

MORPHOLOGY

TEACHER RESOURCE





Playing with Words in Kindergarten

What You Need to Know

Play is the name of the game in Kindergarten. Children do not need to be readers to explore words. A print rich classroom which includes labels, charts, calendars, reading corners, printed songs/ poems, anchor charts, etc. can be enhanced with a few simple morphology based activities.

Word Family

Words that are part of a word family are connected by MEANING and STRUCTURE. This means that this collection of words shares a common definition or 'sense', as well as spelling/letters. PLEASE NOTE: Word families are NOT a collection of rhyming words.

There is no 'at' family where mat, sat, and hat are included; that is simply a collection of rhyming words.

<grow>
growing
grows
grower
regrow
ingrown
overgrown
growth
grown
grown-up



grow
throw
mow
tow



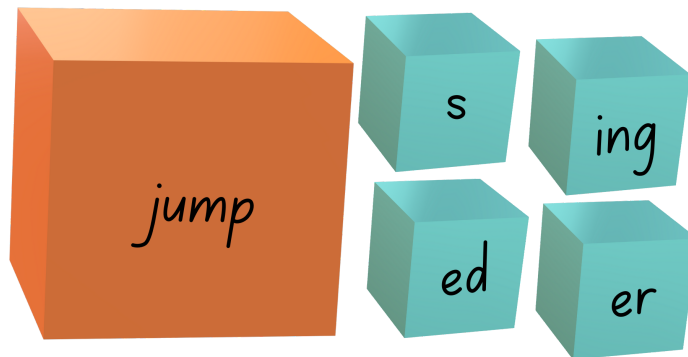
Introducing the Concept

The key to successful morphology investigation is to start with what the students already know. Select a word family they are likely familiar with, such as <jump>.

Through several prompts, you can gather several members of the word family:

- "I jump and she _____" <jumps>
- "Five little monkeys were _____ <jumping> on the bed."
- "He _____ <jumped> so high he touched the sky!"

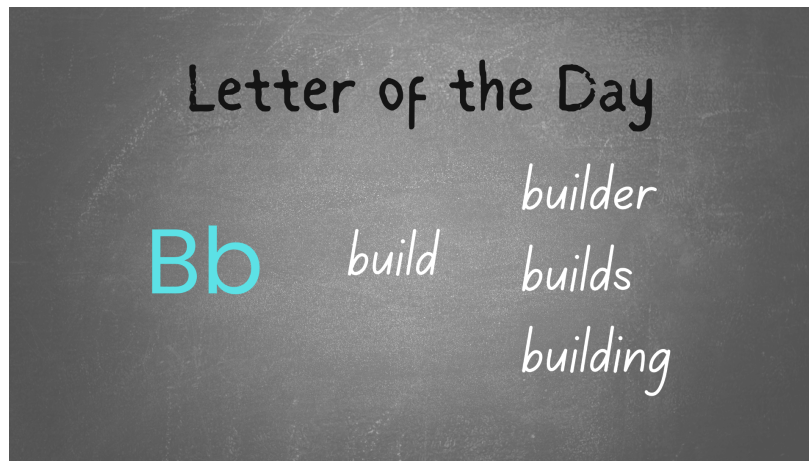
From here you can explain that <jump> is what we call the base word and <s>, <ing>, and <ed> are called suffixes. All the words in the word family share meaning and spelling (structure). All of those (<jump>, <s>, <ing>, <ed>) are considered morphemes. We use morphemes like building blocks to make new words. You may wish to illustrate this with morpheme cards (where bases are one color and suffixes are another) or with physical blocks that you can move around. Once students have a sense of how this works, you can add word building into your centers.



Games and Activities

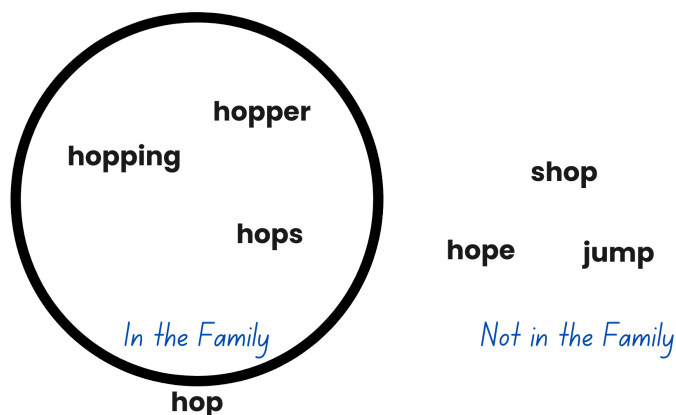
Featured Letter

Many teachers explore letters with their students throughout the year. This might include stories or songs featuring the letter of the day/week or asking students to bring in items that begin with the letter. Teachers can offer their own word and then ask students to help build out the word family.



Word Bag (Is it in the family?)

Introduce the base word to students. Pull words from a bag and have them tell you if it's in the word family of the base word, or not. These can be words that you have pulled from a poem or picture book, or ones that you are studying as part of your introduction to words. Encourage students to explain why it is (or isn't) part of the family. This activity reinforces the notion that in order to be part of the word family, words must share a common structure (spelling) and meaning (definition/sense).



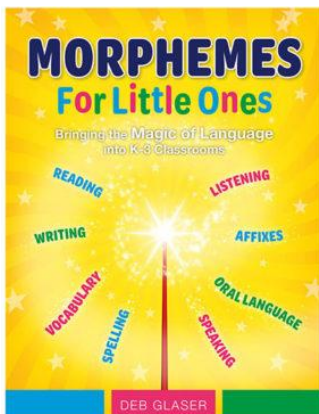
Adding Word Families to Centers

Theme based centers are a common feature in Kindergarten classrooms. You may want to add word families to your sensory bins or sorting centers. For example for your spring gardening themed stations, adding words from the <grow> or <farm> families might be appropriate.

I Spy

While you may already play “I spy...” with big books or environmental print in your classroom (i.e. “I spy a word that starts with /s/.” or “I spy a word with three syllables.”), extend this game to include morphology (i.e. “I spy a word in the <big> family.” or “I spy a word with <-ing> suffix/ending.”)

Resources



[The High Frequency Word Project](https://www.wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Home.html)

References

Bowers, P. (2023). *WordWorks literacy centre*.

<https://www.wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Home.html>

Hegland, S. S. (2021). *Beneath the surface of words: What English spelling reveals and why it matters*. Learning About Spelling.

Hamilton, F. (2023). *WordTorque*. <https://wordtorque.com/>

Steven, M.B. (2023). *Mrs Steven's classroom blog*.
<https://mbsteven.edublogs.org/>

For more information, please contact your local consortia office.

