

Teacher Resource · Free resource

Word sort activities – Year 2

Year group: 2

Source: DfE, *English Appendix 1: Spelling* (2013)

Purpose: Printable word sort activities for Y2 spelling patterns.

How to run a word sort

Print and cut the word card grid below, or write words on small slips of paper

Give pupils the column headers only — not the completed sort

Pupils sort in pairs — they must say *why* each word goes where it does

Discuss as a class — focus on reasoning, not just the answer

Sort 1: The /dʒ/ sound – -dge or -ge?

Column headers: -dge (after a short vowel) · -ge (after a long vowel or consonant)

Word cards — print and cut:

bridge	age	hedge	cage	fudge
page	badge	huge	edge	stage
lodge	change	nudge	range	judge
strange	wedge	large	ridge	charge
smudge	wage	ledge	rage	dodge

Column header cards:

-dge (short vowel before it)	-ge (long vowel or consonant before it)
-------------------------------------	--

(Rule: use -dge immediately after a short vowel in a one-syllable word. Use -ge everywhere else.)

Sort 2: Word endings that sound the same – *-le*, *-el*, *-al*, *-il*

Column headers: *-le* · *-el* · *-al* · *-il*

Word cards — print and cut:

little	camel	central	pencil	table
tunnel	natural	fossil	circle	barrel
hospital	nostril	apple	squirrel	metal
puzzle	pedal	April	bottle	vowel
simple	signal	evil	bubble	travel

Column header cards:

<i>-le</i>	<i>-el</i>	<i>-al</i>	<i>-il</i>
-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------

(No single rule predicts which ending — but -le is by far the most common. -el usually follows m, n, r, s, v, w. -al and -il are rarer.)

Sort 3: Adding suffixes – which rule?

Column headers: Double the final consonant · Drop the -e · Change y to i · No change

Word cards — print and cut:

running	smiling	happier	jumping	swimming
making	carried	looked	sitting	hoping
tried	helped	bigger	writing	copied
walking	flatter	baking	played	beginning
exciting	easiest	shouted	stopped	saving

Column header cards:

Double consonant	Drop the -e	Change y to i	No change
-------------------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------

(When does each rule apply? Double: short vowel + single consonant before a vowel suffix.

Drop-e: silent -e before a vowel suffix. Y→i: -y after a consonant, but NOT before -ing.)

Sort 4: Homophones – match the meaning

Column headers: Use the word that fits the meaning

Word card pairs — print and cut:

there	their	they're	here	hear
to	too	two	see	sea
be	bee	bare	bear	blue
blew	night	knight	no	know
right	write	sun	son	one

(Activity: after sorting into matching pairs, pupils write one sentence using each word correctly.)

Sort 5: Y2 exception words – which pattern makes it tricky?

Column headers: *oul* (could/would/should) · *eau* or *-iful* sound · *-eople/-oney* ending · Tricky vowel

Word cards — print and cut:

could	beautiful	people	because	would
pretty	money	great	should	busy
water	again	any	many	climb
clothes	sugar	half	move	whole
break	steak	eye	door	floor

(Discuss: what is the unexpected letter in each word? Naming the exact problem is more useful than just looking at the word.)

Blank sort template

Pattern I am sorting: _____

Column header cards:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
----------	----------	----------	----------

My word cards:

Extension: Can pupils add one more word to each column from memory?

Source: DfE English Appendix 1: Spelling (2013). Word sort pedagogy: Dymock & Nicholson (2017).