

White, Sowell and Yanagihara have identified prefixes and suffixes that account for approximately 75% of affixed words. The presence of a prefix at the beginning of a word requires that the reader attend to it immediately. Prefixes tend to be spelled consistently and have a clear lexical meaning which makes prefix instruction and learning at grades 3 through 5 both fairly straightforward and useful. Although there is general agreement on the value of teaching prefixes, there is less agreement on the value of teaching suffixes. Stahl (1999) contends, for example, that because many suffixes have vague or unhelpful meanings they can often confuse more than help students. The most frequently occurring suffixes in printed school English are inflectional endings. Most young students use these endings in their oral language and so should have few problems learning and using them. (Lehr, Osborn, and Hiebert, 2004. A Focus on Vocabulary.)

Prefixes and Suffixes That Account for Approximately 75% of Affixed Words (White, Sowell, & Yanagihara, 1989)

Prefixes	% of All Suffixed Words (Cumulative)	Suffixes	% of All Prefixed Words (Cumulative)
1. un- (not)	26	-s, -es	31
2. re- (again)	40	-ed	51
3. in-, im-, il-, ir- (not)	51	-ing	65
4. dis-	58		
5. en-, em-	62	-ly	72
6. non-	66	-er. -or	76
7. in-, im- (in)	69	(agent)	
8. over-	72		
9. mis-	75		

Note. Adapted from "Teaching Elementary Students to Use Word-Part Clues," by T. G. White, J. Sowell, and A. Yanagihara, 1989, *The Reading Teacher*, 42, pp. 303-304 Table 1 and Table 2. Copyright 1989 by the International Reading Association. Adapted