

SUFFIXES



Guidelines:

- * **A suffix is a letter or group of letters that is added to the end of a root or base word.** Common suffixes include *s*, *ed*, *ing*, *ly*, and *tion*. A suffix changes the meaning of the root or base word. Therefore, children need to understand the meaning of a suffix and how it affects the word it's attached to. By helping children quickly identify a suffix and visually remove it to identify the base word, you'll help them figure out the meaning of the whole word.
- * **Adding a suffix sometimes changes the spelling of a base word.** It's important to teach those suffixes that cause spelling changes directly. The three most common spelling changes caused by adding suffixes are:
 1. **consonant doubling (*runner, running*):** The consonant is doubled so that the first syllable will form a CVC pattern. Most CVC words contain a short-vowel sound. Therefore, the second consonant—acting as a diacritical mark—ensures that the short-vowel sound of the base word is maintained.
 2. **changing y to i (*flies, happiest, loneliness*):** The letter y at the beginning of a word or syllable acts as a consonant and stands for the /y/ sound. However, the letter y at the end of a word either stands for a vowel sound (*fly*) or is part of a vowel digraph (*play*). The change from y to i ensures that the vowel sound the y stands for in the word is maintained.
 3. **deleting the silent e (*making*):** When a word ends in silent e, the letter is removed before the suffix (except *s*) is added because most common suffixes begin with vowels and a double vowel would create a vowel digraph and cause confusion.
- * **Teach only the most commonly used suffixes.** The chart above shows the 20 most frequent suffixes based on a count that appears in the *Word Frequency Book* (Carroll, Davies, and Richman, 1971). The suffixes *s*, *es*, *ed* and *ing* account for almost two-thirds of the words. The suffixes *s* and *es* are used to form the plurals of most nouns. The suffixes *ed* and *ing* are inflectional endings added to verbs to change their tense. These four suffixes are generally introduced to children in first grade.

The Most Common Suffixes			
Rank	Suffix	Meaning	%
1	s, es	plurals	31
2	ed	past-tense verbs	20
3	ing	verb form/present participle	14
4	ly	characteristic	7
5	er, or	person connected with	4
6	ion, tion, ation, ition	act, process	4
7	ible, able	can be done	2
8	al, ial	having characteristics of	1
9	y	characterized by	1
10	ness	state of, condition of	1
11	ity, ty	state of	1
12	ment	action or process	1
13	ic	having characteristic of	1
14	ous, eous, ious	possessing the qualities of	1
15	en	made of	1
16	er	comparative	1
17	ive, ative, itive	adjective form of a noun	1
18	ful	full of	1
19	less	without	1
20	est	comparative	1

All other suffixes (@ 160) accounted for only 7% of the words.