

Misspelled Word(s) of the Day - Day 2

Reminder: The purpose of Misspelled Word of the Day is not to try to make everyone a perfect speller, the purpose is to learn from misspellings and then teach the student the misspelled word of the day while instilling an understanding of written language in general. The intention is not to teach students to spell every word in the English language, of which there are more than one million, the intention is to teach the student to think about words differently and learn to question, and understand word structure.

So, drum roll please....this week's misspelled word of the day is: <invenshiun>. I love these mistakes because they are so easy to explain and once properly understood, they help the child deeply understand 100s of other words with the same suffix. And that is what this week's post is about, a suffix issue.

It will only take one word to demonstrate the reality of our writing system that this speller has not yet learned. Now, hold on to you seats, because I am about to tell you something that has major implications for how you analyze words - <tion> and <sion> are not suffixes. They simply do not exist as suffixes. The true suffix is the Latinate <-ion>. Let's take a look at the word <action> to illustrate this point. The word <action> has the base <act> and the suffix <-ion> which is illustrated in this word sum: <act> + <-ion> → action. If we suggest that the suffix is <-tion> and put it into a word sum to test that hypothesis, we get <ac> + <-tion> and we can then immediately realize that <ac> cannot be the base because <act> is the base of the word of <action> and as the base, it needs to carry the meaning and <ac> is not a meaningful base. Therefore, the suffix has to be <-ion>. With this new information you can then build a matrix for a whole family of words related in meaning and spelling to the base <act>, but like <sign>, the base had different pronunciations depending on what suffix was added! Below is a word matrix to help illustrate the concept (created with the free mini-matrix maker <http://www.neilramsdn.co.uk/spelling/matrix/>):

| | | | | |
|----|---|-----|-----|----|
| re | act <i>take</i> <i>action; do something.</i> | ed | | |
| | | ing | | |
| | | or | | |
| | | s | | |
| | | ion | s | |
| | | ive | ist | s |
| | | | ly | |
| | | u | al | ly |

Let's take a look at all of the words the student just learned to read and spell with this new found reality:

Misspelled Word(s) of the Day – Day 2: <ion> Words
by Dr. Kelli Sandman-Hurley, Dyslexia Training Institute

act + ed → acted
act + ing → acting
act + or → actor
act + s → acts
re + act → react
re + act + ion → reaction
re + act + ive → reactive
re + act + ive + ly → reactively
act + u + al → actual
act + u + al + ly → actually

Ok, now back to <invenshiu>. Take a moment to hypothesize what you think the base is of this word is. Write a word sum down. Remember to 1) Think about what the word means, 2) Look for any relatives (see <act> for a refresher about word relatives that share the base) and 3) figure out the morphological parts of the word. Ok, ready for the answer?

What is an invention? It is something that was invented, right? By an inventor? So, we can agree that the base is <invent> (and possibly vent), but for this post, we will go with <invent>. Do you see what I see? The <t> that is usually included in the <tion> suffix *is already there* – it is part of the base, not the suffix. What the student will notice that the phoneme represented by the grapheme <t> changes to a /sh/when followed by <ion>! Voila – problem and guessing solved! When a student perceives /shun/ or /zhun/ at the end of a word, they will know that it is usually represented by <-ion>.

Some other <-ion> words are: nation: nat(e) + ion → nation

discuss + ion → discussion (this has a probably prefix as well, but we are just looking at <-ion> for now.)

instruct + ion → instruction (in + struct + ion; de + struct + ion; re + con + struct + ion; struct + ure' struct + ure + al)

Homework: If you have a student that misspells these words, do this exercise with them and report back!