

# Word roots

## Objective

To identify root words, derivations and spelling patterns in order to extend vocabulary and provide support for spelling.

## Background knowledge

A root word is a word to which beginnings (prefixes) and endings (suffixes) can be added to create new words. The root word can stand alone as a word in its own right. Knowledge of root words, along with a growing knowledge of prefixes and suffixes and their meanings, will assist in developing spelling strategies and for building vocabulary. Root words share parts of the same spelling and they are linked in terms of meaning – because of this they may be referred to as a word family.

## Activities

In this section the children will identify root words and the suffixes and prefixes which are attached to them. They will then use suffixes and prefixes to create their own new words before analysing the origins and meanings of root words, which originate from Ancient Greek and Latin sources. Finally the children will have the opportunity to use dictionaries or online word search engines.

- **Photocopiable page 29 'Back to the roots'**  
Provide pairs of children with a dictionary between them. Write *child* in a word cloud in the middle of the board. Challenge pairs to find the word *child* in the dictionary – which other words on the same page have the root word *child* within them? Take suggestions and record them discussing how the suffixes and prefixes are added and how they develop the meaning of the word.
- **Photocopiable page 30 'Branching out'**  
Children are given a selection of root words and possible prefixes and suffixes which they can add to create new words. Encourage the children to use dictionaries to look up the words that they have created in order to check that they are real words.

- **Photocopiable page 31 'Ancient word roots'**

The children will probably be aware of the prefixes in numbers, for example: *octa* meaning eight. Explain that these partial root words often have Greek and Latin origins. Using dictionaries in pairs, locate the prefix 'octa-' in the dictionary. Take suggestions for root words containing this prefix and record them on the board. Invite the children to read out the definition and confirm how the meaning of the prefix influences the meaning of the derivative.

- **Photocopiable page 32 'What sort of word?'**

To consolidate the work completed, invite the children to recap words which can be created using the root word *happy*. Record suggestions on the board. List the different word classes – noun, verb, adjective and adverb and confirm with the class what each is and what role each one has in a sentence. In pairs, the children make up a sentence on a whiteboard for each of the *happy* words in turn and then explain which word class it belongs to.

## Further ideas

- **Tree of knowledge:** Paint a large tree with roots beneath the ground. On the roots write lots of root words, particularly those of Latin and Greek origin. Display the tree on an accessible wall and place beside it a box of paper leaves, a dictionary and writing materials. Encourage the children to find words which can be built using the root words. Let them write the word on a leaf with their name and add it to the tree.

## What's on the CD-ROM

On the CD-ROM you will find:

- Printable versions of all four photocopiable pages.
- Answers to 'Back to the roots', 'Branching out' and 'What sort of word?'
- Interactive versions of 'Back to the roots' and 'What sort of word?'