

GLOBAL
EDITION



Words Their Way

Word Sorts for Derivational Relations Spellers

THIRD EDITION



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Word Study

Word Sorts for Derivational Relations Spellers

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Sort 16 Consonant Alternation

This sort provides an excellent opportunity to introduce students explicitly to the relationship between spelling and meaning. The meaning connection between most of the words in this sort is fairly straightforward.

Generalisation: A 'silent' consonant in one word may often be explained by another word related in spelling and meaning in which the consonant is pronounced.

silent consonant	sounded consonant
sign	signature
bomb	bombard
soften	soft
muscle	muscular
crumb	crumble
fasten	fast
design	designate
column	columnist
resign	resignation
hasten	haste
solemn	solemnity
moisten	moist

Explore Meaning: Share the sentence, *The boys became fast friends when they found out they shared a love of baseball.* Look up and talk about multiple meanings for *fast* (quick, tight or secure; to do without food and immoral). Which one makes sense in the sentence? Which one would be related to the word *fasten*? *Steadfast* means loyal as in fixed and unchanging.

Sorting and Discussion:

1. The feature of interest in this sort is different from others that the students have done before, so take the time to talk about a few examples before sorting. Ask, **What do you notice about the words *sign* and *hasten*?** Probe with, **What might make them hard to spell?** Explain, **In our sort this week, we are going to be figuring out why some words might have silent letters. When I *sign* my name (write *sign* on the board), I include a *g* even though I do not hear it. When you *sign* your name, what is that called? (*signature*) Do you hear the sound of the *g* now?** Write *signature* under the word *sign*, and underline

the *g* in both words. Introduce the headers, **I am going to put *sign* under the heading 'silent consonant' and *signature* under the heading 'sounded consonant.'**

2. Write the word *hasten*. To check that students understand the meaning, ask, **If I *hasten* to finish a job, what does that mean?** (speed up, hurry) Ask, **What letter is silent in this word? Is there a word related in spelling and meaning to *hasten* in which the *t* is sounded?** (*haste*) Write *haste* underneath *hasten* and underline the *t* in both words. **So where will I put *hasten*?** (under silent consonant) **And where will I put *haste*?** (under sounded consonant) Sort the rest of the words with the students' help, and say, **Let's look for more pairs and find a letter that is silent.**
3. Talk about the meaning of the words as you sort. Students may be unfamiliar with one of the words in a pair, such as *solemn/solemnity* or *resign/resignation*. Say, **If you know one of the words, this word may be a clue to the meaning of the unfamiliar word. For example, describe what it means if someone behaves in a *solemn* manner.** (very serious or sad) **Right! And *solemn* is your clue to the meaning of *solemnity*.** When discussing *column*, refer to a *column* in a newspaper or website. A *columnist* is the person who writes that *column*.
4. In the words *soft*, *fast* and *moist*, the /t/ is often not pronounced in casual speech or in particular dialects. You may need to point this out to your students in a non-judgemental way, **The dictionary tells us we pronounce the final *t* in these words. So, when you're preparing for a more 'formal' situation, such as an oral presentation, try to remember to pronounce the final *t*.**
5. Start the reflection by asking, **Why do words like *sign* and *hasten* have silent letters?** (They are related in meaning to [or have a similar meaning to] other words such as *signature* and *haste*, where you can hear that sound pronounced.) **What did you learn from this sort?** (Sometimes silent letters can be heard in related words.) **How can this help you spell these words?** (Knowing the spelling of one word can help you spell a related word.)

Extend:

See the list of standard weekly routines on pages 14–19 for further extensions but do not expect students to find more of these words in a word hunt. Instead of

the usual blind sort, partners can name one of the pair and ask for the related word. After the students record their sort in their Word Study Notebooks, have them underline the consonants that *alternate*, or change, from silent to sounded in each pair.

The less-than-apparent relationship between *design* and *designate* is a good opportunity to refer students to etymological information in the dictionary; both words come from a Latin term that means ‘to mark.’ Ask, **What does the idea of being ‘marked’ have to do with *designate*—for example, when someone is *designated* as a spokesperson or scorekeeper?** If students are uncertain, say, **She or he is in a sense ‘marked’ to perform this duty.** Ask, **When an architect *designs* a house, what does that have to do with ‘marking’?** You may need to share that, **She is ‘marking’ how the house will be laid out and how it will look.**

The words in this sort offer possibilities for suffix review. Ask students to identify words with suffixes in the derived words (*solemnity*, *columnist*

and *resignation*), and talk about the meaning and/or effect of the suffixes on the base to which they are attached.

Apply:

In pairs, have students examine some additional words in the following list. Is there a word in each spelling-meaning word pair that they know? How does the known word help them understand and spell the unknown word? For pairs in which both words are unknown (perhaps *malign/malignant*, *paradigm/paradigmatic*), check these in the dictionary and write a sentence illustrating the use of each in the Word Study Notebook.

Additional Words:

Consonant Alternation, Silent-Sounded: *allege/allegation*, *autumn/autumnal*, *condemn/condemnation*, *debt/debit*, *malign/malignant*, *paradigm/paradigmatic*

SORT 16 Consonant Alternation

<i>silent consonant</i>	<i>sounded consonant</i>	
sign	signature	bomb
soften	muscular	design
crumb	columnist	fasten
muscle	bombard	soft
resign	crumble	hasten
designate	fast	column
haste	solemn	moisten
solemnity	moist	resignation

Sort 17 Vowel Alternation: Long to Short

This sort focuses on the constancy of spelling between base and derived words despite an alternation of vowel pronunciation from long to short. The spelling of the base, however, may change only at the point where the suffix is added—preserving the meaning-based, visual connection between base and derived word.

Generalisation: Adding suffixes to base words often changes the pronunciation of the vowel within the base word.

long vowel	short vowel
please	pleasant
mine	mineral
breathe	breath
revise	revision
nature	natural
cave	cavity
athlete	athletic
type	typical
crime	criminal
ignite	ignition
precise	precision
humane	humanity

Sorting and Discussion:

1. Display the words, but put aside the headers for now. Ask, **How might we sort these words?** Students will probably notice that some are base words, so continue with, **Let's start by matching base words with their derived words.** Model how to sort a few pairs: *Please and pleasant go together. Are they related in meaning?* (Yes, a *pleasant* person tries to *please*; a *pleasant* person is *pleasing*.)
2. Pair up the rest, talking about meaning as needed. Words like *type* and *mine* have several meanings, and it is important to talk about the one that is related to the derived word. For example, *mine* refers to a place in which *minerals* are extracted or dug out, not to the possessive pronoun. *Cave* and *cavity* provide the opportunity to broaden students' understanding of *cavity*. They know the meaning associated with tooth decay but usually have not extended the meaning to *any* hollow area. Students often have an 'aha!' moment when they realise the

relationship between a *cave* in the ground and this broader meaning of *cavity*.

3. After matching up the pairs, say, **Let's read each base word and see how it changed when a suffix was added.** Focus on the key words *please* and *pleasant*. **What happened when -ant was added to please?** (The *e* was dropped and the vowel sound changed from long *e* to short *e*.) Introduce the headers, **I hear a long e in please but a short e in pleasant, so I will sort those under headers for 'long vowel' and 'short vowel.'** You may want to mark the vowels with macrons (–) and breves (˘). Continue to go through the pairs and ask, **Which word has a long vowel? Which has a short vowel?**
4. Ask, **What did you learn from this sort?** (Vowel sounds can change, or alternate, between long and short as suffixes are added.) **How can this help you as a speller?** (Thinking of the base word or a related word can help identify the vowel that changes.) **Can this also help you understand the meaning of the word even if you have never heard of it before?** See the following Apply section.

Extend:

Assign weekly routines, but do not expect students to find more of these words in a word hunt. Instead of the usual blind sort, partners can name one of a pair of words and ask for the related word. Students can be asked to mark the vowels as they write the pairs in their Word Study Notebook. Students can also sort the base words by their long vowel sound (long *a*, *i* and *e*).

Apply:

Have students work with a partner to examine some of the additional words in the following list. Ask, **Is there a word in each spelling-meaning word pair that you know? How does the known word help you understand and spell the unknown word?** Encourage students to talk together about each set of words and the strategies they used before checking their ideas in a dictionary. Then, in their Word Study Notebooks, they should write a description of how they used this strategy. For example, 'I knew what an *episode* was, but I'd never heard of *episodic*. *Episode* helped me think that *episodic* might have to do with many episodes. I checked the dictionary and learned that's right. It can also talk about just one episode.'

Additional Words:

convene/convention, episode/episodic, extreme/extremity, grave/gravity, grateful/gratitude, page/paginate, profane/profanity, reptile/reptilian, rite/ritual, televise/television, telescope/telescopic

SORT 17 Vowel Alternation: Long to Short

<i>long vowel</i>	<i>short vowel</i>	
please	pleasant	mineral
breathe	revision	cavity
mine	athletic	breath
revise	humanity	nature
athlete	natural	cave
precise	criminal	humane
type	ignition	typical
crime	precision	ignite

Sort 18 Vowel Alternation: Long to Short or Schwa

The words in this sort help students contrast the long/short vowel alternation pattern with a schwa. Students may be unfamiliar with the unaccented sound, known as a schwa, so it is helpful to have a dictionary entry for *competition* ready to display, showing accent marks and how the schwa is represented with an ‘upside down e’ (ə). Many spelling errors at this level are in the unaccented syllables of words in which the vowel sound is usually a schwa, so these spelling-meaning patterns are very helpful to study. In addition, this sort will help students attend to accents within words.

Generalisation: The spelling in an unaccented syllable may often be explained by another word related in spelling and meaning.

long vowel	short vowel	long vowel	schwa
volcano	volcanic	compete	competition
conspire	conspiracy	define	definition
serene	serenity	admire	admiration
divine	divinity	custodian	custody
		compose	composition
		invite	invitation
		reside	resident
		oppose	opposition

Sorting and Discussion:

1. Begin with an example of a commonly misspelled word to introduce the problem of unaccented syllables. Say, **Many students, and even adults, often have trouble spelling the word *competition*, as in the sentence, ‘The *competition* between our teams is fierce.’** Display some examples of misspellings (*computiton* and *compit-tion*) and say, **Folks get most of the word correct but have difficulty with this second syllable** (Say the word and emphasise /puh/.). **There’s a clue, however, and it lies within the base word of *competition*. What is the base word? (*compete*) Do you hear how this second syllable is accented? Can you clearly hear the vowel sound? Write *compete*. Underline the *e* and add an accent mark: com péte’. **That’s our clue to the spelling of the unaccented vowel sound in *competition*** (Now write *competition*.) **We call this sound the *schwa*. It’s like an unaccented****

short /üh/ sound, and it occurs in most multi-syllabic words. Display the pronunciation in the dictionary entry for *competition*, and point to the schwa (ə) in the second syllable: kām-pə-tish’-ən.

2. Display the words in the sort and say, **Let’s pair up the related words as we have been doing.** Then pick out the key words *compete* and *competition*, and ask, **What happened when we added *-ition* to *compete*?** (The vowel changed, the accent changed, the *e* was dropped and the word changed from a verb to a noun.) **Which word has a long vowel sound? (*compete*) We will put that under the heading ‘long vowel.’ What happens to that vowel when we add *-ition*?** (It becomes the schwa sound.) **We’ll put it under the ‘schwa’ header.**
3. Then display the key words *volcano* and *volcanic* and ask, **What does *volcanic* mean, as in ‘volcanic ash’ or ‘volcanic activity’?** (from or related to a volcano) Use your suffix chart as needed. Ask, **What happened when *-ic* was added?** (The *a* was dropped and the vowel sound for *a* changed. The accent did not change.) **Which word has a long vowel? (*volcano*) What is the vowel in *volcanic*?** (short) Sort them under the headers ‘long vowel’ and ‘short vowel.’ Explain, **Now we are ready to sort the rest of the words. Let’s look for pairs and then decide if they will go under ‘long and schwa’ or ‘long and short.’** Model a few more if you think students need more support, or let them sort the rest independently.
4. After sorting ask, **How are the words in each column alike?** Take a variety of responses (vowel sounds change, accent changes, suffixes are added, etc.), but extend students’ thinking as needed by saying, **Let’s check the words under long and short by reading them aloud and listening for the vowel sounds that alternate in the accented syllables.** Repeat with the long and schwa, but say, **What do you notice about the accented syllables? Where is the long vowel sound?** (in accented syllables) **Where is the schwa sound?** (in unaccented syllables) **What vowels are used to spell the schwa sound?** (*e*, *i* and *o*)
5. Discuss the meaning of a few of the paired words, such as *conspire/conspiracy*, *divine/divinity* and *compose/composition*. Ask, **Is there a word in each spelling-meaning word pair that you know? How does the known word help you understand the unknown word?** Discuss how