

Ideas for Classroom Reference Charts

This is a collection of reference charts teachers may want to use as templates for some you may want to create in your room. You do NOT need all of these charts, nor do you need to use the wording I have chosen here. If you have favourite reference charts in your classroom, please email me pictures of them so I can share them with others!

Notes on these problem-solving charts:

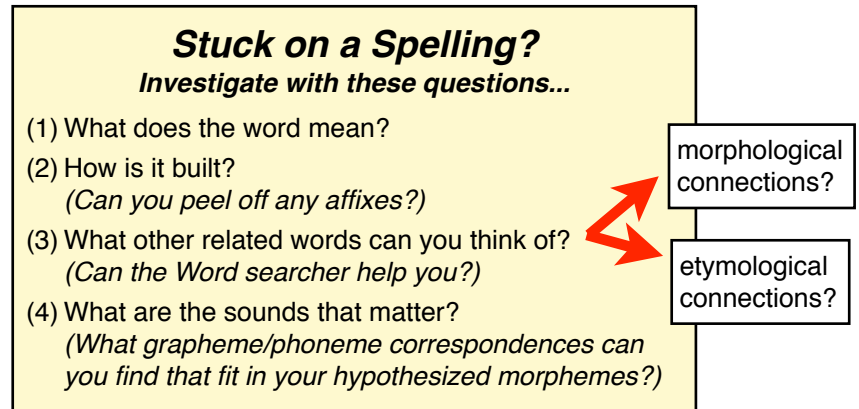
I use a chart like the one titled “Stuck on a spelling?” (see top right) in workshops as I work with teachers or students to develop their skills for orthographic problem solving. A chart like this isn’t just for students. It also helps remind teachers who are new to this content of the questions to ask when encountering spelling questions.

A second chart (below) on the steps for morphological analysis can be used to focus on the question (2) “How is it built?”

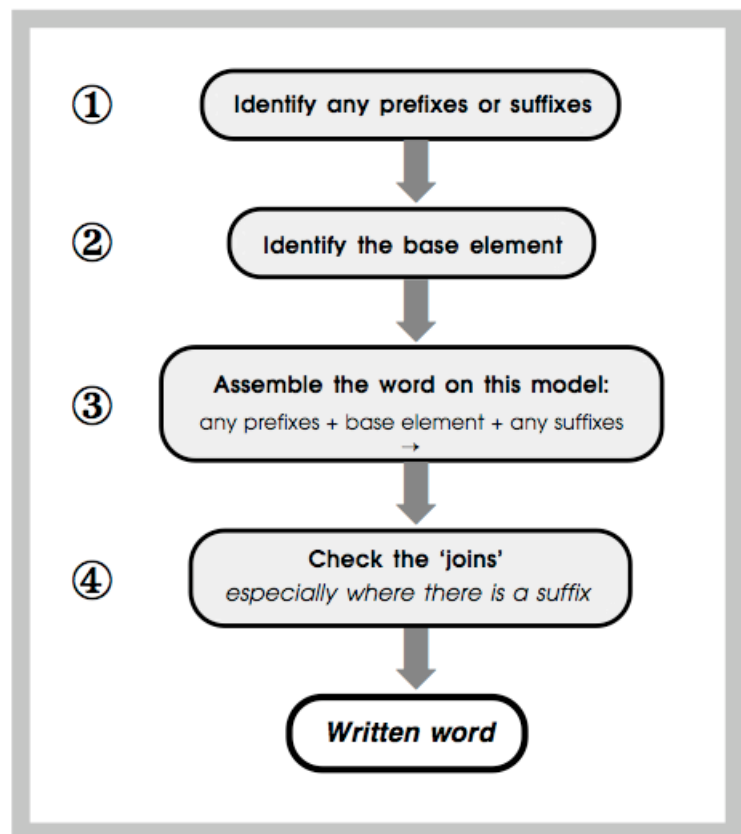
At first, question (3) largely focuses on morphological connections between words, but as we develop our understanding further, it becomes clear that we often need to look for etymological connections as well. When we start to develop this knowledge, I adapt the chart to add this detail.

I’ve seen many variations of this chart which I have adapted from sets of questions I found in the Real Spelling User’s Manual. You may well find ways to improve this one for your own use.

Steps for orthographic problem-solving



Steps for Morphological Analysis



Word Sums:

reveal the underlying structure of any complex word (a word with more than just a base).

un + help + ful + ness → unhelpfulness
pleas~~e~~ + ant + ly → pleasantly
pityⁱ + ful → pitiful
snob^b + ish → snobbish

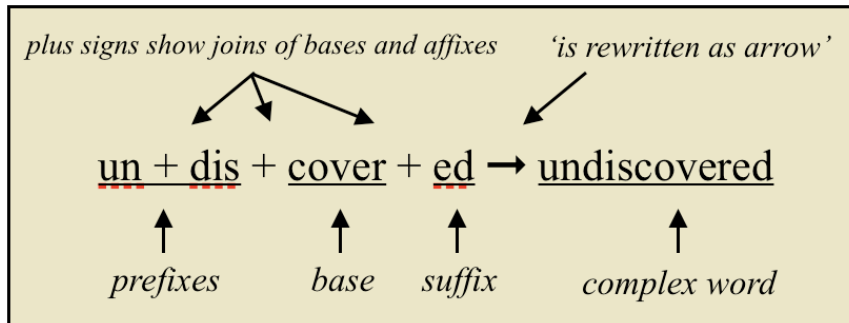
Word Matrix:

A map of a word family

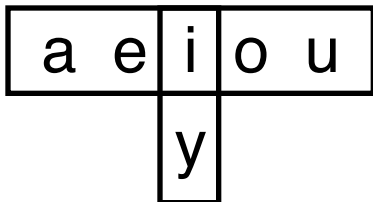
un	help	ful	ness
		s	ing
		ed	
		er	s

The word sum and word matrix are such central tools to the study of word structure and meaning that many teachers like having a clear example of each. I like putting up something like this after we have already worked with these tools.

The Word Sum!

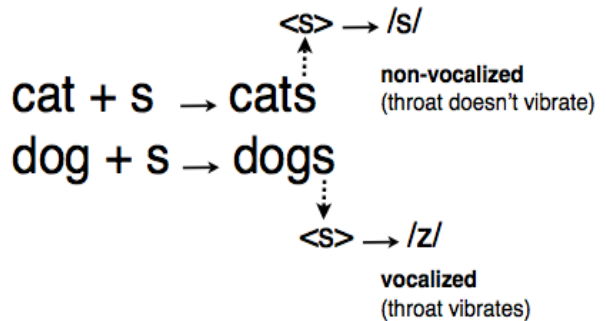


A diagram reminding us that the pronunciation of morphemes shift, but their spelling is consistent.



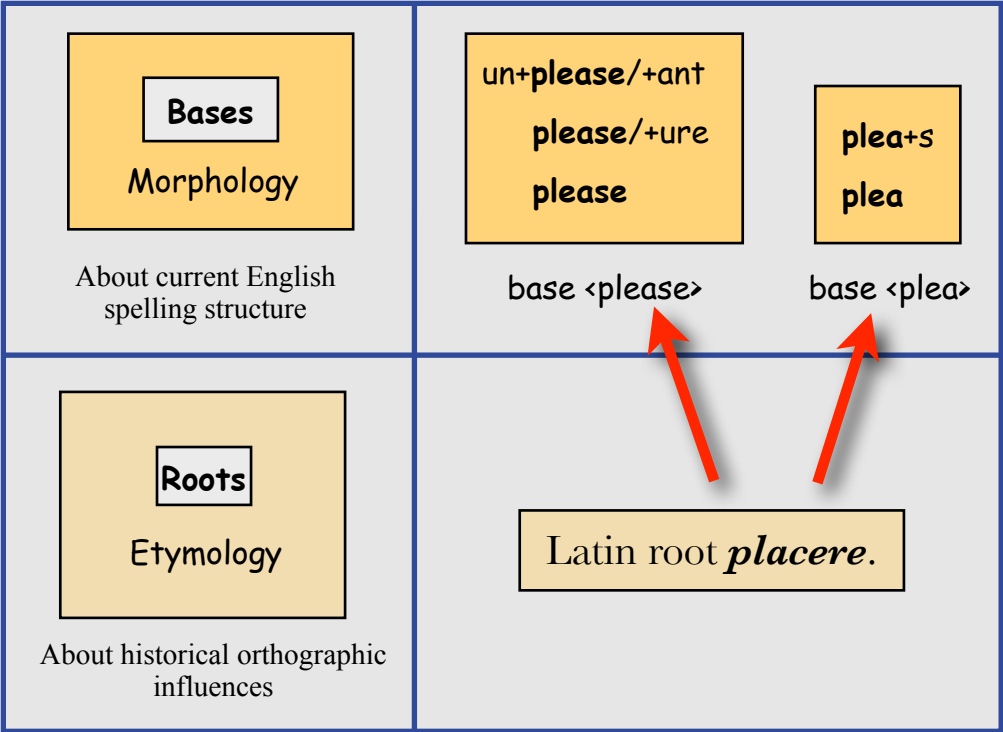
This vowel chart sets the stage for learning the vowel letters, and how they behave in spelling.

Many of us know about the fact that the <y> and <i> have a "job share" arrangement. This chart also sets up the fact that there is also an <o> / <u> and <a> / <e> job share arrangement to learn about too!

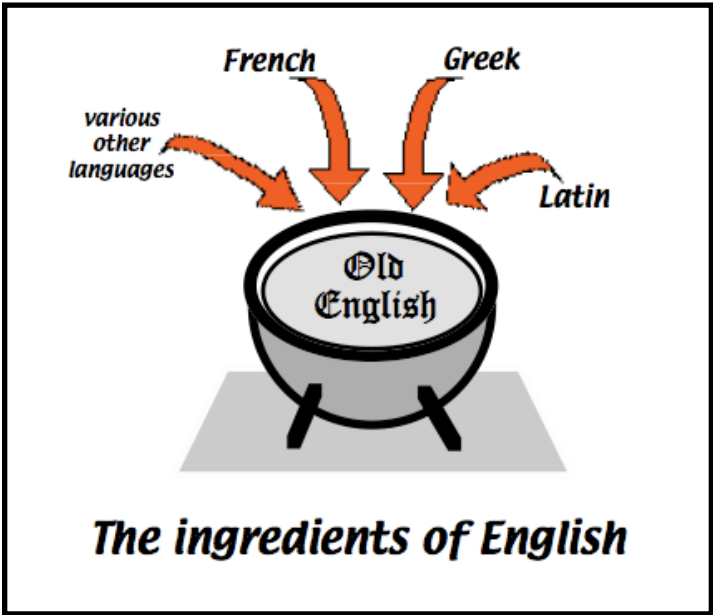


We use the suffix <-s> for 'more than one' whether it is pronounced /s/ or /z/.

Morphology & Etymology:
 Words of the same base WILL have the same root...
 But, two words of the same root may not have the same base!

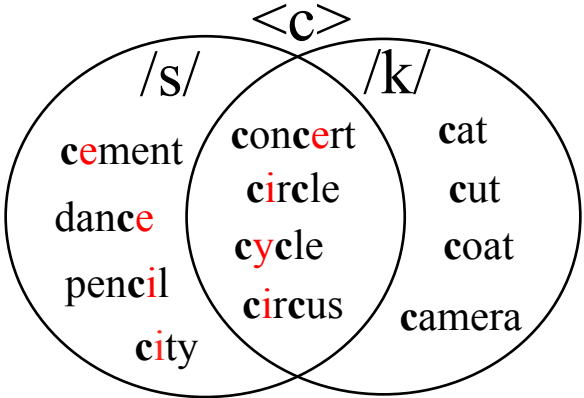


I find this diagram useful for explaining and revisiting the interrelationship of morphology and the terms 'base' and 'root'.



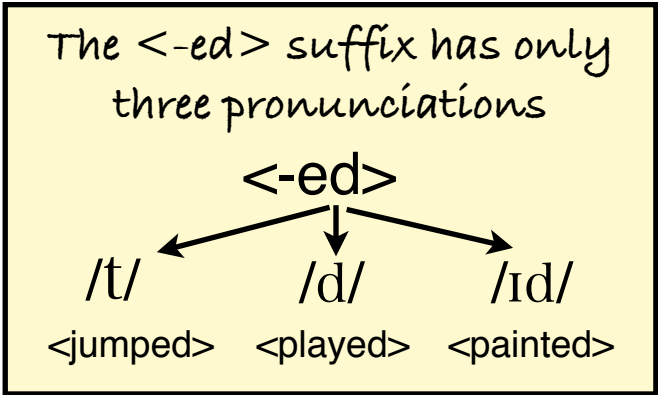
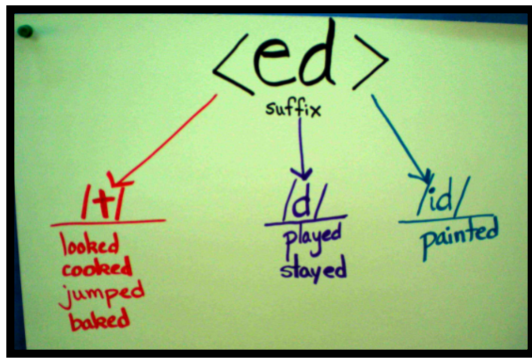
I've seen many teachers use this illustration from Kit 2L on "The Days of the Week" to remind students that the English language and its spelling system is influenced by many sources. Once we learn common spelling cues about some of these origins, we can research and understand the meaning and spelling of words more effectively.

Venn Diagrams to identify categories



English Spelling Makes Sense!

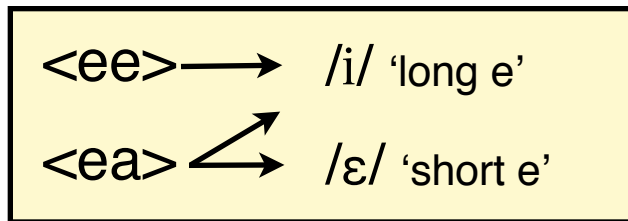
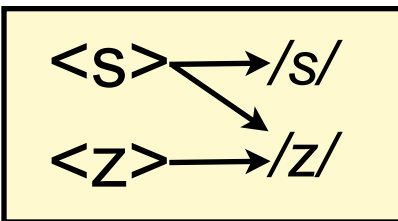
Studying spelling is about developing a way of thinking.



You might take an activity that you've done on a white board, and then recreate it with a more careful reference chart to help reinforce the basic concept after you move on to other investigations. Note that during the class, this teacher forgot to put the dash to mark the suffix, these kinds of details can be corrected in the official chart. You can also make a chart that uses sticky notes (like this example for function and content words) so that you can keep adding words to categories as you discover them. You can also put clear definitions on the charts to help students get used to terms and concepts.

Function Words	Content Words
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> or </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> to </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> be </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> ore oar </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> too two </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> bee </div>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> he she </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> on in </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>• Only function words use one or two letters (they can use more).</p> <p>• Content words use at least three letters.</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>homophones</p> <p>If one of a set of homophones is a content word, it will use fewer letters than its homophone(s).</p> </div>

Build up grapheme-phoneme correspondence charts as you study them.

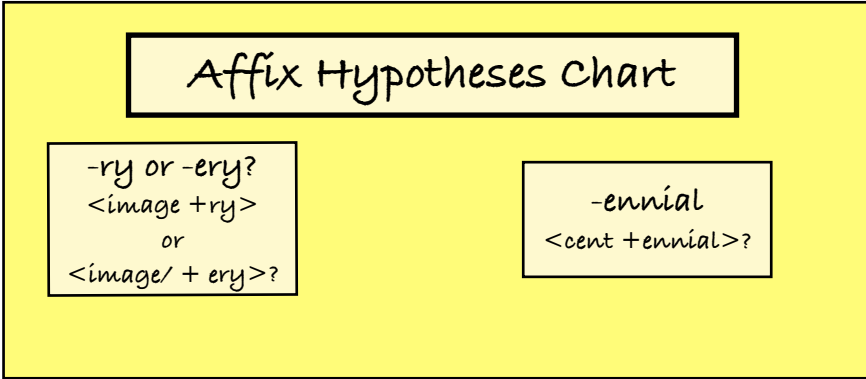
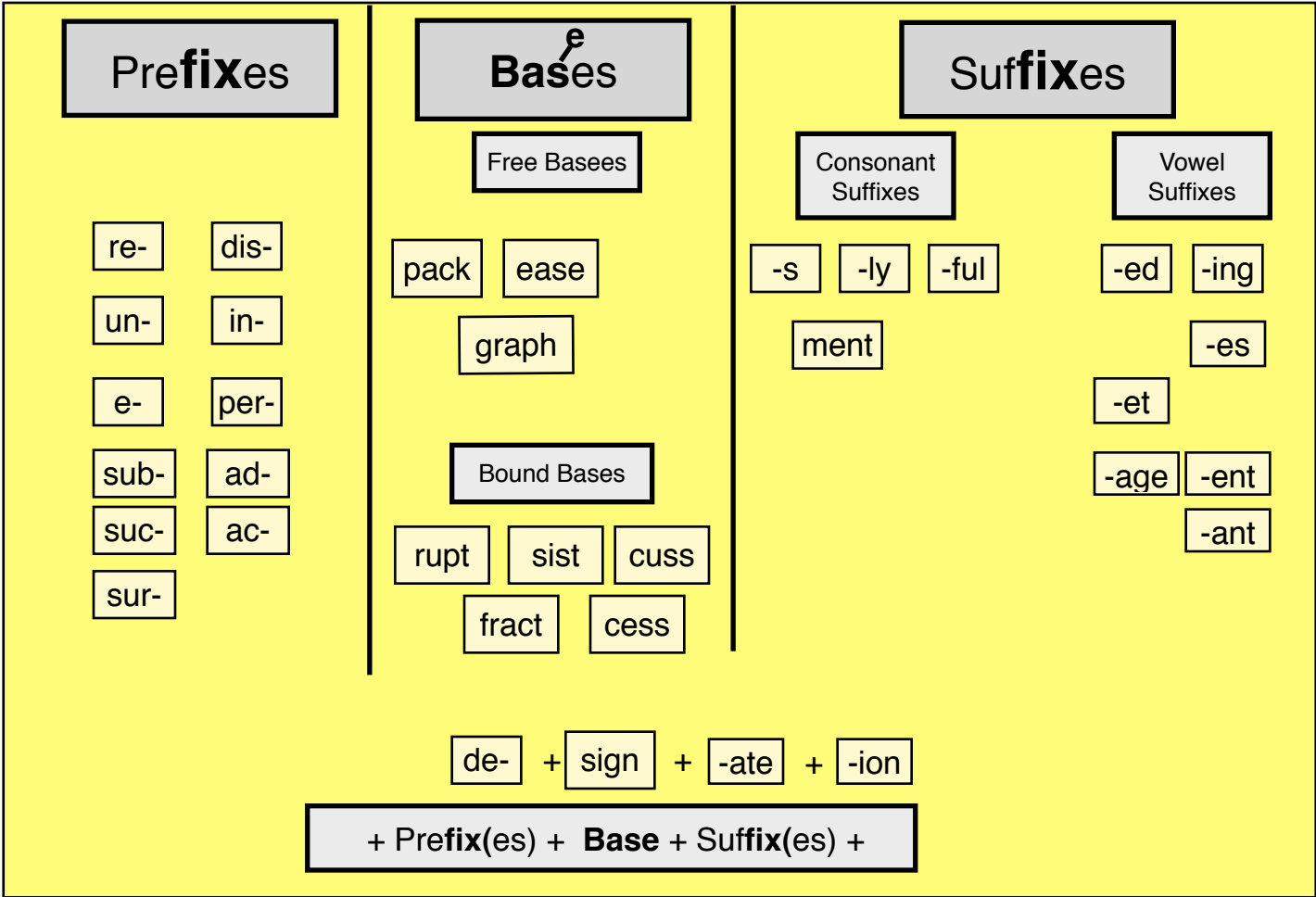


Matrix word sum pairs can be used to highlight high frequency words you have studied, but use those words as tools for making sense of the wider system.

do	es
go	ne
	ing

do + es	→ does	go + es	→ goes
do + ne	→ done	go + ne	→ gone
do + ing	→ doing	go + ing	→ going

Class Sticky-Note Morpheme Chart



Keep adding bases, prefixes and suffixes to chart above as you encounter them in attested sources (Real Spelling Themes, Dictionary searches) or when you prove them with word sums with which you are confident. As students encounter these morphemes, and you confirm their accuracy by adding them to the chart, they gain in their ability to analyse more words.

Keeping an “Affix Hypothesis Chart” encourages students to share the ideas they have about possible new affixes as they are encountered. By placing them on this chart, other students know not to trust these suffixes yet. On a regular basis the teacher can take up the hypothesized affixes and model using word sums and dictionaries to prove or disprove them. The proven ones get attested on the official chart. In my experience, students are always proud to get their affixes attested and not embarrassed when theirs is shown not to work. I make it a rule for students to include hypothesized word sums and their names to put up their hypotheses. Be ready for this chart to get filled up quite quickly with great theories! Affixes that you can’t resolve can be placed on the “Wonder Wall” shared with other classes. If they remain unresolved, email Pete and Melvyn to see if we can find an answer!