



# Morphology

EXPLICIT TEACHING OF MORPHOLOGY TO ENHANCE SPELLING

BY ROB SMITH

Note: Apologies if you have a dislike of cats.



How many words in the English language?

- 171,146 words from **a** to **zyzzys** in the Oxford English Dictionary.
- An average person's working vocabulary is around 20,000 words.
- Passive vocabulary of around 40,000 words.



## High frequency words.

1. the	2. be	3. to	4. of
5. And	6. a	7. in	8. that
9. have	10. I	11. it	12. for
13. for	14. on	15. with	16. he
17. as	18. you	19. do	20. at

Twenty most frequently used words according to OEC.

100 most frequently used words = 50% of all we read and write.

300 most frequently used words = 65% of all we read and write.





Spelling Shed

# Morphology

morphé = form

- ology = the study of

morphology

Morphology – the study of the formation of words





Spelling Shed

# Morphemes

The smallest word parts to carry meaning



cats

cat s

base word

suffix

# Key Terms

## Base Word

A word that can stand alone when all of the affixes have been removed.

## Root

The root carries the primary meaning of the word. A root does not always stand alone as an English word when all of the affixes have been removed.

help

helpless  
helpful  
unhelpful  
helping  
helper

help is a **base word** as well as a root

mort

mortal  
mortgage  
immortal  
mortality  
immortalise

mort is the **root** but, isn't a base word

# Key Terms - Affixes

## **affix**

A group of letters that can be added to the beginning or end of a word/root.

## Types of affix

### **prefix**

A group of letters added to the beginning of a root to alter the meaning.

### **suffix**

A group of letters that can be added to the end of a root which alters the meaning.

### **derivative**

A word which is formed by adding suffixes and prefixes to a root or by combining two base words to form a compound word.

# Teaching Sequence

- High frequency words
- Compound Words
- Prefixes
- Suffixes
- Roots



# Compound Words

foot + ball = football

head + stand = headstand


hair + brush = hairbrush

blue + berry = blueberry



An investigation from one of our Y1 lessons.

Children work in pairs to split the compound words.

7.4  Whole Group

Let's take a closer look at this week's words.  
Can you spot the words that make up the compound words?

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play + ground	<b>sunset</b> <b>playground</b> <b>blackberry</b> <b>farmyard</b> <b>bedroom</b> <b>football</b>	sun + set
farm + yard		black + berry
foot + ball		bed + room

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# Compound Words

- headquarters
- lighthouse
- wheelchair
- earthquake



# Prefixes

Some of the most common examples

The 4 in **green** are the most frequent.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
anti-	against	antisocial
de-, <b>dis-</b>	opposite, not	disagree
in-, im-, <b>in-, im-, il-, ir-</b>	in not	invest impossible, irreversible
inter-	between	interact, international
mid-	middle	midday, midair
mis-	wrongly	mishear, misfire
<b>re-</b>	again	repack, rewrite, reuse
pre-	before	preload, prepaid
semi-	half	semicircle
sub-	under	submarine, subterranean
super-	above	superstar, supervision
<b>un-</b>	not	unkind, unhappy



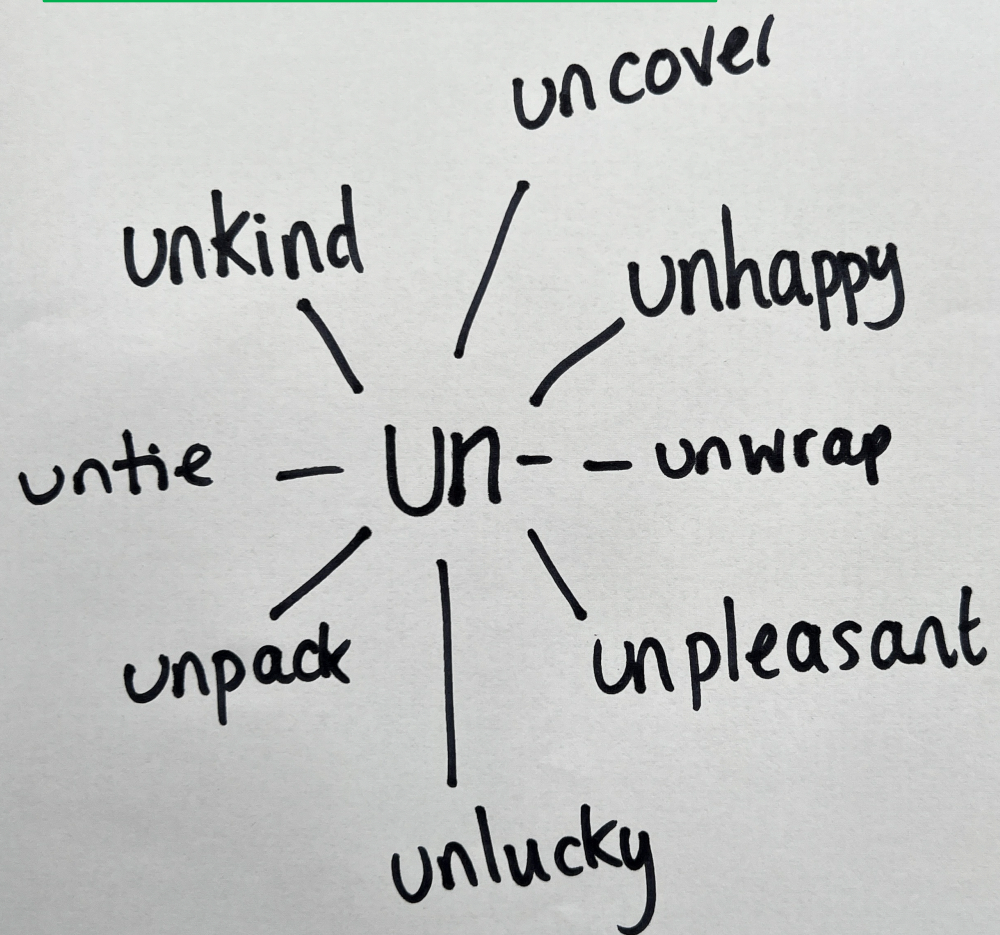
97% of all words use these 20 prefixes

disappear  
never  
dissappear

Table 1 The most common prefixes in printed school English for grades 3-9			
Rank	Prefix	Number of different words with the prefix*	Percentage
1	un-	782	26
2	re-	401	14
3	in-, im-, ir-, il-, 'not'	313	11
4	dis-	216	7
5	en-, em-	132	4
6	non-	126	4
7	in-, im-, 'in or into'	105	4
8	over- 'too much'	98	3
9	mis-	83	3
10	sub-	80	3
11	pre-	79	3
12	inter-	77	3
13	fore-	76	3
14	de-	71	2
15	trans-	47	2
16	super-	43	1
17	semi-	39	1
18	anti-	33	1
19	mid-	33	1
20	under- 'too little'	25	1
	All others	100 (estimated)	3
Total		2,959	100%

\*From John B. Carroll, Peter Davies, and Barry Richman, *The American Heritage Word Frequency Book*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1971.

# Word Webs

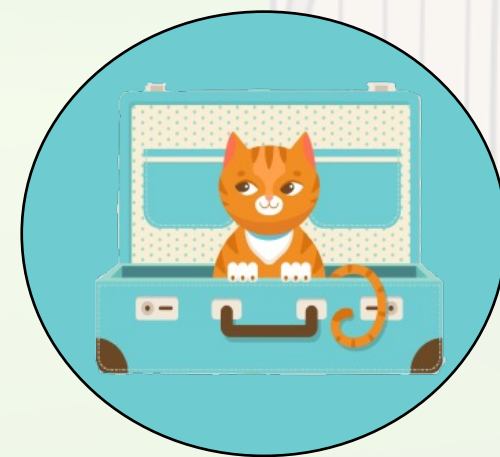


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## Silly sentences

He was unhappy as he had to unpack because the cat had made an unpleasant mess in his suitcase.

Finding non- examples (underneath)







# Word Shed

Word class and root word	In a sentence
comfortably	
Synonyms for 'providing relaxation/comfort'	Synonyms for 'doing something with ease'

Lesson 25: Words ending with 'ably'



Stage 6  
1 Hour Session

Lesson 13: Words containing the prefix 'over'

13.13  
13.14



Can you identify and spell the missing words in these sentences?

overbalance	overcoat	overpaid	overtired
overthrow	overslept	overreact	overlooked
overturned	overcook		

The house \_\_\_\_\_ the most beautiful blue ocean and golden beaches.

Because the baby didn't sleep well during the night, her parents were \_\_\_\_\_ and exhausted.

If you leave an egg in boiling water for ten minutes, you will \_\_\_\_\_ it.

Tens of thousands of angry protestors marched along the street to the parliament building, determined to \_\_\_\_\_ the government.

I \_\_\_\_\_ on my groceries yesterday as I forgot to check my receipt; I was charged full price for an item which should have been half price.

I \_\_\_\_\_ this morning because I forgot to set my alarm which then caused me to \_\_\_\_\_ and tumble out of bed with a thud!

For a split second, it looked as though the tightrope walker was going to \_\_\_\_\_ and fall into the safety mats below.

The VAR \_\_\_\_\_ the referee's decision to allow the goal as it was marginally offside.

The strange looking man wore brightly coloured trousers, green boots, a tatty leather \_\_\_\_\_ and carried a rucksack on his back.



Independent

# Word Shed

Add a prefix

Add a suffix

**Happy**

Add a prefix and a suffix

Use your new words in a sentence





Independent

# Word Shed

Add a prefix

unhappy

Add a suffix

happier  
happily  
happiest

Happy

Add a prefix and a suffix

unhappily

Use your new words in a sentence

Unhappily, she crept into  
the forest.

# Word Study

<p>un</p> <p>in</p> <p>re</p> <p>con</p>	<p><b>quest</b> 'seek, ask, gains'</p>	<p>s</p> <p>ing</p> <p>ed</p>	
		<p>ion</p>	<p>ing</p> <p>able</p> <p>s</p> <p>ed</p>

# Suffixes

## The Magnificent 7



-s, -es

-ed

-ing

-ly

-er

-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition

These 7 suffixes make up 82% of all words which end in suffixes.



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We have all had spellings like these...

- She **hopped** for a new bike for Christmas.
- The bunny **hopt** along the path.
- She **happly** set off to her grandmother's house.





## Suffix solutions for adding -er, -ing, -est, -ed, -y

1

Does the word end in 2 consonants?

Yes. Just add the suffix

2

Does the word end with a short vowel sound followed by a consonant?

Yes. Double the consonant then add the suffix

3

Does the word end in consonant followed by e?

Yes. Take off the e then add the suffix

4

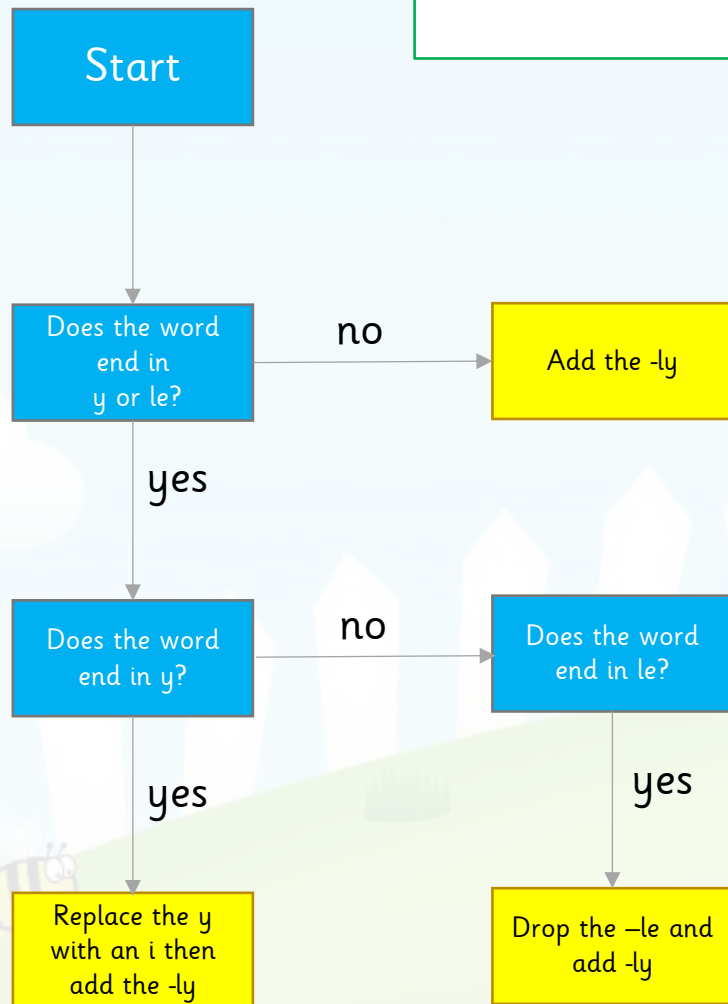
Does the word end in a consonant and a y?

Yes. Change the y to an i then add the suffix.





# Suffix flow diagram -ly



This turns an adjective into an adverb.

- bad > badly
- angry > angrily
- terrible > terribly

• Your turn....







# Toxic Morphology

- Don't have children using searchlights to find 'little words inside big words.'
- Do not look for words like *hen* in *then*, *eat* in *weather* or *act* in *fraction*.
- It adds an unnecessary layer to the spelling task, use morphemes accurately and only where they aid the spelling process.
- **Homeowner** may have the word **meow** in it...

but that does not make possessing a house anything to do with cats.





# In summary ...

- We have a large vocabulary but we only use part of it at any one time.
- Young children cannot be expected to be able to remember how to spell all words by memory alone.
- We can use morphology knowledge alongside HFW, orthographical mapping and etymology to aid the spelling process.
- Use morphology accurately and introduce it gradually.
- Use diagrams to aid recall of the guidelines.

- Teacher hub
- New scheme
- Questions