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Sample pages

Sort 6 Suffixes (-ty, -ity)

In this sort, students are introduced to the effect suffixes have upon base words, so base words are included. When *-ity* is added to a base word, the accent often shifts from the first syllable (*active*) to the second (*activity*) or the syllable right before the suffix. The suffix *-ity* or *-ty* has a number of Spanish cognates with the *-dad* ending: *actividad*, *tranquilidad*, *humedad*, *novedad* and *seguridad* (*safety*).

Generalisation: The suffixes *-ty* and *-ity* usually change adjectives to nouns, and they mean ‘state, condition, quality.’ Adding suffixes can sometimes change the accented syllable.

base word	-ty	base word	-ity
safe	safety	active	activity
special	specialty	festive	festivity
novel	novelty	tranquil	tranquility
loyal	loyalty	humid	humidity
casual	casualty	minor	minority
certain	certainly	sensitive	sensitivity

Explore Meaning: Ask, **What does the word *casual* mean to you? Have you heard of *casual dress*? (It seems to suggest relaxed and not too serious as in ‘casual Fridays.’) What about the word *casualty*?** Have students look up these words in a dictionary. The base words have to do with something occurring infrequently or by chance, but *casualty* means a death in battle or in traffic, and that seems contradictory! Ask, **What does *novel* mean?** Discuss the two meanings of *novel* (a book of fiction as well as something new or unusual). In this sort, the second definition is related to novelty.

Sorting and Discussion:

1. Explain, **We’re going to be exploring suffixes in our next few sorts. They all occur quite a bit in words you’ll encounter in your reading, so it’s important to understand how they work and what they mean.** Display the words and read over them. Take the time to talk about words with unfamiliar meanings, such as *casual*, *casualty* and *novel*. Then ask, **What do you notice about the words in this sort?** Take multiple responses, and then say, **Let’s start by**

just sorting the words with suffixes under the headers for *-ty* and *-ity*.

2. After sorting, read down the words in each column and emphasise that the sound difference (*-ity* is distinct from *-ty*). Then explain, **Now let’s match each word with its base word. A word is derived from its base when we add a suffix to the base. So, I’ll match the base word *safe* with its derivative, *safety*. I’ll match the base word *active* with its derivative, *activity*.** Do this with all the words.
3. Then ask, **What part of speech are the base words?** (They are adjectives, because they can be used to describe things.) Offer some examples such as, *That bug looks like a novel species of insect!* Then talk about the meanings of each pair and how the suffix changes the adjective to a noun (*The novelty of the new app soon wore off*). Ask, **How would you describe the meaning of the suffixes *-ty* and *-ity*?** (Responses usually include being ‘like’ the base word.) Explain, **Certainty is the state, quality, condition of being certain. Humidity is the state, quality, condition of being humid.** But do not expect students to remember this!
4. Now go back and read through the *active-activity* pairs to talk about the accented syllables and the change in accent. Ask, **Which syllable is accented in *active*?** (The first) **When we add the suffix *-ity* to *active*, which syllable is accented?** (The second) Emphasise the accented syllable in each pair as you read down the list with the students. Then go over the pairs that end in *-ty* the same way. **Does the accented syllable change when *-ty* is added?** (No, *loyal* and *loyalty* are both accented on the first syllable.)
5. Pull out *sensitive/sensitivity*, *active/activity* and *festive/festivity* and say, **Look at each of these pairs. What do you notice when you compare the base words and the derived word?** (The final *e* is dropped before *-ity* because it is a suffix beginning with a vowel.)
6. Ask, **What did you learn about the suffixes *-ty* and *-ity*?** (They signal nouns, and adding *-ity* can change the accented syllable.) Review by pulling out the word *sensitivity*, and say, **What is the base word and what part of speech is it?** (*sensitive*, which is an adjective) **How did this word change when *-ity* was added?** (The *e* was

dropped, it changed from an adjective to a noun and the accent shifted to the third syllable.) Repeat with *humid*.

Extend:

Students should complete weekly routines described on pages 14-19. A blind sort with a partner will be easy, but it will highlight how sound is a clue to spelling words. It might be difficult to find more words in a word hunt because many will not have clear base words, such as *dignity*. Word hunts will also turn up many words that end in *-ty*, where the *y* has been added to a base word ending in a final *t* to create an adjective, such as *rusty*, *thirsty* and *tasty*. Help students distinguish these from the nouns that end in *-ty* and *-ity*.

Apply:

Ask students to add either *-ty* or *-ity* to these words and then pronounce them. Remind them to keep accent changes in mind: *difficult*, *popular*, *stupid*, *subtle* and *timid*. Read each word in the frame sentence substituting other words for those in the parentheses: (*Difficulty*) is the state or condition of being (*difficult*).

Additional Words:

-ty *amnesty, difficulty, gaiety, liberty, plenty, poverty, property, puberty, subtlety, travesty, uncertainty, warranty*

-ity *hostility, humanity, royalty, passivity, popularity, priority, reality, relativity, stupidity, timidity, validity, anxiety, certainty, civility*

Sample pages

SORT 6 Suffixes (-ty, -ity)

<i>base word</i>	<i>-ty</i>	<i>base word</i>	<i>-ity</i>
safe	safety	active	
activity	festive	special	
novelty	tranquil	festivity	
specialty	novel	loyal	
casual	loyalty	tranquility	
humid	minor	humidity	
certain	casualty	sensitive	
minority	sensitivity	certainty	