

Word Sorts

What are Word Sorts?

There are two types of word sorts: **open** and **closed**. In closed word sorts the teacher defines the process for categorizing the words; that requires the students to engage in critical thinking as they examine sight vocabulary, corresponding concepts, or word structure. In open word sorts the students determine how to categorize the words, thereby becoming involved in an active manipulation of words.

Word Sort Activities

Alphabetization

Students shuffle and arrange cards alphabetically.

Vowel Sounds

Students group words by the long or short vowel sound they hear:

long i, short i, long a, etc.

Within each group the words can be subdivided into how the same vowel sound is spelled:

long a: a consonant e, ai, ay

Word Endings and Suffixes

Students arrange words by how the ending is spelled:

er: er, ar, or

el: le, el, al

Students sort words into columns according to base word and type of suffix or word ending. Students examine the columns and generalize about the part of speech each column represents based on the suffix. Students can also see spelling-meaning links by tracking the base word across each row.

(base)	(noun)	(adjective)	(verb)
laugh		laughable	
act	action		
plan			planned

Prefixes

Students arrange words by spelling of the prefix:

in: in or im

Students can cut or fold the card to separate the prefix from the base word.

