

# ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Layers of Language:  
Anglo-Saxon Morpheme Patterns

Marcia K. Henry, Ph. D.  
Professor Emerita,  
San Jose State University

## ~ Module 13, Session 6 ~ Handout 1- Suffix Addition Rules

### Doubling Rule:

- (a) In one-syllable words: One-syllable base words ending in a single consonant immediately following one short vowel must double the final consonant before a suffix beginning with a vowel (e.g., *-er*, *-ing*, *-est*, *-ed*, *y*, etc.)

Do not double the final base word consonant if the suffix begins in a consonant (e.g., *-ment*, *-ful*, *-less*, *-ness*, *-ly*, etc.)

Examples: *big* + *-er* = *bigger*, but *big* + *-ness* = *bigness*  
*fret* + *-ing* = *fretting*, but *fret* + *-ful* = *fretful*

- (b) In polysyllabic base words: The above rule applies to the final syllable in a polysyllabic base word if the final syllable is accented.

Examples: *begin'* – *beginning*, *beginner*  
But, *o'pen* – *opening*, *opened*

Again no doubling is necessary when the suffix begins with a consonant as in *forget* – *forgetting*, but, *forgetful*, *forgetfulness*.

### Final e Rule:

When a base word ends with final *-e*, drop the *e* before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel.

Examples: *blame* - *blaming*, *blamed*, but *blameless*  
*Time* – *timing*, *timer*, *timed*, but *timely*, *timeless*

### Final y Rule:

- (a) When a base word ends in *y*, change the *y* to *i* before adding a suffix;

Examples: *heavy – heaviness, heavier; silly – silliest, silliness*

- (b) **Except** when the y is preceded by a vowel;

Examples: *play – played, playing, played, playful*

- (c) **Except** when the suffix begins with an *i*;

Examples: *cry – crying, but cried; baby – babyish; copy – copying, copyist*