

Words within words

More motivating word level work

Word level work can be uninspiring if we are not careful. However, most people enjoy puzzles and this activity can be presented as a similar type of challenge. We are familiar with the task which asks us to see how many words we can make out of 'rhinoceros', for example.



This activity, sometimes called 'word chunking', is more focussed in that it requires students to find words within words using a continuous sequence of letters. This gives practice in recognising letter strings and spotting how words are put together. Although a kind of word demolition, it is helpful in the opposite process of word-building. The words used in the activity will vary according to the ability of the class and the focus for the session. Some words lend themselves to this more than others – but don't be put off if there seem to be only two or three. Sometimes those can be helpful, amusing or revealing (the hems and elves in themselves, for example).

The basic procedure involves displaying a word or words on the whiteboard which have other words within them, such as lawnmower, which contains law, mow and owe as well as lawn and mower. There should be room for argument about, for instance, whether ow (Ow!) is a word and the question, 'Do you think 'ower' is a word?' (Is it?).

The activity can easily be turned into a game or competition.

This lesson activity should be used in conjunction with the SMART Notebook™ file 'Words within Words.notebook'.

 Notes

Suggested activity outline

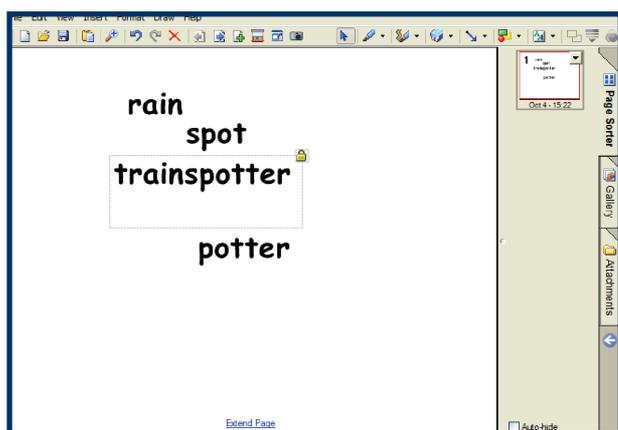
- Display a suitable word and demonstrate how it contains other words. Show this by copying and pasting the found words above or below the original word. Make sure you leave the original word intact.
- Display another word and ask the class to look at it for a minute and think about which words they can discover.
- Ask a volunteer to come and highlight one on the whiteboard. It can then be moved and 'parked'. Let others do the same.
- Move on to another word. Repeat the same sequence.
- Display another word or short list of words and ask students to jot down the words within words which they can find, either individually or in pairs.
- In a plenary, collect their suggestions.

SMART specific

Having decided which words to use, type or copy the list onto a SMART Notebook page. Make a copy of the first word to be tackled on a new page. Do the same with the second word.

Display the first word. You may find it helpful to lock it into position. (Use the drop down menu on the top right of the text box. If locked, a little padlock will appear – see Example 1).

Make sure the Notebook is in text mode when your volunteer highlights the word he or she has found. They can then drag it and park it wherever they like. Later the words can be arranged to show their connection to the original as in the example.



Example 1

Extension activities

The activity does not have to involve finding whole words. It can be used to break words down into prefix/stem/suffix or in any other way which you find useful. Nor should it concentrate on spelling; meaning and etymology are equally relevant.

There are a number of ways of setting up the activity as a game. One way is to work in teams. One team starts and suggests a word within the main word. Then it is the other team's turn. This continues until one of the teams cannot find a word. Points are awarded for each word, or each letter. The teacher is the adjudicator but you may like to have a work of reference to back up a controversial decision!

Depending on the class, a small group of pupils could act as adjudicators – very useful for their speaking and listening as well as reference skills.

Another approach is to have students work in pairs. They then combine into fours and share their words. In the plenary, each group calls out its list of words in turn. Any word which only one other group has found scores double; any word which only they have found scores treble.

Instead of drawing up the list of words yourself, get the students to find the words.

Notes

Resources

For compound words which are particularly good in this activity:

www.rickwalton.com/curricul/compound.htm

General sites on word derivations:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etymology

www.etymonline.com

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