

# Word Sorts

## What Are Word Sorts?

There are two types of word sorts: **closed** and **open**. In closed word sorts the teacher defines the process for categorizing the words. This requires 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.

### Spelling of Prefixes, Suffixes, or Roots

Students categorize words by how their prefixes, suffixes, or roots are spelled:

**ad-:** *ac-, al-, ap-, ar-, at-*

**l̩ə bəl|:** *-able, -ible*

*scrib, scrip, script*

Students can cut or fold word cards to separate a prefix and/or suffix from a base word or root.

bi    month    ly                    re    sign    ation

### Parts of Speech

Students could sort words and word parts into columns according to the part of speech formed when a suffix is added. Students can also see spelling-meaning links by tracking the base word or root across each row.

<u>Base Word or Root</u>	<u>Noun</u>	<u>Adjective</u>	<u>Verb</u>
legal			legalize
fract	fracture		
flex		flexible	
eleg	elegance	elegant	

## Word Histories

Students might sort words based on their origin:

Algonquian

squash

Dutch

easel

Eskimo

igloo

French

reservoir

Spanish

sombrero

## Oral Practice

Students, working in pairs, can practice pronunciation and spelling by asking each other to spell the word on their card. This activity might be especially effective when students are studying words from other languages (*enchilada, bouquet, moccasin*).

## Interactive Games

Students choose a word card and act out or draw clues about the word for others to guess. A point is given to the student who both guesses and spells the word correctly.

For vocabulary enrichment, students can read aloud the dictionary definition or the thesaurus subentries for a basic list word while other students guess and spell the basic word.

For additional game ideas, consult your **Teacher's Resource Book**.

## Word Building

Have students use their understanding of word formation and word families to build new spelling words with the cards provided for prefixes, suffixes, and roots or with cards they make for other familiar word parts. As a self-check, ask students to look up each word they make in a dictionary.

**For meeting individual needs, refer to the *Helpful Hints* on page 2.**