



Word building

Vowel Suffixes1

(Double, drop or do nothing)

Objectives:

To be able to build words by adding:

-ing, -ed and -er to verbs where no change is needed to the root word (Revision from Y1).

-ing, and -ed, to verbs of one syllable ending in a single consonant letter after a single vowel letter.

-ing and -ed to verbs ending in -e with a consonant before it.

-er and -est to adjectives where no change is needed to the root word (Revision from Y1).

-er, -est and -y to words ending in -e with a consonant before it.

Subject knowledge / Conventions

- We can add **-ing, -ed, -er** to verbs
- We can add **-er** and **-est** to adjectives (to make the comparative and the superlative form of the adjective)
- We can add **-y** to nouns or verbs (to create adjectives)

Short vowel sound: One syllable word ending in a single consonant letter - DOUBLE the final consonant letter then add the suffix.

skip - skipping, skipped **big - bigger, biggest** **flop - floppy**

Short vowel sound: One syllable word ending in two (usually different) consonant letters - DO NOTHING just add the suffix.

jump - jumped/jumping **long - longer/longest** **milk - milky**

Long vowel sound: Most words - DO NOTHING just add the suffix.

moan - moaning/moaned **mean - meaner, meanest** **cream - creamy**

Long vowel sound: Words ending in e (split digraph) - DROP the **e** then add the suffix.

smile - smiled, smiling **fine - finer, finest** **laze - lazy**

NB: In a few words that contain a split digraph, the **e** is not dropped when adding **y cagey**. In some cases both the versions (with the **e** and without) are listed in dictionaries **pricy/pricey**.

Some words with short vowel sounds end in e (often with v before it) - DROP the **e** then add the suffix.

have - having **love - loved** **come - coming**

The **e** was added at the end of words containing short vowels and ending in /v/ by Norman scribes nearly 1000 years ago. The decision not to follow the usual conventions for short vowels was to avoid confusion caused by the fact that their handwriting made **v** look like **u** and **vv** look like **w**. There are still very few words in the English language that end in **v** (without an **e**) or that contain **vv**.

Words with the ending -le e.g. **whistle, chuckle, giggle**, usually drop the **e** before adding the suffix. These words will be tackled in the unit 'Letter strings and word families 1'.

An important part of learning about suffixes is thinking about how they change meaning. However, whilst the suffixes in this unit are very common, their meanings aren't all easy to explain. Try *showing* (by looking at the words in sentences) rather than *explaining* how meanings change.

- Help children see that these conventions are all there to help readers to know how to pronounce words. Wherever possible ensure that children's writing is read by people and help children see that misspelt words make it much harder for the reader.
- For children to apply these conventions when trying to spell a word, they first need to recognise that the word contains a suffix. It is easy to hear that a word ends in **-ing** or **-er** but children need to train themselves to recognise the different ways the other endings can be pronounced.
- **-ed** can be pronounced /t/ - **clapped** /d/ - **cleaned** or /i/d/ - **needed**
- **-est** endings are usually pronounced /i/s/t/.
- **-y** endings are usually pronounced /ee/

Children should already be able to:

- Segment words, including Phase 5 words
- Distinguish between vowel and consonant phonemes
- Know the names of all the letters in the alphabet (not in order)
- Show some understanding of what a verb is
- Orally convert present tense verbs to past tense
- Add -ing, -ed, -er and -est to words where the root word does not change

Revisit, assess and adapt – suggested activities

Letter name assessment (could be tackled in a handwriting session to check up on letter formation at the same time). Say the name of each of the letters of the alphabet (in a muddled up order) and ask children to write the small case letter and upper case letter. Before you start, ask children to listen out for any letters that are vowels and to put a star next to the vowel letters. At the end discuss any letter names that proved tricky to remember. Make a note of any that need more rehearsal.

Play Countdown (See the **Rehearsal Games** page in the **Teachers** section on the website for instructions) to rehearse reading words (where no change is needed to the root word) that end in **-ing, -ed, -er, -est, -y**.

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes – Revisit](#)

Look at a selection of words from the countdown game above. Ask children which words / suffixes are simplest to read (and will therefore be simplest to spell) using phonics (**-ing** and **-er** – should be easy to read from Phase 3). Look at the others and together identify that **-y** is usually pronounced as /ee/, that **-est** is usually pronounced /i/st and that **-ed** can be pronounced /t/, /d/ or /i/d/. Sort words with the **-ed** ending into the three possible pronunciations.

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes – Revisit](#)

Discuss with children what verbs are and how they change if we are talking about something that happened in the past. Can children orally work out what the past verb would be for a selection of verbs?

On whiteboards ask children to spell a selection of words ending in **-ing, -ed, -y, -er, -est** (where the spelling of the root word isn't altered before adding the suffix). You could use the Countdown game for this by hiding what is shown on the projector (there is usually a hide or conceal button on the projector's remote control) and turning the monitor away from the children so that only you can see it. Read the first word aloud and ask the children to spell it on their whiteboards. Press the hide button on the projector remote again to reveal the word. Children mark each correct letter in the word. They will have to write and check quickly before the minute runs out.

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes – Revisit](#)

Subscribers to phonicsplay.co.uk will find other interactive resources that can be used for revisiting some of this learning on the PhonicsPlay website in [Phase 5d](#).

Use what you find out from these revisit sessions to adapt planning of the rest of the unit. For children who are not yet ready for this unit or who may already be working beyond the level of this unit, see the units below for ideas.

Supporting and extending



To support – look back to
Phase 5d phonicsplay.co.uk

To extend – look ahead to
Suffixes 2



Teach & Practise – suggested activities

Ask children to tell you some vowel phonemes. Children may know /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/ and /ai/, /ee/, /igh/, /oa/, /oo/ but may need to have it pointed out that the other phonemes they learned in Phase 5c are also vowel phonemes. You may need to point out that vowel phonemes can have graphemes that contain consonant letters. Explain that vowel phonemes can be long or short. Play a game sorting one syllable words into those that contain long vowel phonemes and those that contain short vowel phonemes.

[Long or Short](#) (Level 1 & Level 2)

Read the words **hopping, bugged, fitter, wettest, snappy**. **Printable flash cards available**. Ask children how they knew that they should pronounce the words in the way that they did. Why don't we say these words **h/oa/ping, b/oo/ged, f/igh/ter, w/ee/test, sn/ai/py**? Hopefully they will suggest meaning* and point out that the words don't make sense pronounced in those ways. Hopefully they will also spot that all these vowels are followed by a double letter which gives us a

big clue as readers that the vowel will be short. Read the words **jumped, swinging, longer, milky**. Ask how the children knew that they should pronounce these words with a short vowel sound? Help them work out that although these aren't double consonants, there are still two consonant letters between the short vowel and the suffix and that this lets us know to use the short vowel. Stress that there are exceptions and that we will go on to learn the exceptions as we go through school but by remembering the convention when can save ourselves from having to learn lots and lots of words on a one by one basis.

Look at some root words that are verbs containing a short vowel and ending with either a single consonant letter or two consonant letters. Model adding **-ing** and **-ed**. [Violet's Vowel Suffixes - Demonstrations](#). Model thinking aloud about the thought processes needed and specifically point out when the consonant needs to be doubled to make sure readers know to read it as a short vowel (and when there is no need because there are already two consonant letters). Repeat a few times. Talk about the fact that this is changing the tense of the verb and ask children to put the words into sentences, either orally or in writing. Children play a game where they are shown root words one at a time and decide whether they would need to double the final consonant or do nothing before adding the suffix **-ing** or **-ed**. To ensure children are all thinking about the answer, decide on a gesture for doubling and one for doing nothing. Ask all children to choose whether each word needs to have the final consonant doubled or not and to show the gesture for that choice. Alternatively, ask them to write the finished word on their whiteboards.

[Violet's vowel suffixes Double or do nothing \(-ing and -ed option\)](#)
[Printable word cards and sorting grids available](#)

Point out that when we know the convention for adding vowel suffixes to **-ing** and **-ed**, "Short vowel sound – we need two consonants." it will also help as we add other suffixes that begin with vowels. Model adding **-er, -est** and **-y** to root words containing a short vowel and ending in either a single consonant letter or two consonant letters. [Violet's Vowel Suffixes - Demonstrations](#) Some children may question whether **-y** counts as a vowel suffix. If so, encourage them to think about the sound rather than the letter. Children play a game where they are shown root words one at a time and decide whether they would need to double the final consonant or do nothing before adding the suffixes **-er, -est** or **-y** (and revisiting **-ing** and **-ed**).

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes - Double or do nothing \(-ing, -ed, -er, -est, -y option\)](#)
[Printable word cards and sorting grids available](#)

Try chanting the rule/convention as a class, "Short vowel sound, we need two consonants." or ask the children to invent a rule chant that they like better. Ask children to come up with actions to go along with the chant. Chant the rule and do the actions in any spare moments in the school day, e.g. whilst lining up, waiting for whiteboards/pens to be given out, whilst coming to sit on the carpet etc.

Challenge children to make posters to remind themselves about the rule/convention.

Look at a selection of root words containing long vowel phonemes **moan, rain, cool, bright, dream**. Talk about how the children know how to pronounce these words. Hopefully children will say that most of the graphemes don't (or rarely) represent short vowel phonemes making a long pronunciation the sensible choice and that this can be backed up by thinking about meaning and checking that the words make sense. Model adding suffixes to these root words. The graphemes that represented the vowel sound in the root word aren't affected when we add

a suffix so we can still easily see how to pronounce them **moaning, rained, cooler, brightest, dreamy**.

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes - Demonstrations](#)

[Printable flash cards available](#)

Look at some root words containing long vowel sounds and ending in **e** (split digraphs) **smoke, hope, fine, wide, laze**. How do we know how to pronounce the vowel sounds in these words? Hopefully children will recognise that the split digraph in the root words represents the long vowel sound. Model adding suffixes to those words explain that the convention is that we remove the **e** before adding the suffix **smoked, hoping, finer, widest, lazy**. How will readers know how to pronounce the vowels in these words now? Hopefully they will spot the fact that there is only one consonant between the vowel and the suffix and that this is enough of a clue to let us know that we need to say the long vowel sound (so we don't need the **e** part of the split digraph anymore).

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes - Demonstrations](#)

[Printable flash cards available](#)

Give children a selection of verbs containing long vowel phonemes some of which have split digraphs and ask all children to decide whether these words need us to drop the **e** or do nothing before adding the suffixes **-ing** or **-ed**.

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes - Drop or do nothing \(-ing and -ed option\)](#).

[Printable word cards and sorting grids available](#)

Remind children that adding **-ing** and **-ed** to verbs changes the tense. Ask children to write some sentences using these words to check that they understand them.

Point out that once we know the conventions for adding **-ing** and **-ed** to words containing long vowel phonemes, we can use the same rules for lots of other suffixes that begin with vowels. Model what happens when **-er, -est** and **-y** are added to root words containing long vowel sounds. [Violet's Vowel Suffixes - Demonstrations](#). Ask children to have a go at adding **-er, -est** and **y** (and revise adding **-ing** and **-ed**) to words containing long vowel sounds.

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes - Drop or do nothing \(-ing, -ed, -er, -est, -y\)](#)

[Printable word cards and sorting grids available](#)

Try chanting the rule/convention as a class, "Split digraph, send the e for an early bath." or "Long vowel sound, we don't need final e around." or ask the children to invent a rule chant that they like better. Ask children to come up with actions to go along with the chant. Chant the rule (with actions) at any handy moment in the school day. E.g. Whilst lining up, waiting for whiteboards/pens to be given out, whilst coming to sit on the carpet etc.

Challenge children to make posters to remind themselves about the rule/convention.

Explain that there are a few words that contain short vowel phonemes and end in **e** **have, come, live, love, give**. They sometimes catch people out when they are reading as they look like they should be pronounced with a long vowel phoneme. There are only a small number of words like this. However some of them are very common words. Children learned several of them as tricky HFW. When adding suffixes, we can follow the same convention that we use for words that contain long vowel phonemes and end with **e**. Drop the **e** then add the suffix. Play quickwrite with a selection of these words.

[Printable flash cards available](#)

Play a selection of rehearsal games. For example:

Double, drop or do nothing (A word sort game) – Give pairs of children a grid with column headings 'Double the consonant', 'Drop the e' and 'Do nothing'. Give children a selection of words that can have suffixes added to them. Ask them to take each word card, discuss and decide which column it belongs in. See top tips for playing word sort games in the *Rehearsal games* section in the *General resources* section on the website.

[Violet's Vowel Suffixes – Double, drop or do nothing](#)

[Printable word cards and sorting grids available for -ing & -ed / -er & -est / -y](#)

Play any of the *Rehearsal games* (interactives and printables available) from the *General resources* section of the website or any other spelling games that you or the children know or can invent based on the spelling conventions learned in this unit.

*If children don't appear to be thinking about whether words make sense or not when they read/pronounce them, this could be something that is holding back their reading. Explore in guided reading whether they expect what they read to make sense and whether they have strategies to use when they read a word and it doesn't make sense. It may be useful to do more work on Phase 5b phonics as well as working on a range of comprehension skills.

Apply and assess – suggested activities

In guided reading ask children to race to see who can find the most double consonants in their guided reading book in one minute. Look at some examples more closely and see whether they all indicate that the vowel before them is short or whether you can find any exceptions.

Use informal whiteboard spelling tests to determine whether children are correctly spelling words ending in the suffixes **-ing, -ed, -er, -est, -y**. See the word cards in printable resources or use specific words that your children need to work on.

Look at pictures of monsters/aliens/animals and a selection of root words.

Model using the words, adding appropriate suffixes and using them in sentences, e.g. Floop likes to do lots of jumping. Dreve climbed a hill yesterday. Clave has got the softest fur. Strew has got longer horns than Plick. Ask children to write their own sentences based on the pictures.

[Printable resources available](#)

Dictate a short text containing a selection of words that have been worked on this week.

Dear Headteacher,

I am writing to you to let you know that (insert name of class) are the greatest, kindest, smartest class in the world. They never stop thinking, trying and learning. They even smiled and cheered when I gave them really tricky homework. They are very funny too and love joking around.

Thank you for making me their teacher.

Applying across the curriculum

See the [Teachers](#) section of the website for ideas on applying across the curriculum. Try to build in lots of modelling, planned opportunities and support in the learning environment for applying across the curriculum. Without this, it is easy for children to simply forget what they have learned in spelling sessions.