

Lesson 12: The Building Blocks of Language

Suffixes in Use: Finding Bases and Building New Words

Review Word	PLAYGROUND
Focus	A suffix is added after a base.
Guiding Question	What does the suffix do?
Suffix Families	-ful: full of or having • -less: without • -ing: action in progress in these examples
Core Comparison	Same suffix. Different bases. What stayed the same? What changed?

Objectives and Preparation

- **Students will:** identify a base and suffix, build and read words in three suffix families, compare what stays the same and changes, and explain what each suffix contributes.
- **Prepare:** base and suffix word cards or magnetic pieces, board space for three family columns, and optional movement cues for the -ing words.
- **Keep the scope narrow:** focus on suffixes after transparent, unchanged bases. Save root and base distinctions for a later lesson.

Teaching Sequence

1. Review the Base

Display **PLAYGROUND**. Have students see it, say it, clap it, and break it into **PLAY + GROUND**. Identify it as a compound word, then keep **PLAY** on the board. Say: “PLAY is our base. A base is something we can build on.”

2. Introduce the Suffix Tool

Write **BASE + SUFFIX**. Ask, “Where does a suffix go?” Recover: **after the base**. Post the question: **What does the suffix do?** Explain that the class will keep one suffix fixed while changing the base.

3. Teacher Model: The -FUL Family

Build and read **PLAY + FUL → PLAYFUL**, **HELP + FUL → HELPFUL**, and **CARE + FUL → CAREFUL**. Use the working handle **-ful = full of or having, in these words**. Ask: “What stayed the same?” “What changed?” “Where is the suffix?” and “What does -ful contribute?”

4. Guided Practice: The -LESS Family

Build and read **FEAR + LESS → FEARLESS**, **TOOTH + LESS → TOOTHLESS**, and **END + LESS → ENDLESS**. Use the handle **-less = without, in these words**. Invite one or two student suggestions. For each candidate, ask: “What is the base?” “Is -less after it?” and “Does ‘without’ help explain the word?” If uncertain, say: **Investigators check what they build.**

5. Student Prediction and Movement: The -ING Family

Have students predict and build **PLAY + ING → PLAYING**, **HELP + ING → HELPING**, and **COOK + ING → COOKING**. Pair each with a sentence and action: “I am playing,” “I am helping,” and “I am cooking.” Ask the same comparison questions. Say: **In these sentences, the -ing forms show actions in progress.**

6. Compare and Close

-FUL	-LESS	-ING
PLAYFUL	FEARLESS	PLAYING
HELPFUL	TOOTHLESS	HELPING
CAREFUL	ENDLESS	COOKING

Ask: “Where is the suffix in every word?” “Inside each family, what stayed the same?” “What changed?” and “What did the suffix contribute?” Conclude: **A suffix is added after a base and can contribute meaning or a grammatical job to the word we build.**

Quick Formative Check

Show **HELPFUL**, **TOOTHLESS**, and **COOKING**. Ask each student to point to the suffix, identify the base, read the word, and explain or demonstrate what the suffix contributes.

Teacher Notes

- Move gradually from teacher modeling with -ful, to guided work with -less, to student prediction and movement with -ing.
- Accept speaking, pointing, moving cards, reading, sorting, drawing, or acting as valid participation.
- Do not teach “-ing means happening now” as a universal rule. In the lesson sentences, **am + the -ing form** shows an action in progress.
- Keep the recurring language simple: “What are we building on?” “What did we add?” “Where did we put it?” “What stayed the same?” “What changed?”

Hold On to This

A base is something we can build on.

A suffix is added after a base.

Same suffix. Different bases.

Find the base. Add the suffix. Build the word. Read it. Compare what happened.