two consonants to make one syllable

**Words ending with a silent “e”**

* lane
  + This word has two consonants and two vowels
  + The “e” and the end of the word is silent to represent a long “a” sound
  + The single vowel sound in this word is a long “a” sound
  + The single vowel sound joins with the two consonants to make one syllable
* tile
  + This word has two consonants and two vowels
  + The “e” and the end of the word is silent to represent a long “i” sound
  + The single vowel sound in this word is a long “i” sound
  + The single vowel sound joins with the two consonants to make one syllable

***Polysyllabic Words***

**Words with more than one syllable (polysyllabic)**

* baker
  + two syllables
  + This word has three consonants and two vowels
  + “bak”: two consonants “m” “k” plus one vowel “a”
  + “er”: one vowel “e” plus one consonant “r”
* growing
  + two syllables
  + This word has five consonants and two vowels
  + “grow”: three consonants “g”, “r”, and “w” plus one vowel “o”
  + “ing”: one vowel “i” plus two consonants “ng”
* terrible
  + three syllables
  + This word has five consonants and three vowels
  + “ter”: two consonants “t” and “r” plus one vowel “e”
  + “ri”: one consonant “i” plus one vowel “i”
  + “ble” : two consonants “b” and “l” plus one vowel “e”

Note: The last “e” in “terrible” is not silent. The “e” and the end create more of a “bull” sound when joined with the “b” and “l” than an “e” sound would normally make.

**MORPHOLOGY**

**DEFINITION**

Morphology is the study of words. Morphemes are the minimal units of words that have a meaning and cannot be subdivided further. There are two main types: free and bound. Free morphemes can occur alone and bound morphemes must occur with another morpheme. An example of a free morpheme is "bad", and an example of a bound morpheme is "ly." It is bound because although it has meaning, it cannot stand alone. It must be attached to another morpheme to produce a word.

***Free morpheme: bad  
Bound morpheme: -ly  
Word: badly***

When we talk about words, there are two groups: lexical (or content) and function (or grammatical) words. Lexical words are called open class words and include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. New words can regularly be added to this group. Function words, or closed class words, are conjunctions, prepositions, articles and pronouns; and new words cannot be (or are very rarely) added to this class.

Affixes are often the bound morpheme. This group includes prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and circumfixes. Prefixes are added to the beginning of another morpheme, suffixes are added to the end, infixes are inserted into other morphemes, and circumfixes are attached to another morpheme at the beginning and end. Following are examples of each of these:

***Prefix: re- added to do produces redo  
Suffix: -or added to edit produces editor  
Infix: -um- added to fikas (strong) produces fumikas (to be strong) in Bontoc  
Circumfix: ge- and -t to lieb (love) produces geliebt (loved) in German***

There are two categories of affixes: derivational and inflectional. The main difference between the two is that derivational affixes are added to morphemes to form new words that may or may not be the same part of speech and inflectional affixes are added to the end of an existing word for purely grammatical reasons. In English there are only eight total inflectional affixes: