



Build-a-Word Game

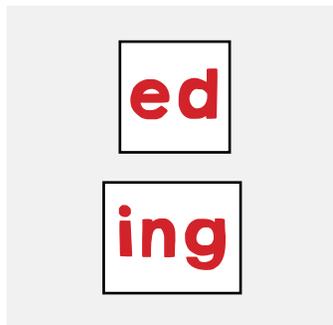
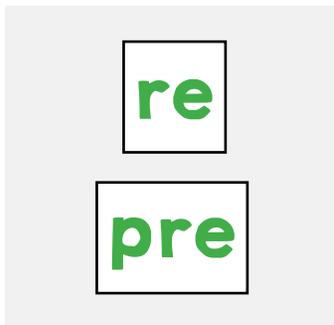
Materials

- 1 package of 3 x 5 file cards
- 3 different coloured markers
- enough ziploc plastic bags for each group to have a bag of prefixes, a bag of suffixes, and a bag of root words
- masking tape

Preparation

Prepare the cards:

- Write single prefixes on some cards; single suffixes on other cards; and root words on yet other cards. You might start by writing the prefixes *re-* and *pre-* on file cards and also the suffixes *-ed* and *-ing*. Then select a simple word for your root word, such as the word '*sort*' and write that on another file card.
- Cut the file cards to fit the morpheme, cutting particularly closely to the end of the prefix so that it will fit right next to the root word, and particularly closely to the beginning of the suffix, for the same reason.
- If you have an interactive white board (IWB), prepare digital file cards.



Pre-teach the morphemes:

- Teach the students the meaning of the prefixes and suffixes and discuss the meaning of the word, *sort*.

re again; back

ed in the past

pre before

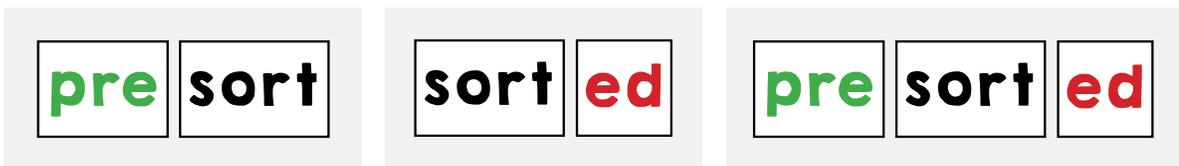
ing in the present

▶ **Plan student groupings:**

- Groups should usually be heterogeneous, of mixed ability. However, there may be times when you wish to differentiate instruction by interest, by ability level, by different books the students may be reading. As always, flexibility in grouping is key.

■ **Modelling & Guided Practice**

- Tape the cards to the blackboard. If you have an IWB, skip this step.
- Move the prefixes, suffixes, and root words around, asking the students to tell you the meaning of each word that you create.
- Using the same root word, add a different prefix or suffix, and again ask the students the meaning of the word.
- Have individual students come to the board to help create the words. Each time a word is created, the student must say what the word means. Stating the meaning each time reinforces the meaning of the prefix or suffix used.



■ **Independent Practice**

- In groups of 3 or 4, the students will form as many different words as they can from the cards, creating a written list of words on a separate sheet of paper. Initially, give the students 10 minutes to do this.
- Then, each group reports their list to you, telling you the meaning of each word.
- The next day, review the meanings of the prefixes and suffixes, repeat the exercise, and if there is time, add a new root word, making sure that it is simple. Do not add more prefixes or suffixes too quickly. It is much more important for the students to internalize the meanings of the morphemes and this can be done by adding new root words. As with all learning, it is important to start small, with just a couple of prefixes and suffixes and one root word, adding more as the students master the first ones. As the students become accustomed to the game, they can be encouraged to recommend new prefixes, suffixes or root words to be added to their bags.

■ **Resources**

▶ **A list of common prefixes and suffixes can be found at:**

http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/vocabulary/pdf/prefixes_suffixes.pdf

▶ **A list including root words and their meanings (more suitable for older students) can be found at:**

<http://www.cdl.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Common-Prefixes-Suffixes-and-Roots-8.5.13.pdf>

For more information, check out the LD@school article,

Learning to Read: The Importance of Both Phonological and Morphological Approaches.