



Learn the Tip

- 1. Pick a word:** While your child reads, look for words that have a prefix, suffix, or an ending like -ed and -s. Or words to which you could add a prefix (beginning) or suffix (ending).
- 2. Add and/or subtract a suffix and a prefix:** Encourage your child to experiment. They can make nonsense words! Nonsense words are make believe words that have the same sound patterns as real words. They help your child practice sound patterns.
- 3. Discuss how the word changes:** Talk about how the word changes. For example, it may mean something new, or a verb may have become a noun, or a word could become plural by adding -s.

Why this tip?

In order to grow as a reader, your child needs multiple “tools” to figure out new, tricky words. Looking at the beginning or ending is one tool readers use to get at the meaning of words.



Ask Your Child

Younger kids

- Let’s use the end of the word as a clue to the meaning.
- We know the end -s means the word is plural.
- How does this word change if you add a beginning or an ending to the word?

Older kids

- Let’s add a suffix to this word. What about -ness, to make the word a noun?
- Let’s add a prefix to this word. What about un-, which means “opposite” or dis- which means “not”?
- What does this new word mean? Can you use it in a sentence What if we add or subtract...?
- This is a nonsense word but what could it mean? Why?



Playfully Practice

Play “Categories.”

Pick a category and say as many words as you can that fit into that category. It could be big, like “fruits” or more focused like “things you find on a bus.” You could make it a competition (whoever can’t think of a word in the category loses) or just play for fun.

If you want to play with prefixes or suffixes you could make the category “Words that start with pre-“ or “words that are nouns” (many of them would end with -ness or -ion).

