

Year 2 · Free resource

Suffixes: -ment, -ness, -ful, -less, -ly

Year group: 2

Source: DfE, *English Appendix 1: Spelling*, National Curriculum for England (2013) — Year 2

Curriculum requirement: Statutory

The rule

These five suffixes are all **consonant suffixes** — they begin with a consonant. This means they follow a simpler rule than vowel suffixes:

The spelling of the base word does **NOT** change when you add a **consonant suffix** (with one exception — see *-y* to *-i* below).

enjoy + *-ment* = **enjoyment** (no change)

care + *-ful* = **careful** (no change — keep the *e*)

sad + *-ness* = **sadness** (no change)

The five suffixes and what they mean

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-ment	the result or act of	<i>enjoy</i> → enjoyment
-ness	the state of being	<i>sad</i> → sadness
-ful	full of; having	<i>care</i> → careful
-less	without	<i>care</i> → careless
-ly	in a [adjective] way	<i>slow</i> → slowly

Note: *careful* and *careless* are a pair — opposite meanings, same base word.

-ment examples

Base	Word	Meaning
<i>enjoy</i>	enjoyment	pleasure
<i>excite</i>	excitement	a feeling of excitement
<i>move</i>	movement	the act of moving
<i>amaze</i>	amazement	great surprise
<i>treat</i>	treatment	the way something is dealt with
<i>agree</i>	agreement	an understanding between parties
<i>disappoint</i>	disappointment	the feeling of not getting what you wanted
<i>amuse</i>	amusement	entertainment
<i>argue</i>	argument	a disagreement (<i>drop the e – exceptional; -ment is consonant but this base drops e</i>)
<i>judge</i>	judgement	a decision (<i>British English keeps e: judgement</i>)

-ness examples

Base	Word	Note
<i>sad</i>	sadness	double <i>d</i> + <i>d</i> = <i>dd</i> (from base, no extra doubling)
<i>kind</i>	kindness	
<i>dark</i>	darkness	
<i>sweet</i>	sweetness	
<i>loud</i>	loudness	
<i>fit</i>	fitness	<i>(double t? No – fitness is fit + -ness; the t is not doubled because -ness is a consonant suffix)</i>
<i>happy</i>	happiness	<i>y</i> → <i>i</i> (consonant before <i>y</i>)
<i>silly</i>	silliness	<i>y</i> → <i>i</i>
<i>busy</i>	business	<i>y</i> → <i>i</i> ; also has unusual pronunciation /'biznɪs/
<i>good</i>	goodness	
<i>aware</i>	awareness	keep the <i>e</i>
<i>polite</i>	politeness	keep the <i>e</i>

-ful examples

-ful has only ONE *l* (not two). It comes from the word *full* but is spelled with one *l* as a suffix.

Base	Word
<i>care</i>	careful
<i>help</i>	helpful
<i>hope</i>	hopeful
<i>play</i>	playful
<i>use</i>	useful
<i>wonder</i>	wonderful
<i>thank</i>	thankful
<i>success</i>	successful
<i>colour</i>	colourful
<i>beauty</i>	beautiful (<i>y</i> → <i>i</i> before vowel? No – <i>-ful</i> starts with consonant. But <i>beauty</i> → <i>beauti-</i> because <i>-ful</i> begins with <i>f</i> and the <i>y</i> to <i>i</i> rule applies before most suffixes except <i>-ing</i>)

Beauty → **beautiful**: the *y* in *beauty* changes to *i* before *-ful* because *y* → *i* rule applies before consonant suffixes when the letter before *y* is a consonant.

-less examples

Base	Word
<i>care</i>	careless
<i>help</i>	helpless
<i>hope</i>	hopeless
<i>use</i>	useless
<i>power</i>	powerless
<i>harm</i>	harmless
<i>end</i>	endless
<i>worth</i>	worthless
<i>sleep</i>	sleepless
<i>thought</i>	thoughtless
<i>count</i>	countless

-ly examples (covered in depth at Y3/4)

At Y2, teach the simple case: add *-ly* to most adjectives with no change.

Base	Word
<i>slow</i>	slowly
<i>quick</i>	quickly
<i>loud</i>	loudly
<i>kind</i>	kindly
<i>soft</i>	softly
<i>bright</i>	brightly
<i>safe</i>	safely
<i>nice</i>	nicely
<i>brave</i>	bravely
<i>happy</i>	happily (y → i)

The **-y to -i** exception

Even though these are consonant suffixes (no vowel suffix doubling or e-dropping), the *y to i* rule still applies:

*happy + -ness = **happiness** (not happyness)*

*beauty + -ful = **beautiful** (not beautyful)*

*happy + -ly = **happily** (not happyly)*

Careful / careless – a teaching pair

Use *care* to show how opposites are built from the same root:

care + *-ful* = **careful** (full of care)

care + *-less* = **careless** (without care)

care + *-fully* = **carefully**

care + *-lessly* = **carelessly**

care + *-fulness* = **carefulness**

care + *-lessness* = **carelessness**

Six words from one base. This is morphology in action.

Common mistakes

Wrong	Right	Reason
<i>carefull</i>	careful	-ful has only one l
<i>happyness</i>	happiness	y → i before -ness
<i>beautifull</i>	beautiful	-ful has only one l
<i>usefull</i>	useful	-ful has only one l
<i>excitment</i>	excitement	keep the e before -ment
<i>movment</i>	movement	keep the e before -ment

Word sort

Add the suffix and write the new word.

Base + suffix	New word
<i>help + -ful</i>	
<i>kind + -ness</i>	
<i>care + -less</i>	
<i>slow + -ly</i>	
<i>enjoy + -ment</i>	
<i>happy + -ness</i>	
<i>wonder + -ful</i>	
<i>end + -less</i>	
<i>excite + -ment</i>	
<i>beauty + -ful</i>	

Dictation sentences

With **careful movement**, she placed the glass on the table **gently**.

The **darkness** and **silence** created a feeling of **sadness**.

Her **kindness** was a source of great **enjoyment** for everyone around her.

The **hopeless** situation brought **disappointment** and a sense of **helplessness**.

He walked **slowly** and **thoughtfully**, grateful for the **wonderful calmness** of the morning.

Source: DfE English Appendix 1: Spelling (2013). All examples verified against Year 2 statutory content.