



## Vocabulary Classroom Activity

# Morphology Matters

## Overview

Students can decode new vocabulary and unlock meaning by understanding how words are built. This activity introduces students to basic word parts—prefixes (beginnings), suffixes (endings), and roots (base words)—in playful and engaging ways. Students will break apart and build new words to strengthen both decoding skills and comprehension.

**Focus:** Prefixes, suffixes, and roots

**Grade Range:** K–2

**Goal:** Build vocabulary and decoding skills by helping students explore and manipulate word parts to understand how words are formed and what they mean.

## Materials Needed

- Printed activity pages
- Word part cards or tiles (optional for centers or extension)
- Pencils, markers, and scissors

## Instructions

1. **Introduce the Concept:** Explain that big words are often made up of smaller parts. Use familiar examples like unhappy (un- + happy) or playing (play + -ing).
2. **Explore Word Parts:** Introduce the prefix, suffix, or root of the day. Define it in kid-friendly language. (e.g., “Pre- means before.”)
3. **Practice Together:** Complete one student page as a class. Model how to use pictures, definitions, or context to understand the meaning of new words.
4. **Hands-On Application:** Let students build words using cut-out parts, write their own word combinations, or draw pictures to represent meanings.

## Tips for Differentiation

- Use picture cues or partner supports for emerging readers.
- Let advanced students use new words in sentences or identify them in books.
- Use the cards as a word-building station in centers.
- Focus on just one part (prefix or suffix) for students who need more support.

## Wrap-Up Questions

- What small part helped you know what this word means?
- Can you think of another word that starts or ends the same way?
- How does breaking a word apart help you read it?

## Student Practice Sets

### Prefix Pages (Pre-, Re-, Un-)

- **Activity 1a: Match the Prefix** | [Jump to page 4](#)

Students match words with prefixes (pre-, re-, un-) to corresponding illustrations. Prefixes are underlined to reinforce visual recognition.

- **Activity 1b: Make and Sort** | [Jump to page 8](#)

Students complete a mini-sorting mat with two columns: Un- Means “Not” and Pre- Means “Before.” They cut out or write prefix words from a word bank and sort them. This task reinforces morphological meaning through both classification and creative expression.

### Suffix Pages (-ing, -ed)

- **Activity 2a: Match the Suffix** | [Jump to page 9](#)

Students complete a set of word-picture puzzles that use verbs that have the -ing or -ed ending (e.g., jumping, painted). Each puzzle includes a word and an image that students must match by cutting and assembling. This sentence stem chart can be used to support differentiated groups to model verb forms, guide sentence building in small groups, or provide targeted scaffolds during writing and fluency activities.

- **Activity 2b: Show and Tell** | [Jump to page 11](#)

Students complete sentence frames like “I am \_\_\_\_ (ing)” and “Yesterday I \_\_\_\_ (ed),” then draw one of their actions. This activity promotes oral language development and grammatical accuracy while reinforcing suffix patterns in context.

### Root Word Pages (Play, Help)

- **Activity 3a: Word Web** | [Jump to page 12](#)

Students start with a base word (play or help) and use a word bank to complete a web of related words. Each page includes drawing space for one word and a short caption box.

- **Activity 3b: Cut and Sort** | [Jump to page 13](#)

Students cut out words like playing, replay, helpless, unhelpful, etc., and sort them into categories: Words with Prefixes, Words with Suffixes, or Both. Includes color-coded headers and optional picture support. This activity builds word awareness and analytical thinking around word parts, while optional illustrations support comprehension for early learners.

# Prefixes

A prefix is a group of letters that come at the beginning of a word and changes its meaning.

**un-**

**UN-** means **not**



unhappy



unkind

**re-**

**RE-** means **again**



redo



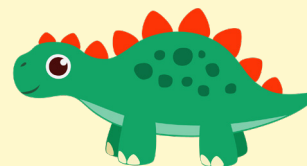
reread

**pre-**

**PRE-** means **before**



preschool



prehistoric

# Prefixes

A prefix is a word part added in front of a base word that changes the meaning of the word.

**pre-**

=

before

**un-**

=

not, opposite

Time to cut and paste! Cut out the words below and match them with the correct pictures. Ready, set, cut!



preheat	unpack	unhappy
unzip	prepay	pretend

# Prefixes

A prefix is a word part added in front of a base word that changes the meaning of the word.

**pre-**

=

before

**un-**

=

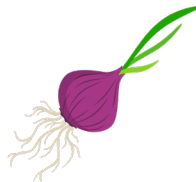
not, opposite

**re-**

=

again

Time to cut and paste! Cut out the words below and match them with the correct pictures. Ready, set, cut!



reheat	uproot	unzip
refill	unpack	pretend

# Prefixes

A prefix is a word part added in front of a base word that changes the meaning of the word.

**dis-**

=

opposite

**un-**

=

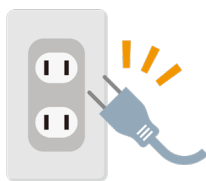
not, opposite

**re-**

=

again

Time to cut and paste! Cut out the words below and match them with the correct pictures. Ready, set, cut!















discover	unplug	refill
dislike	unwrap	rebuild

# Prefixes

A prefix is a word part added in front of a base word that changes the meaning of the word.

**mis-****=**

wrong

**non-****=**

not, opposite

**over-****=**

too much

**pre-****=**

before

Time to cut and paste! Cut out the words below and match them with the correct pictures. Ready, set, cut!



prepay	nonfiction	misbehave
preheat	overdo	misread

Sorting Words

# PRE- and UN- Words

**PRE-** means **before**

**Preschool**

**UN-** means **not**

**Unhappy**

Read the words below, then write them in the correct box.

prepay	unhappy	pretest	unkind	preheat
unsafe	preview	unfair	preplan	untie

**Means “before”**

**Means “not”**

Choose one word from above and draw a picture of what it means.



**Walking**



**Hopping**



**Looking**



**Sliding**



**Baking**



**Kicking**



**Writing**



**Learning**



**Painting**



**Helped**



**Played**



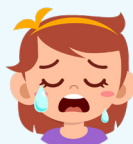
**Stopped**



**Smiled**



**Cried**



**Waved**



**Opened**



**Shouted**



**Carried**



# Complete the Sentences

Use the word bank and add the suffix -ing or -ed to complete the sentences.

Word Bank:					
play	walk	help	jump	talk	yell
kick	clean	clap	smile	bake	slide
shout	paint	learn	write	open	invite

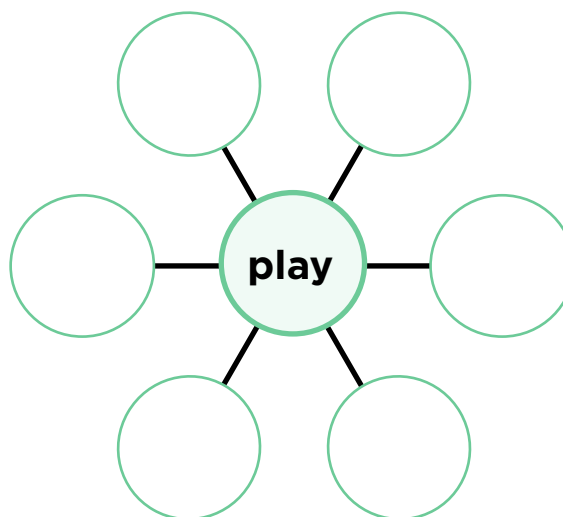
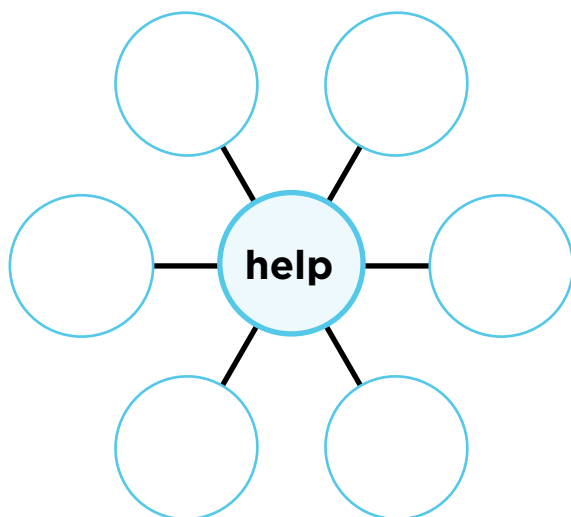
1. I am \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Yesterday, I \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Sue was \_\_\_\_\_ with her friend.
4. Joe \_\_\_\_\_ with his sister.

Choose one sentence to draw a picture of the action.

# Word Web

Look at your base words. Find the words in the word bank that are related to the base word and write them in the correct web.

Word Bank:					
played	helpless	playful	display	helping	replay
unhelpful	playing	helped	helpfulness	preplay	helpful



Choose one word from above and write it in the box.  
Draw a picture of what it looks like in action.

# Prefix and Suffix Cut and Sort

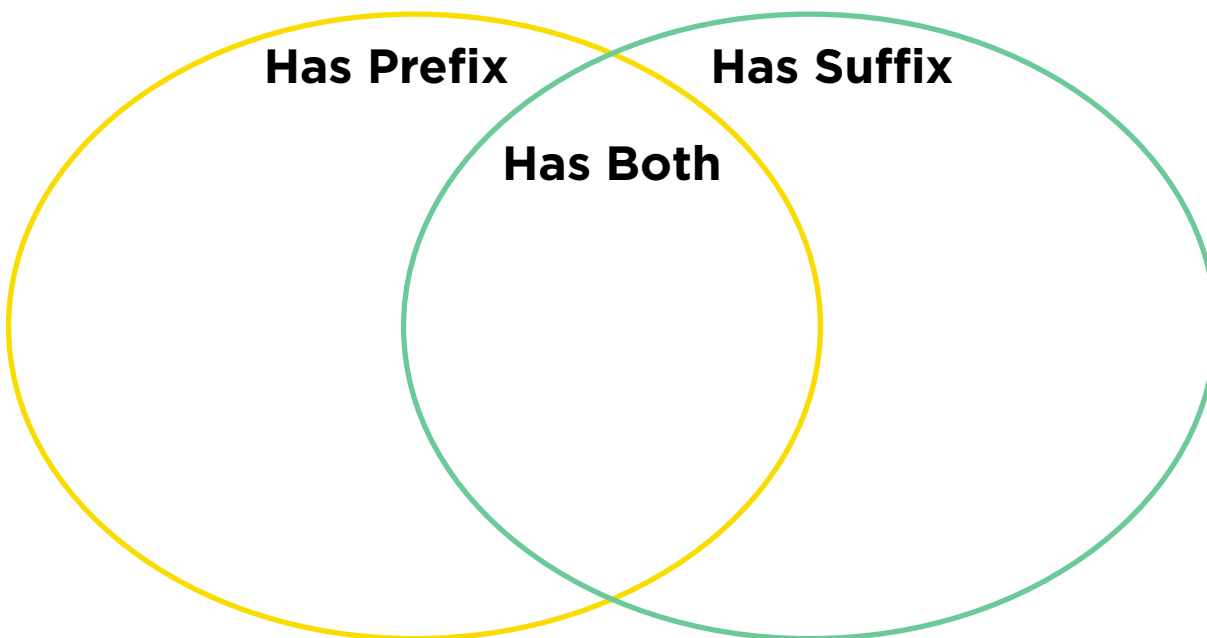
Cut out the words below and sort them in the Venn diagram. Look to see if each base word has a prefix, suffix, or both.

## Prefix

A prefix is a word part added in front of a base word that changes the meaning of the word.

## Suffix

A suffix is a word part added to the end of a base word that changes the meaning of the word.



✂

played	helpless	playful	display
helping	replay	unhelpful	playing
helped	helpfulness	preplay	helpful