

Lesson Skill: Understanding and using suffixes to expand vocabulary

Strand Reading--vocabulary

SOL 6.4
7.4
8.4

Materials

- Copies of the attached Working with Suffixes worksheet
- Dictionaries

Lesson

Note that this lesson can be used equally well with prefixes by using the attached Working with Prefixes worksheet.

1. Review the meaning of *suffix* and have students give some examples. Choose a suffix (e.g., *-ist*, meaning “one who”) that is a part of many words that students already have in their active vocabularies. Write the suffix on the board, and write one or two examples of words that contain it (e.g., *pianist*, *bicyclist*). Have students brainstorm more words that include the suffix, and write these on the board. If they offer words that contain the letters of the suffix but not the suffix itself (e.g., *list*), record those words for the moment.
2. Ask students what the meanings of all these words have in common. Ask whether there are any words that do not belong in terms of meaning. Check words on the list that belong, and scratch through words that do not belong.
3. Have pairs of students work to create a working definition of the target suffix. Circulate to check answers and assist as necessary.
4. Point out that one reason to learn common suffixes is that it can help you figure out the meanings of words you do not know. Choose a word containing the suffix (e.g., *philatelist*) that is unlikely to be in students’ active vocabularies, and add it to the list. Have student pairs create a definition of the word based on what they know about the suffix. Point out to students that if they encountered this uncommon word in reading or on a test, even if they do not know it, the suffix *-ist* would tell them that it means “one who” does something. Discuss with students how this could help them as readers or test-takers.
5. Distribute the “Working with Suffixes” worksheet, and go over the directions. Have student pairs brainstorm words that use each target suffix and then create a working definition of each suffix based on the words they have brainstormed. Then, have students look up the suffixes in a dictionary or in an online resource, such as the one listed below under Resources, to confirm or correct their definitions. While students are working, circulate to assist.
6. Hold a class discussion of the students’ brainstormed lists and the definitions they wrote.

Working with Suffixes

Fill out each graphic organizer below for the suffixes *-able* or *-ible*, *-ic*, *-ism*, and *-ment*.

1. Brainstorm words that use the indicated suffix.
2. Discuss what your brainstormed words have in common and come up with a possible definition of the suffix.
3. Use the provided resource to check your definition.

Suffix	<i>-able, -ible</i>
Brainstormed Words	
Possible Definition	
Actual Definition	

Suffix	<i>-ic</i>
Brainstormed Words	
Possible Definition	
Actual Definition	

Suffix	<i>-ism</i>
Brainstormed Words	
Possible Definition	
Actual Definition	

Suffix	<i>-ment</i>
Brainstormed Words	

Possible Definition	
Actual Definition	

Working with Prefixes

Fill out each graphic organizer below for four prefixes.

1. Select four common prefixes, and write one of them in the first row of each organizer.
2. Brainstorm words that use each prefix.
2. Discuss what your brainstormed words have in common and come up with a possible definition of the prefix.
3. Use the provided resource to check your definition.

Prefix	
Brainstormed Words	
Possible Definition	
Actual Definition	

Prefix	
Brainstormed Words	
Possible Definition	
Actual Definition	

Prefix	
Brainstormed Words	
Possible Definition	
Actual Definition	

Prefix	
Brainstormed	

Words	
Possible Definition	
Actual Definition	