Changing verbs

To learn that regular past tense verbs are formed by adding '-ed', but that this can be pronounced in various ways. To learn the spelling changes needed when adding '-ing' or '-s' to verbs.

Background knowledge

Inflectional suffixes are required to make a sentence grammatically correct, but they add little meaning to the word. They never change a word from one grammatical class to another. The main function of inflectional suffixes for verbs is to distinguish the tense of the verb. The suffix '-s' indicates that the verb is present tense in the third-person singular (*I play*, but *he/she/it plays*). The spelling rules related to the verb suffix '-s' are the same as those for the '-s' plural suffix for nouns (see page 64 'Changing nouns and adjectives').

Here are the basic rules used in this section:
- **Adding '-ing'**
If the word ends with:
  - 'e' – drop the 'e' (*live* ➞ *living*).
  - a single consonant after a short vowel – double the consonant (*hop* ➞ *hopping*).
- **Adding '-s'**
If the word ends with:
  - 'y' after a consonant – change 'y' to 'i' and add '-es'.
  - a hissing sound like 's' ('s', 'ch', 'sh', 'x', 'z') – add '-es'.

Activities

- **Photocopiable page 61 'Past-tense verbs with -ed'**
This activity is best approached alongside grammar work on the past tense. Introduce the activity by focusing on segmenting and counting phonemes and comparing the letters and sounds. Challenge the children to write three extra verbs for each list.

- **Photocopiable page 62 'Adding -ing'**
Talk about the spelling rules for adding '-ing' together. Explain that for this activity the children will need to look carefully and apply rules for spelling changes when adding '-ing'. Encourage them to try each spelling on a whiteboard to draw on visual strategies. Challenge them to write sentences that use the '-ing' words.

- **Photocopiable page 63 'Adding s'**
If approached as part of grammar work, the '-s' suffix for verbs (only used in the present-tense third-person singular) will be distinguished from the '-s' plural for nouns. Help the children to notice that it is spelled with '-s' whatever the pronunciation and encourage them to hear the additional syllable when '-es' is added. Visual strategies will help to confirm that these words do not look right without the 'e' (*crashs, whizzs*). After completing the activity, challenge the children to work out the spelling rules. Can they find any more words that follow these rules?

Further ideas

- **How do I sound?:** Collect and display '-ed' words, grouped under different pronunciations. Writing tasks (particularly stories and recounts) will give opportunities for applying the '-ed' spelling.
- **Irregular collection:** Extend knowledge of the past tense by exploring spelling changes when adding '-ed' and common irregular verbs (*fall – fell*; *go – went*). Ask the children to collect irregular verbs from reading and writing.
- **What's my ending?:** Provide cards for matching games, using words from the photocopiable pages and other common verbs. Make cards for the root words and cards for the inflectional suffixes. Challenge the children to match them up to explore and categorise spelling changes.

What's on the CD-ROM

On the CD-ROM you will find:
- Printable versions of all three photocopiable pages.
- Answers to all three photocopiable pages.
- Interactive version of 'Adding s'.