**Word Study: Suffixes**

**Exercise 1 (best done with 2 children)**

Presentation

I want to show you some charts that I have. One particular chart first, come with me? See this chart here? (It stays there) Here we have words in rows right across like that, and also in colours. I want you to read them straight across. You can choose whichever group of words you like. Now the trick is we’re leaving that chart there. You have to remember it. Okay? Now if you’re not sure about it or you forget the word, you can always come back to look at it. But do try to remember it.

Can I show you what we need? We actually need the moveable alphabets. We have three here but we are just going to use one for the moment. Which colour would you like – would you like to use the red alphabet or the blue alphabet? You decide. We are going to use the same one for the moment.

Can you remember your group of words? Okay would you like to make them? And I’ll tell you what, lets try and keep them nice and neat, one on top of the other.

Okay, can you read out your words?

And you, yours?

There are some pieces (?) that keep repeating don’t they?

And look there are some pieces at the end that aren’t repeated, can you see them. Well let’s put them in a different colour so they’re easier to see. Which colour would you like to use?

And you can do the same.

Lets read those words again.

So you have these pieces that are the same and then these pieces at the end. What do these words mean? Yes absolutely.

So there are these words that mean the same act-act-act, or friend-friend-friend, but then when we add something to the end the meaning changes doesn’t it.

Well it’s interesting, “or” has a meaning of its own doesn’t it?

And “ing” – well it doesn’t have a meaning does it?

And look, its so interesting, when you add these pieces at the end they change the meaning of the word. Each of these is called a “suffix”.

I’m pretty sure these spellings are right but lets go check them on the chart.

[Then follow with loose 3PL]

What’s this word? And which is the suffix?

And what is the suffix for this word?

And what is that piece called?

**Follow-up work**

Do this with the moveable alphabet with younger children; write it down with the older children. We do it with the moveable alphabet because it is clearer that we are MAKING the root and then ADDING to it. With paper it is different because you would be TAKING AWAY. So the concept is clearer with the moveable alphabet. The older children won’t use the moveable alphabet – that is fine. With an older child if it is their first presentation I will still use the moveable alphabet so they can see it but they can work with paper it is fine.

**Exercise 2**

Presentation

Do you remember the other say we were talking about suffixes? Where did the suffixes live? At the end, yes. Well let’s look at the chart again. I want to read to you a set of words.

Spend, Spender, Spending.

What do you hear there?

Spend, Spend-er, Spend-ing

What’s the word you hear all the time?

Spend, yes.

Lets try another one. What about

Test, Tester, Testing?

Test. Yes, that’s the one that’s repeating isn’t it?

What about

Conduct, Conductor, Conducting?

Conduct, yes.

Okay another one? Mark’s turn.

Music, Musical, Musician.

Music, yup. Okay this is for you Olga.

Kind, Kinder, Kinder.

Yes, Kind.

Well this word that keeps repeating, it’s called the “root”. And its called the root because that’s the part the word grows from.

[Question about musician]

What an interesting question. Absolutely, you can’t quite hear the “music” in musician. Because its about the spelling sometimes and not just about the sound.

Okay, go and choose a set of words again.

Remember what we were talking about. The suffix? Where did it come again? The end. And what else did we talk about? Yes, the root. Well because the root is so special, and because that’s the part where the word grows from, we are always going to put the root in a very special alphabet, which is black.

We don’t need both the red and the blue moveable alphabet, we can put one away, which one? Okay lets put that away.

Now remember what we said you are going to do. You’ve got the words in your group in your head, and you are going to put them out there, but make sure the root is in black. Okay, lets put the root down first.

Tell you what, it would be a really good idea to put your words over there, lets move it there.

Okay you’ve each done the root.

Now what were the other words in your group? Do you want to put them out now, but remember the root is always in black.

[Some children put all the roots out first; some children do each full word one at a time]

Do you want to check your spelling?

[The children having to go to check means that they have to carry it in their minds and they have to be aware of the sequence. It is much more mechanical if they bring the chart to the table.]

What words do you have? Can you show me the root in yours? And what are your suffixes?

Now what I want you to do is to put those away, and you may continue using the chart on your own.

These are the first two presentations with the Suffix chart. It is the idea that you add a bit to a root and the whole meaning changes that interests them. Lots of children love to then look for words in the dictionary. Sometimes children may not know the meaning of words they pick out from the chart – again, using the dictionary is such an essential thing. Do not provide the explanation yourself. But be careful about this: you can be deadly dull by always insisting they look it up for themselves! Just remember you can overdo anything. It comes with observation and knowledge of the children. Sometimes I say okay you do one and I’ll do the other.

If a child doesn’t show interest in following up then you can suggest doing it with coloured pencils. Or – depending on their handwriting – with coloured inks! This is a really special thing. It really gets them. Yellow ink, red ink… they absolutely love it.

They can then follow on from there with the other charts, which are the “Classified Charts”. A classified chart introduces the idea that there are different kinds of suffixes that you can add to words to change their meaning. This is exploratory work – they can continue working with these charts and there is no order to them. The charts are only an initial source.

In relation to the classified charts for suffixes, when the children for instance discover there is a suffix “er” – try to think of all the words you know that end with “er”. This brings them on to the implications of meanings for suffixes.

Remember the purpose: the purpose is to awaken interest and the desire to explore their language.