

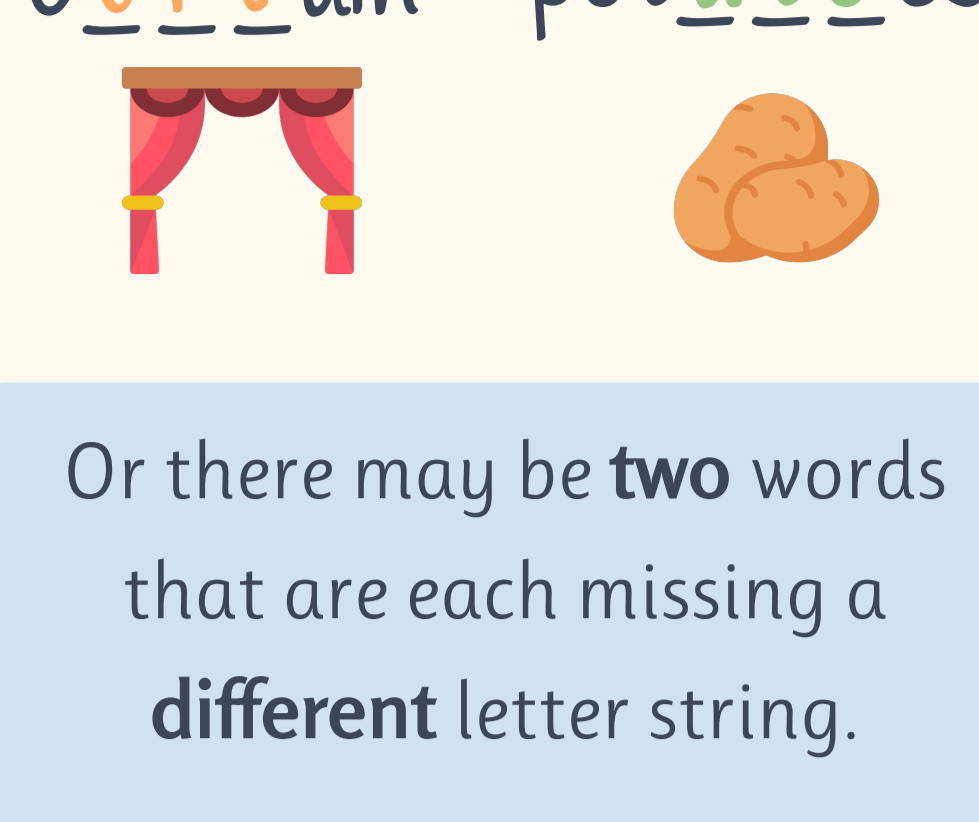
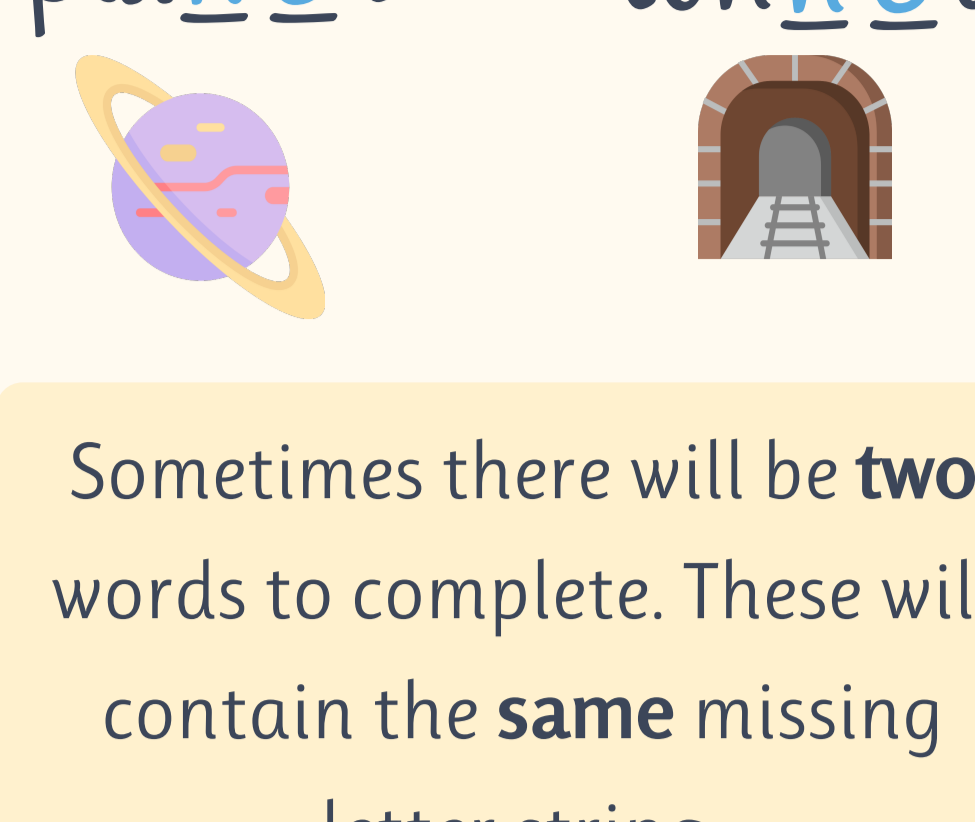
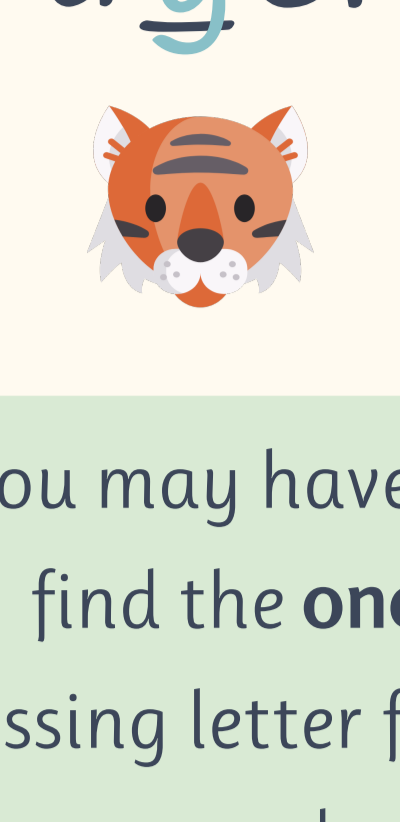
What do you need to know?

In **Missing Letter** questions you are asked to find the **letter or string of letters** that are missing from the one or two words.

A **letter string** is a group of two or more letters that appear together in a word.

You will be given several different options but only **one** of them will **correctly** complete the word or words. No other letters in the words can be removed or reordered.

Occasionally you will be asked to write out the missing letter string rather than select the option.



You may have to find the **one** missing letter from a word.

Sometimes there will be **two** words to complete. These will contain the **same** missing letter string.

Or there may be **two** words that are each missing a **different** letter string.

Key Skills:

There are some key skills that you will need to be able to recognise real, correctly spelt rearranged words:

Vocabulary	Recognise words and how to pronounce them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Read a variety of books and texts. ★ Make lists of new words to extend your vocabulary. ★ Check the pronunciation of unfamiliar words.
Spelling	Spell words accurately and recognise incorrect spellings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ List the different letter strings used to spell sounds (e.g. i, i-e, igh, y, ie). ★ Words ending in '-s' or '-es' are likely to be plurals. ★ Practise tricky spellings ★ Learn spelling rules and play spelling games

Approach:

When working out the missing letters, use the following simple steps to work out the answer:

1- Check how many letters are missing from the word or words. Do any of the incomplete words look familiar? Can you visualise the complete word? If there's a picture use it to help you.

2- Try sounding out the incomplete words to work out the missing letters. You'll often be able to make the sound of the missing letters.

3- Look for common letter strings, prefixes or suffixes within the word and try to identify the **word type**. For example, **'-ful'** is a likely **adjective** ending, **'-ing'** and **'-ed'** often end **verbs** and **'-tion'** is a common **noun** ending.

4- Check that the letter or letters will form a word that not only **sounds** correct, but is also correctly **spelt**.

Prefix

A **prefix** is a letter or group of letters that is placed at the **start** of a word to form a new word with a different meaning.

The prefix **'un-'** can be added to 'kind' to form **'unkind'**. The prefix changes the meaning of the adjective to mean 'not kind'.

Suffix

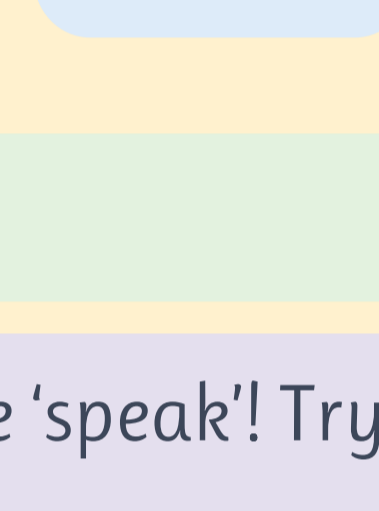
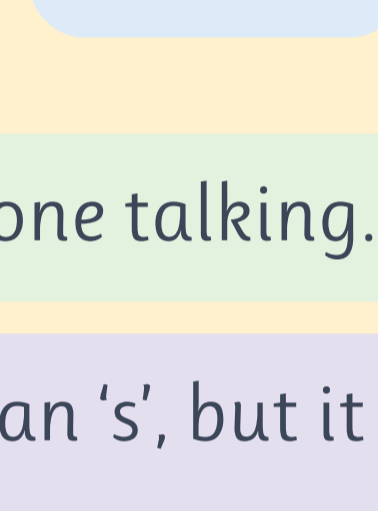
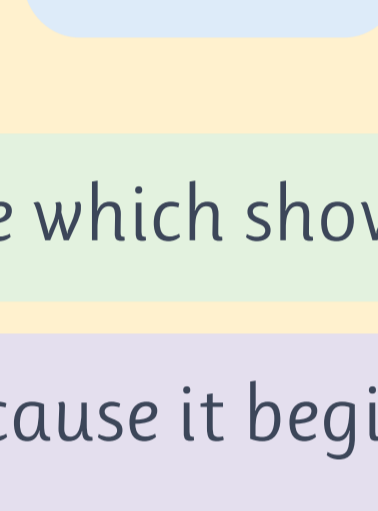
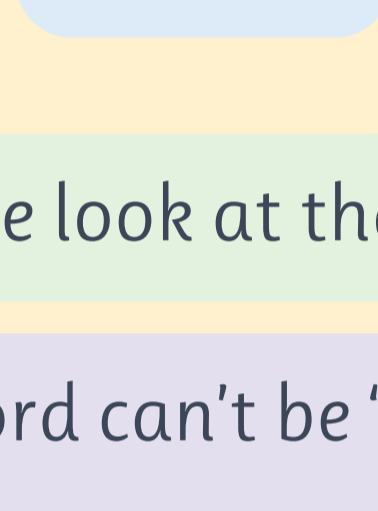
A **suffix** is a letter or group of letters that is placed at the **end** of a word to form a new word. This new word can have a different meaning or be a different type of word.

'-ful' is a suffix that forms adjectives: 'beauty' + **'ful'** makes the adjective **'beautiful'**.

Let's take a look at an example!

Choose the letter that will complete this word. Use the picture to help you.

s _ eak



First we look at the picture which shows someone talking.

The word can't be 'talk' because it begins with an 's', but it could be 'speak'! Try **sounding out** the word to help you work out the missing letter.

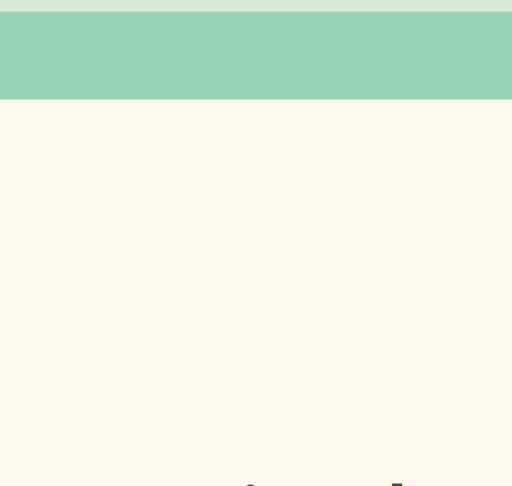
In 's_eak' the letter **'p'** is missing. If we add the letter **'p'**, we will make the word 'speak'!

speak

Did you know?

The average person speaks around **120** words per minute.

That's a lot of words!



Let's take a look at another example...

These words are both missing two letters. Identify the letter string that will complete both words.

g _ _ den | d _ _ phin

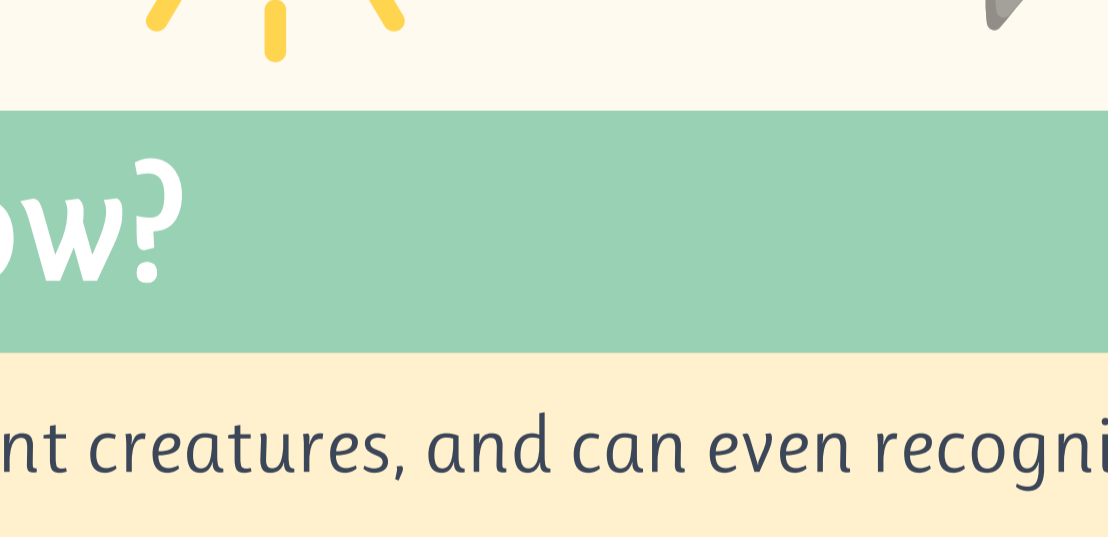
We need to find the letter string that will complete **both** words. Looking at 'g_ _ den' on the left, it could be 'garden' or 'golden'.

We now have two possible letter strings; **'ar'** or **'ol'**. Let's check them with the word on the right!

If we **sound out** 'd-ol-fin' (notice that the 'ph' makes an 'f' sound!), we can tell that the missing letters must be **'ol'**, as **'ar'** does not work!

The only letter string that can complete both words is **'ol'**: adding this will make 'golden' and 'dolphin'!

golden | dolphin



Did you know?

Dolphins are very intelligent creatures, and can even recognise themselves in a mirror!



I look great!

Watch out!

The **same** letters and letter strings can represent **different** sounds in **different** words.

In 'golden', the 'o' has a **long 'oa'** sound, as in 'goal'.

In 'dolphin' the 'o' is a short **'o'** sound, as in 'doll'.

You must always think about the **spelling** of a word, as well as the sounds it contains!

Let's try one more!

Find the pair of letter strings which will correctly complete the following words.

an _ _ _ r wond _ _ _ ul

dre & oul

swe & erf

eas & raf

swe & act

gry & inn

We need to identify the **two** letter strings that will complete the two given words.

The first incomplete word doesn't have many letters for us to work from, so let's start with the second. If we look at 'wond_ _ _ ul', we can see that it ends in 'ul'. The suffix **'-ful'** is a common adjective ending.

Therefore, the last letter of the string for this word could be an 'f'. Only two options contain a letter string ending in an 'f': **'swe & erf'**, and **'eas & raf'**.

The letter string **'erf'** would make the adjective 'wonderful' which is a correctly spelt word. The string **'raf'** would make 'wondrafuful' which looks and sounds wrong!

If the second word is 'wonderful', the other letter string is **'swe'**. By inserting **'swe'** into 'an_ _ _ r', we get a real word: 'answer'. This is a tricky spelling because the 'w' is silent!

The option **'swe & act'** is a red herring because **'swe'** makes 'answer', but **'act'** makes 'wondactul' which isn't a real word. **Watch out for those red herrings!**

None of the other options will make two, correctly spelt words. So, the correct pair of letter strings are **'swe & erf'** because they make the words 'answer' and 'wonderful'.

answer wonderful

Silent Letter

A **silent letter** is a letter that cannot be heard when the word is spoken.

They can occur at the beginning, middle or end of a word.

For example, 'knight' has a silent **'k'**, 'castle' has silent **'t'** and 'lamb' has a silent **'b'**!

Tips!

- ★ Try **sounding out** the words to work out the missing letters.
- ★ Look for common letter strings, **prefixes** and **suffixes** within the word.
- ★ Use letter strings to help you identify the possible **word type**.
- ★ Be aware that letters can have **different sounds** in different words.
- ★ Remember, some words contain **double letters**.
- ★ Watch out for any **silent letters!**
- ★ Check that the letter or letters will form a word that not only **sounds** correct, but that is also **spelt correctly**.