

The Word-Building Workshop

Learning objective: To identify and understand the impact of prefixes and suffixes on word meaning and word class.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Remember to use full sentences.

Pip the bookworm caterpillar was busy in his garden workshop. Pip loved changing words to make them more exciting. He explained to his friends that a prefix is a group of letters added to the start of a base word, like adding 'un-' to 'happy' to make 'unhappy'. This changes the meaning to the opposite. Next, Pip showed them how a suffix works by adding it to the end of a word. When he added '-ness' to 'kind', it became 'kindness', which turns an adjective into a noun.

Max the monkey watched closely, tapping his chin. 'So, if I take the word 'read' and add 're-' to the front, it means to read again,' Max chirped. Pip nodded happily. 'Exactly! You are becoming an expert word-builder.' Using these tools, Pip and Max could transform a simple list of words into a colourful adventure. By simply adding small parts to the beginning or end of a base word, they could change how a sentence felt, how it sounded, and what it truly meant. Their garden workshop was never quiet, as they spent the afternoon creating new, complex words to fill their storybooks.

Word bank: prefix · suffix · base word · meaning · unhappy · kindness

1. According to the text, what happens to the meaning of a word when you add the prefix 'un-' to it? (2 marks)

2. What does Max suggest adding to the word 'read', and what does he say the new word means? (2 marks)

3. Why might Pip and Max choose to use suffixes like '-ness' when they are writing their stories? (2 marks)

4. How does the author show that Max is an enthusiastic learner in this passage? (2 marks)

5. Do you think learning about prefixes and suffixes is a useful skill for a Year 5 student? Explain why using evidence from the text. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw Pip the caterpillar in his workshop, holding a sign that shows the base word 'happy' being transformed into 'unhappy' with a colourful prefix.



Extension challenge: Choose three base words of your own and try to add at least one prefix and one suffix to each. Write them in a sentence to show how the meaning changes.