

'Suffishes' are a fun way to introduce suffixes (and can also be used for prefixes as well). A suffix is one or more syllables that are added at the end of a word. It can change the word's meaning, eg pain + less = painless, or part of speech, eg quick (adjective), quickly (adverb). It may also affect the tense of a verb, eg wish/wished/wishing, or whether a noun is singular or plural, eg duck/ducks.

Suffishes are a way to get children to practise making words using suffixes (and/or prefixes) and the spelling rules associated with them.

Once you have a set of suffix they can be left out in the classroom to be used again and again, and more can be added over time. They allow students to look at, experiment with and try out words and suffixes to see if the words they make are 'real'. They also have to think how the 'new' word will be spelt.

## What they'll learn

- > What suffixes and root words are
- > Suffixes can be added to root words
- > Adding suffixes may change meaning, part of speech or tense
- > Spelling rules for adding suffixes to root words

## Starter activity

Write some words on the board, eg amazed, amazement, amazing, amazingly. Ask what word is in all of these words (amaze). Explain that 'amaze' is called the 'root' word. This is the word that all the others 'grow' from. Look at other groups of words and identify the root and what has been added to them. How has this changed the words, eg painful, painless. If this is your first suffixes lesson, stick to a small set number of suffixes. If you've taught them before, use examples the class should know. Other suffixes could include 'able', eg breakable; verb suffixes 'ed' and 'ing', eg started, talking; or comparative adjectives 'er', 'est', eg bigger, biggest. Ask the class to suggest how a word such as 'happy' can be made longer. Use a more complex word for older classes. If the children know about prefixes, you can also include these in the lesson introduction eg unkind, unkindly.

## Main activities

### 1 Kettle of fish

In advance, draw and cut out 'suffish' fish body shapes and write root words on them, eg talk, clap, kind, swim, hope, happy. On fish tail shapes, write suffixes, eg ness, less, ed, ing. Make sure you have words that end in consonants (eg harm, weak), vowels (eg hope, use), 'y' (eg happy, pity) and a short vowel and consonant (eg run, stop).

Ask the children to make words by adding the 'body' words to the 'tail' suffixes, to create suffishes. Point out that each of the suffixes could be added to more than one word. The body and tail can be moved together to show the word, then put back.

### 2 Spelling bee

Write the words the children have created on the board, talking about how you spell them. Explain that there are some rules to help

them know how to spell the word when adding a suffix. This is particularly important if the word ends with a vowel and the suffix begins with one.

> If the suffix starts with a consonant, eg less, usually they are just added to the word, eg painless, useless.

> If the word ends with a consonant which is not immediately after a short stressed vowel sound, the suffix is simply added to the root word, eg jumping, knocked.

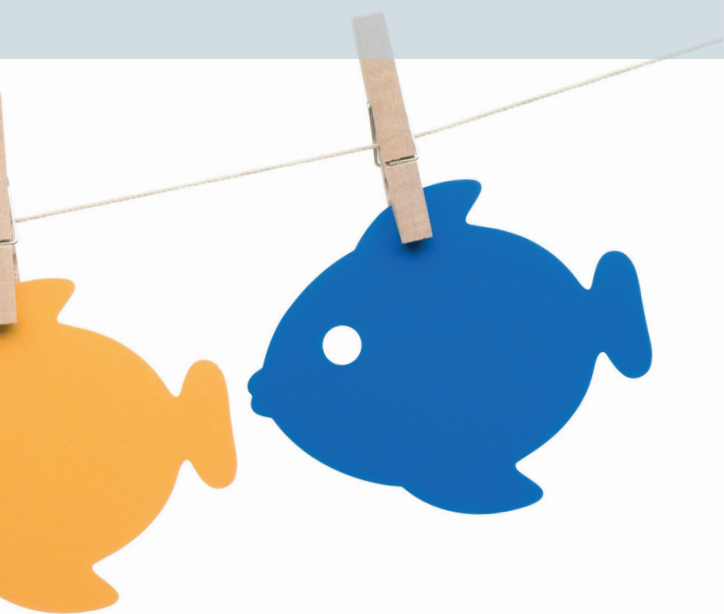
> If the word ends with an 'e' and the suffix begins with a vowel, the 'e' is dropped before the suffix is added, eg smiling, joking.

> If the word ends with a short stressed vowel and a consonant then the final consonant is doubled, eg hopping, dripped. The double consonant acts as a 'wall' to stop the vowel at the start of the suffix changing the sound of the vowel immediately before it.

> If the word ends with a 'y', it is replaced with an 'i', eg happiness.

# Better, faster, STRONGER

Create an aquarium of paper 'suffishes' to introduce the concept of suffixes



These rules could be broken down into different lessons and covered one or two at a time if necessary.

**3 Mix and match**  
Give students a selection of suffish bodies and tails and ask them to match them up to create words. Ask them to write

the new word on a complete fish shape. This activity can be done individually or in groups, with the children checking each other's words and spelling. Use the paper fishes to create a suffish aquarium wall display, then encourage the children to use the words in sentences, written or orally.

“ The spelling rules may seem daunting, but you do understand them as you use them daily, even though you may not be able to explain them without some thought.

### Extending the lesson

- > Create a box of suffish that children can use to create words. Add more words and suffixes as your pupils learn them.
- > Write prefixes on fish head shapes and add these to the set.
- > Encourage children to add both prefixes and suffixes to create longer, more complex words.
- > Include blank heads and tails. Words with more than one suffix can be made by adding two 'tails', eg 'interesting-ly'. With a prefix this could become 'un-interesting-ly'.
- > This idea can be extended and used when learning about plural suffixes such as 'es' (brushes), 'ies' (cherries), comparative adjectives 'er' and 'est', and adding 'ly' to make adverbs.

## Q USEFUL QUESTIONS

- > What is the meaning of the word and how does it change once a suffix has been added?
- > What spelling should the word have when the suffix is added?
- > Why do we drop the final 'e' when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel?
- > What are other words in the same root word family?



### i ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sara Wernham was a primary school teacher and is the co-author of the Jolly Phonics programme. She now develops and writes materials for Jolly Learning and provides teacher training.



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