Small word parts. Useful clues.

Years 3–6; adapt to vocabulary and decoding experience

1. Explain the meanings of help, helpful, unhelpful and helpless. How do helpful and unhelpful differ?

2. Complete with helpful or helpless: “The clear map was ___.” “Without assistance, the injured bird seemed ___.” Explain your choices.

3. Explain replay and prepay. What does each prefix contribute?

Try it. Explain it. Check it.

4. Build a noun from pay + -ment. Build a noun from happy + -ness. Notice the spelling in the second word.

5. A pupil says read means “do ad again” because it starts with re. Explain why that split does not work.

6. Write two sentences using different words from this pack. Underline the word and explain what it means in your sentence.

Answers and teaching notes

1. help: assist/assistance; helpful: giving useful help; unhelpful: not giving useful help; helpless: unable to help oneself in the stated situation. Accept suitable contextual explanations.

2. helpful; helpless. The map assists; the bird needs assistance. Do not use helpless as a label for a pupil.

3. replay: play again; prepay: pay beforehand. Other senses need context.

4. payment; happiness. In happiness, the y of happy becomes i before -ness. This example does not prove a rule for every suffix.

5. Ad is not the relevant base and that proposed meaning does not match read. Similar letters alone do not establish a meaningful prefix.

6. Open: grammatical sentence and accurate contextual meaning. Example: “Please replay the song” means play it again.

What to ask next

Ask pupils to explain a new family such as care/careful/careless. Check meaning in a sentence; do not introduce many spelling exceptions at once.

Original SkillFlex activity prepared with AI assistance and editorial checks. Not classroom-trialled. Adapt to your pupils; suggested years are flexible.