

Understanding how words are related in meaning and spelling.

Building word webs through a collaborative approach.

Strategy: Collaborative Round Table Word Webs

In this activity, the students will build four different word webs by collecting words that share a common base. The groups will have the opportunity to record additional words, question different spellings and write theories on each word web presented.



Essential Understandings:

This strategy will help the students understand the way English spelling links words that belong together in 'word families'. It will reinforce how we can use this information to help our spelling, *'words related to each other in meaning will also be related to each other in spelling.'* (Ref: Real Spelling KIT 1 THEME F Early Word Webs, pg. 1)

Groupings:

The students are organised into heterogeneous, mixed ability groupings. As this is primarily a collaborative learning opportunity, all students will be expected to have a 'voice' and 'role', regardless of where they are on their learning pathway. Through this learning process the students will have the opportunity to question each other,

suggest other spellings and to make ‘big fat juicy mistakes’ (as *Real Spelling* so fondly names mistakes!) Collaboration helps to create an inclusive learning community which focuses on inquiry, problem solving, and a positive recognition of learning mistakes. These questions, mistakes and theories are subsequently used for class discussion and reflection and will provide the basis for further learning experiences.

Teacher Role:

During this activity, the teacher/s takes on the important role of an ‘observer’ to observe group and individual dynamics and behaviour; to assess current knowledge, misunderstandings, questions and theories. These informal observations will form the foundation for future planning and learning. It also provides the opportunity for the teacher to give pertinent feedback to the students so they can reflect and assess their own learning.

Previous knowledge and background:

The students need a prior introduction to the concept of ‘word families’ and demonstration of how words are related in meaning and spelling.

Students need to have established a clear understanding of group roles, responsibilities and expectations:

- to be respectful of all the ideas and theories written by other groups;
- to move from chart to chart in a timely manner;
- to ensure everyone is included;
- to understand everyone has an important role to play in their group.

Materials: (four x four groups=16 students)

- four puzzles (16 pieces in all) that have been created from four starter bases. *See examples below.*
- four large pieces of chart paper, one for each word web.
- four different coloured markers, one for each group.

Teacher Preparation:

1. *Identify four bases*, selected according to the students' needs and age. These could be selected, based on the following criteria:

- choose bases the students have previously been working with.
- create a combination of known bases and new bases to introduce a new concept or pattern.
- choose words from current curriculum learning.

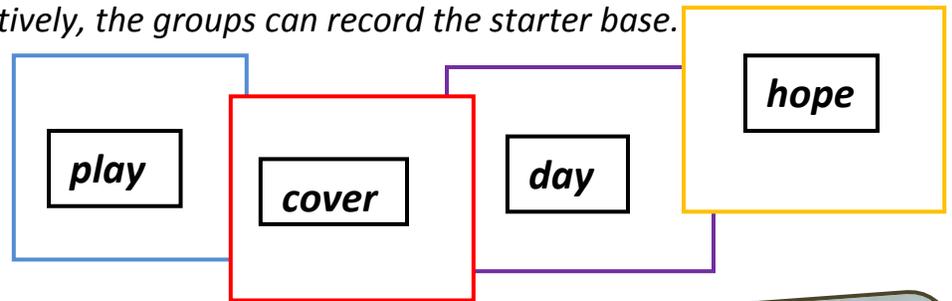
Some available resources for identifying bases:

- Word searcher: <http://www.neilramsdn.co.uk/spelling/searcher/index.html>
- Real Spelling Tool Kit

Here is a selection of possible starter bases.

<p><i>Bases that don't require any changes.</i></p> <p>read + <i>ing</i> → reading</p>	<p><read> <build> <cover> <friend></p>
<p><i>Bases with a pronunciation change.</i></p> <p>please/ + <i>ure</i> → pleasure</p>	<p><heal> <sign> <please> <photo></p>
<p><i>Bases with the final single silent <e> :</i></p> <p>create/ + <i>ion</i> → creation</p>	<p><use> <create> <hope> <safe> <write></p>
<p><i>Bases where the final consonant letter is required to be doubled. Monosyllables.</i></p> <p>hop (p) + <i>ed</i> → hopped</p>	<p><hop> <wrap> <cut> <swim></p>
<p><i>Bases in which the final <y> is replaced with the vowel letter <i>.</i></p> <p>family/i + <i>es</i> → families</p>	<p><hap> <happy> <family> <body> <merry></p>
<p><i>Bound bases which require affixes to create a word.</i></p> <p>dis + aster + <i>s</i> → disasters</p>	<p><sci> <struct> <aster> <mune></p>

2. Create four large word webs, with the chosen starter bases. Place these charts on separate tables. Alternatively, the groups can record the starter base.



Now for the learners:

1. The students create four, diverse heterogeneous groupings by receiving one piece of a starter 'base' puzzle. Groups are formed when the students have found their counterparts to complete the finished puzzle. The completed puzzle is an indication of which word web the group will start with.

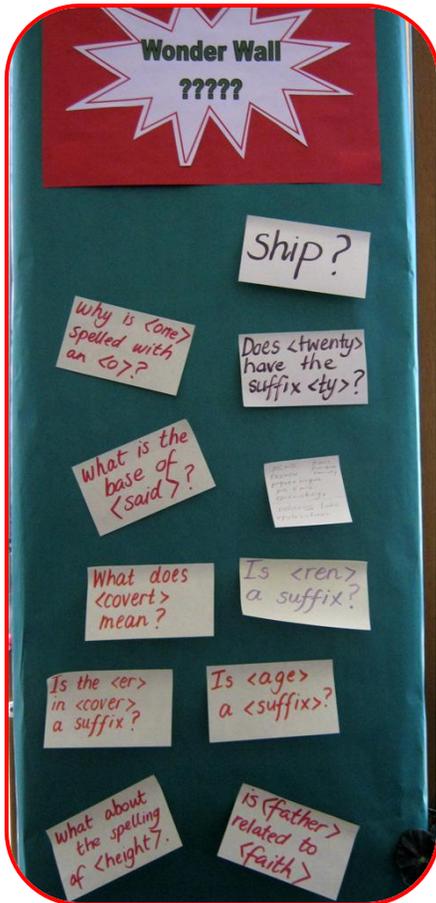


2. Forming and working as a group. Each group collects one marker for recording and identifies the first recorder. Move to the table that identifies the group starter base. Before recording, each group must *orally* discuss the meaning of the base and ensure that everyone in the group understands. The students work together to suggest other words belonging to the word family. The allocated recorder writes the group's suggestions. A consensus is reached regarding the spelling suggestions.

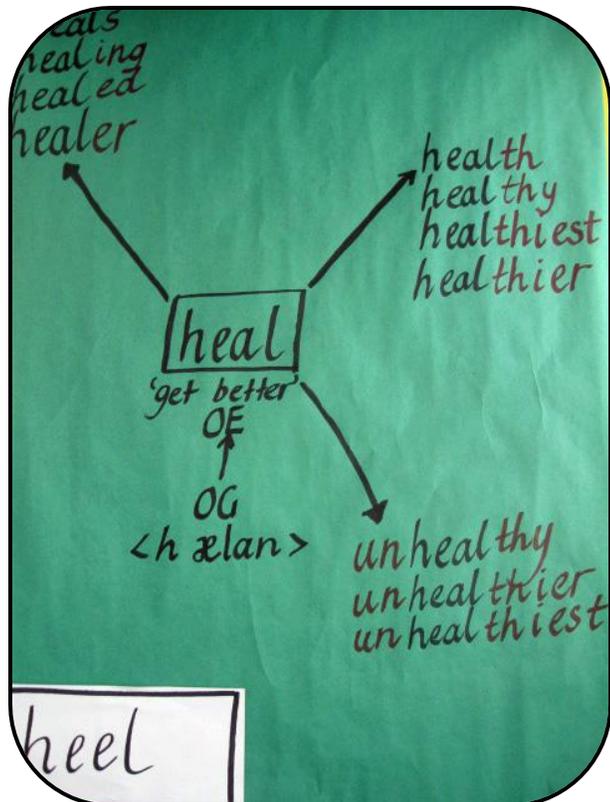
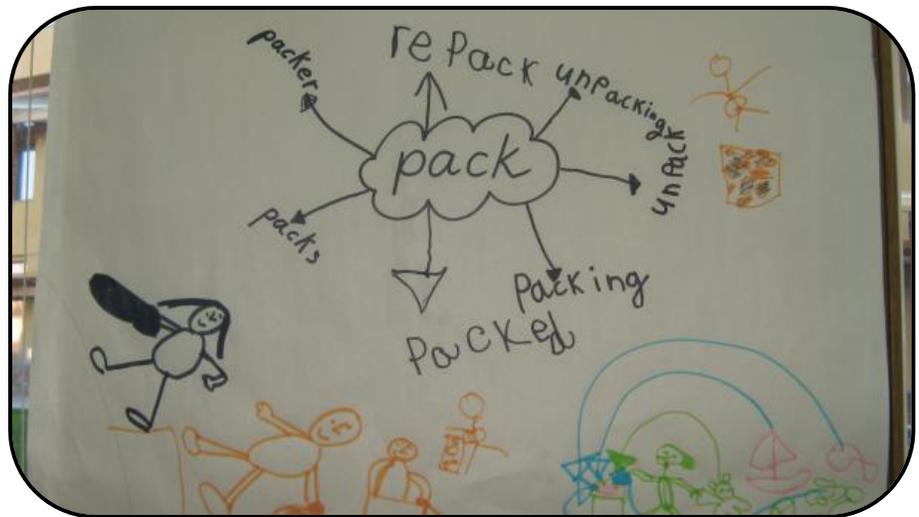
3. The groups rotate from one word web station to the next, on a signal; like a bell, hand clap etc. *With younger children I suggest a maximum of 5 minutes for each 'word web station'.* **The 'word web' chart stays, the group moves on!** The marker is exchanged amongst the students as the group moves to the next word web chart.

4. When the group arrives at the next starter base the students read and discuss the starter base and word family, and then add additional words or alternatives to spellings. If the students are unsure of a spelling they indicate this with a question mark but do not cross out any mistakes. The mistakes/questions are used during class reflection time.

5. During the final round the last group discusses the word web created by the other groups, illustrates and/or writes a sentence to demonstrate the meaning of the base. The group writes one question about the word web created and identifies an interesting spelling or mistake to share with the class.



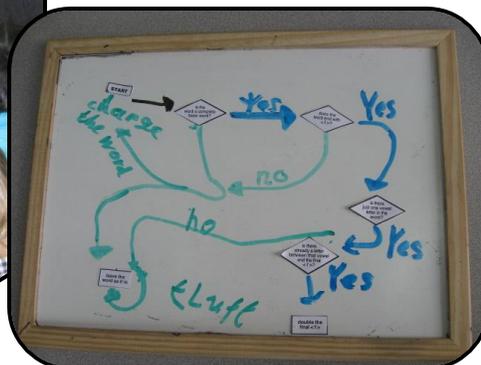
6. Class reflection-Each group shares one of their ideas. Use these ideas as follow up lessons or for future class investigations. These ideas/questions can be added to the class "I wonder?" chart.





Some possible follow up activities/learning experiences:

- As a class develop and extend a collection of starter bases for word web activities. Display the word webs as 'works in progress' so that words can be added throughout the year.
- Students teach and create a word web with their family at home.
- 'Passing' word web activity. A word web chart with a starter base is attached to the classroom door. Adults and students passing by need to add a word to the word web! (*Real Spelling Kit K*)
- Identify a suffixing pattern (e.g. the effect of the final single silent <e>) and investigate how it works with an introduction to flowcharts.



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- Individual/partner students create and start their own word webs for others to develop and extend.
- The students work collaboratively to check for accurate spelling, add additional words and *Dictionaries* and John Ayto's *Word Origin, Word Searcher* are possible resources for students.
- Independent reflection/practice activities. The students record the word webs, write sentences, and identify meanings in their own workbooks. The teacher uses ongoing assessment to plan for individual student needs.
- 'Packet of words' activity-students are given a 'packet of words' from which they are required to identify the starter word and then create a word web.
- 'I Wonder?' Chart: Investigate questions and theories identified during the Round Table activity.
- Develop matrixes from the word webs, and create the morphological word sums.
- Select a grapheme from one of the starter bases and create a chart to demonstrate how it is used to represent phonemes.
- Other variations: the word web chart moves, the group stays!



In this photo you will notice a question mark after the spelling of the word <player?>. These can be used for class reflection and discussion items. The students were questioning why the <y> did not change to an <i> in this instance.

