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Grades 2-3

by Timothy Rasinski Kent State University

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To my children—Mike, Emily, Mary, and Jenny— Word Wizards in their own right.

A father couldn't ask for better kids.



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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 40 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05



Contents

Welcome to Word Ladders!5
Counting Up
Home, Sweet Home 8
In the Doghouse 9
Shrinking Sizes
All Wet
Go, Team! 12
Sweet Seasons
Art Smart
Sleepytime
More or Less
Barbershop17
Inside Out
Weighty Matters
Restful Vacation
Gardening 21
Birdsong 22
Shady Glade23
School Days
Transportation
Good Cooking
America's Pastime
Sweet Treats
Finish Line 29
Fireworks
Opposites Attract
Seasoning Selection
Displays of Affection

Neigh-bors
Giving and Receiving 35
Getting There
Splish Splash 37
Fancy Footwear 38
Shopping Spree 39
Sweet Things 40
Woodsman
Thar She Blows! 42
Holiday Candy 43
Car Trip
Friendship 45
Great Grapes 46
Busy Bees
Ship Ahoy 48
Score! 49
Personality Change
Ride 'Em 51
Love Life 52
Underfoot
Bare Feet
Color Change
Deep Freeze
In the Kitchen
Giving Thanks 58
On the Range
Vehicles
Hungry!61

Opposites Attract #262
Nap Time 63
City Living 64
Air Travel 65
Snack Food66
A Matter of Size 67
Catnip
Showers and Flowers
Coffee Break70
Simon Says71
Wet and Wetter
After Dinner
Bookworm
Daily Journey
Top to Bottom
Finders Keepers77
Tolling Time
Some Like It Sweet
Feelings
Bright Light 81
Play Ball! 82
Good, Clean Fun83
Gently Down the Stream 84
Better and Better85
Winter Weather
Brrrrr!
Baby Animals 88
Fizzy Drinks 89

Animal Enemies
Five Senses
Shop 'til You Drop
Cross-Country93
The Whole Story
Rags to Riches
Insect Incline
In the Service
Tidying Up
Outerwear
Brass Band
Crybaby
Utensils
Wildlife
Boo!
Bedridden
Make-Your-Own Word Ladders
Answer Key



Welcome to Word Ladders!

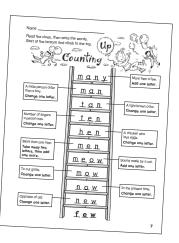
In this book you'll find 100 mini-wordstudy lessons that are also kid-pleasing games! To complete each Word Ladder takes just ten minutes but actively involves each learner in analyzing the structure and meaning of words. To play, students begin with one word and then make a series of other words by changing or rearranging the letters in the word before. With regular use, Word Ladders can go a long way toward developing your students' decoding and vocabulary skills.

How do Word Ladders work?

Let's say our first Word Ladder begins with the word *walk*. The directions will tell students to change one letter in *walk* to make a word that means "to speak." The word students will make, of course, is *talk*. The next word will then ask students to make a change in *talk* to form another word—perhaps *chalk*, or *tall*. At the top of the ladder, students will have a final word that is in some way related to the first word—for example, *run*. If students get stuck on a rung along the way, they can come back to it, because the words before and after will give them the clues they need to go on.

How do Word Ladders benefit students?

Word Ladders are great for building students' decoding, phonics, spelling, and vocabulary skills. When students add or rearrange letters to make a new word from one they have just made, they must examine sound-symbol relationships closely. This is just the kind of analysis that all children need to do in order to learn how to decode and spell accurately. And when the puzzle adds a bit of meaning in the form of a definition (for example, "make a word that means to say something"), it helps extend students' understanding of words and concepts. All of these skills are key to students' success in learning to read and write. So even though Word Ladders will feel like a game your students will be practicing essential literacy skills at the same time!



How do I teach a Word Ladder lesson?

Word Ladders are incredibly easy and quick to implement. Here are four simple steps:

- **1.** Choose a Word Ladder to try. (The first five pages feature easier ladders; you may want to start with those.)
- **2.** Make a copy of the Word Ladder for each student.
- **3.** Choose whether you want to do your Word Ladders with the class as a whole, or by having students work alone, in pairs, or in groups. (You might do the

first few together, until students are ready to work more independently.)

4. At each new word, students will see two clues: the kinds of changes they need to make to the previous word ("rearrange letters" or "add two letters"), and a definition of or clue to the meaning of the word. Sometimes this clue will be a sentence in which the word is used in context but is left out for children to fill in. Move from word to word this way, up the whole Word Ladder.

Śź.

Look for the **Bonus Boxes** with stars. These are particularly difficult words you may want to preteach. Or you can do these ladders as a group so that children will not get stuck on this rung.

That's the lesson in a nutshell! It should take no longer than ten minutes to do. Once you're done, you may wish to extend the lesson by having students sort the words into various categories. This can help them deepen their understanding of word relationships. For instance, they could sort them into:

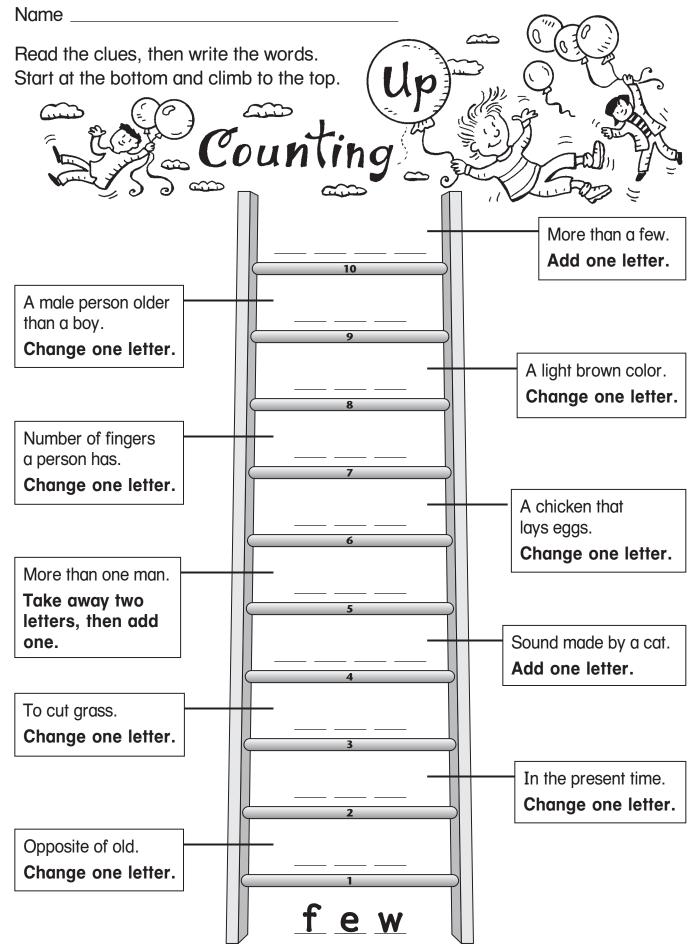
- Grammatical categories. (Which words are nouns? Verbs?)
- Word structure. (Which words have a long vowel and which don't? Which contain a consonant blend?)
- Word meaning. (Which words express what a person can do or feel? Which do not?)

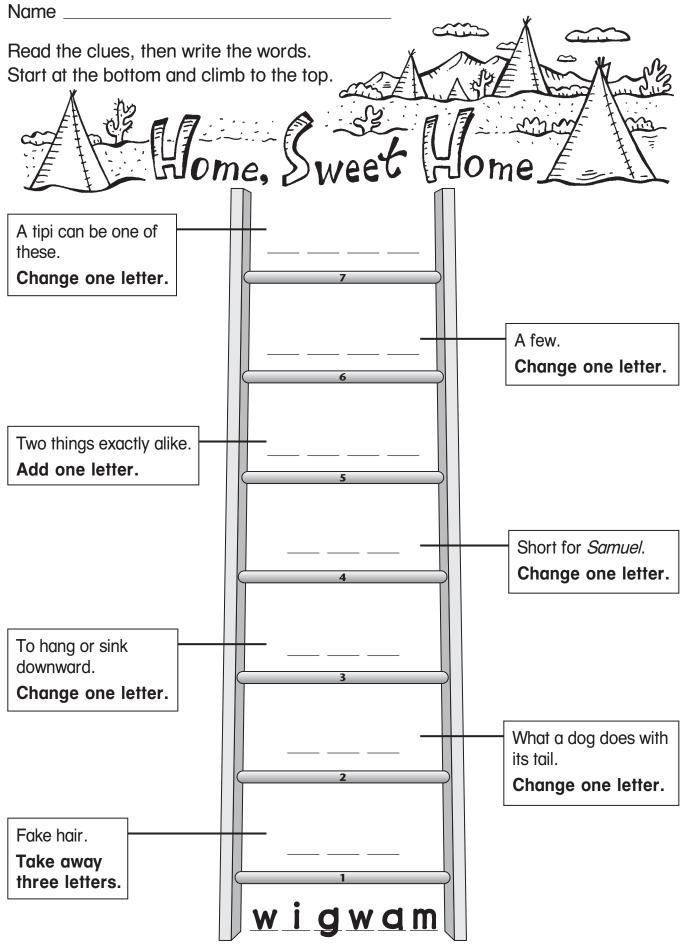
Tips for Working With Word Ladders

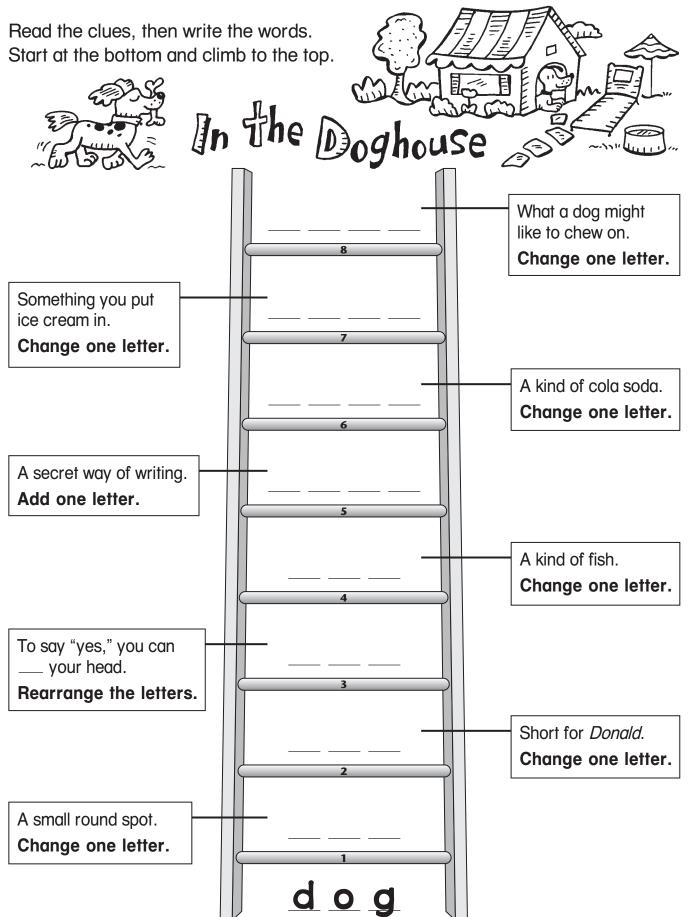
To give students extra help, mix up and write on the board all the "answers" for the ladder (that is, the words for each rung) for them to choose from as they go through the puzzle. In addition:

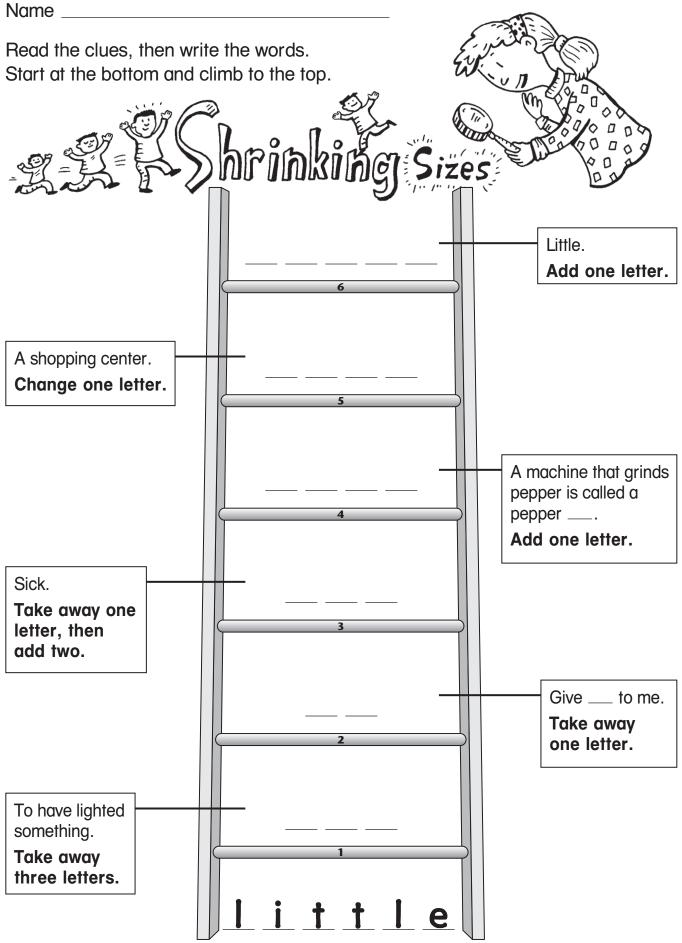
- Add your own clues to give students extra help as they work through each rung of a ladder. A recent event in your classroom or community could even inspire clues for words.
- If students are having difficulty with a particular word, you might simply say the word aloud and see if students can spell it correctly by making appropriate changes in the previous word. Elaborate on the meanings of the words as students move their way up the ladder.
- If students are stuck on a particular rung of the Word Ladder, tell them to skip it and come back to it later.
- Challenge students to come up with alternative definitions for the same words. Many words, like *lock, fall,* and *stock,* have multiple meanings.

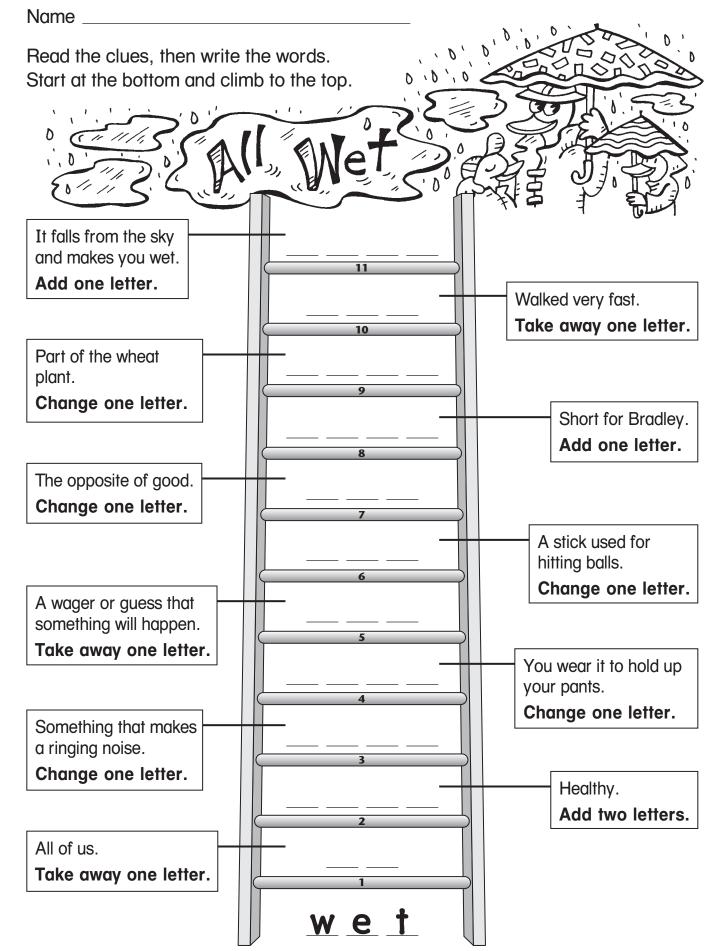
Timothy Rasinski is a professor of literacy education at Kent State University, with a special focus on young and struggling readers. Dr. Rasinski has served on the board of directors at the International Reading Association and as president of the College Reading Association. He is the author of numerous books and professional articles on effective reading instruction.

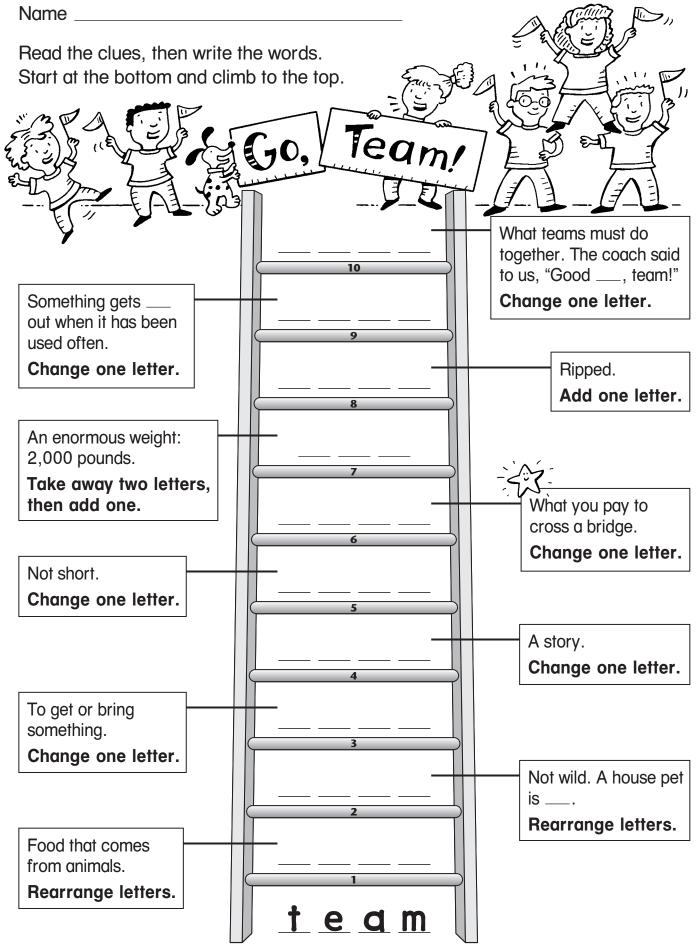


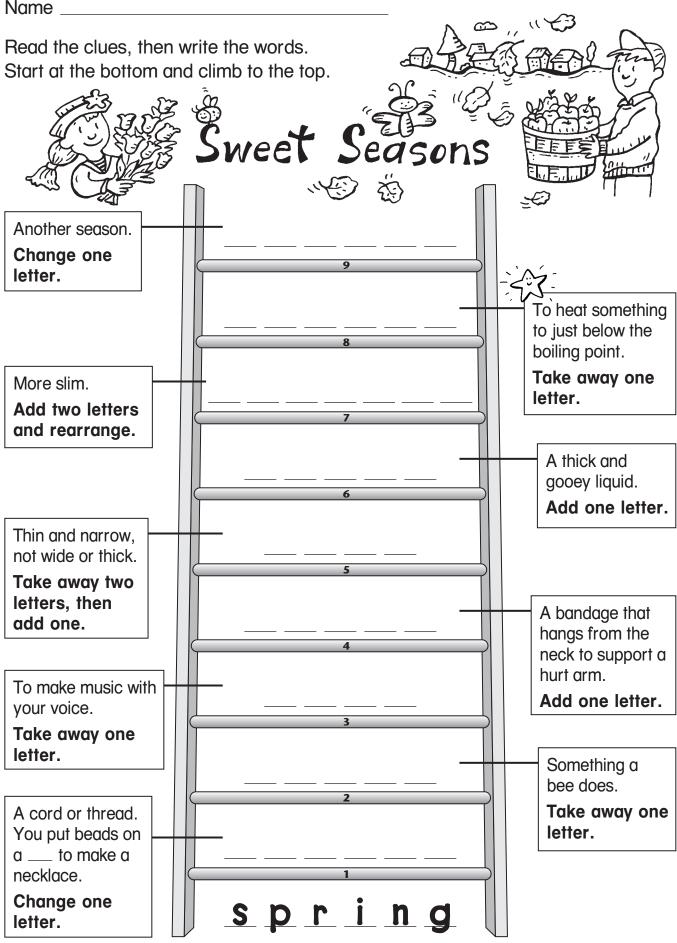


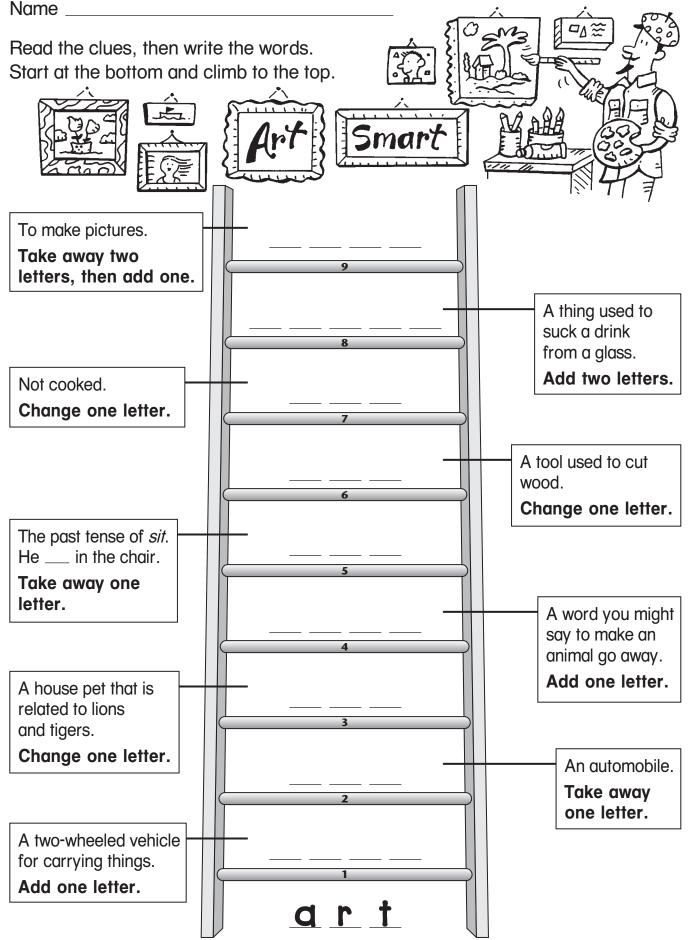




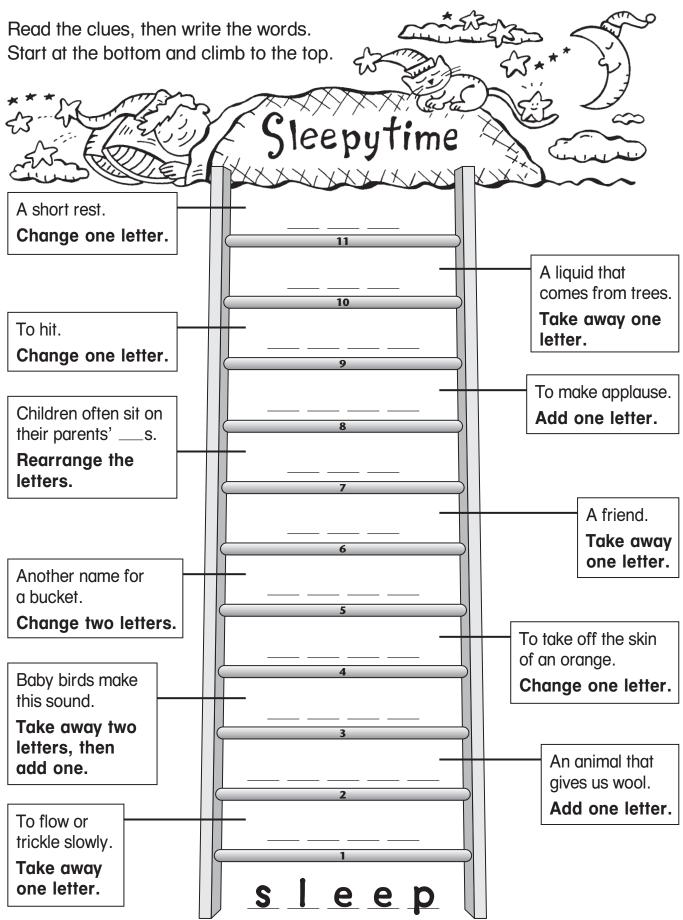




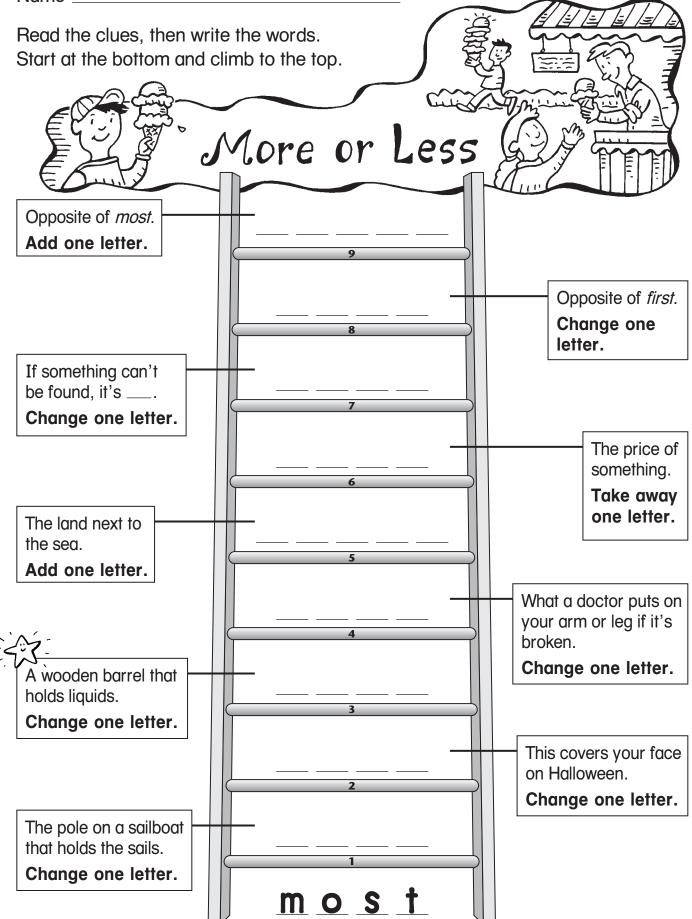


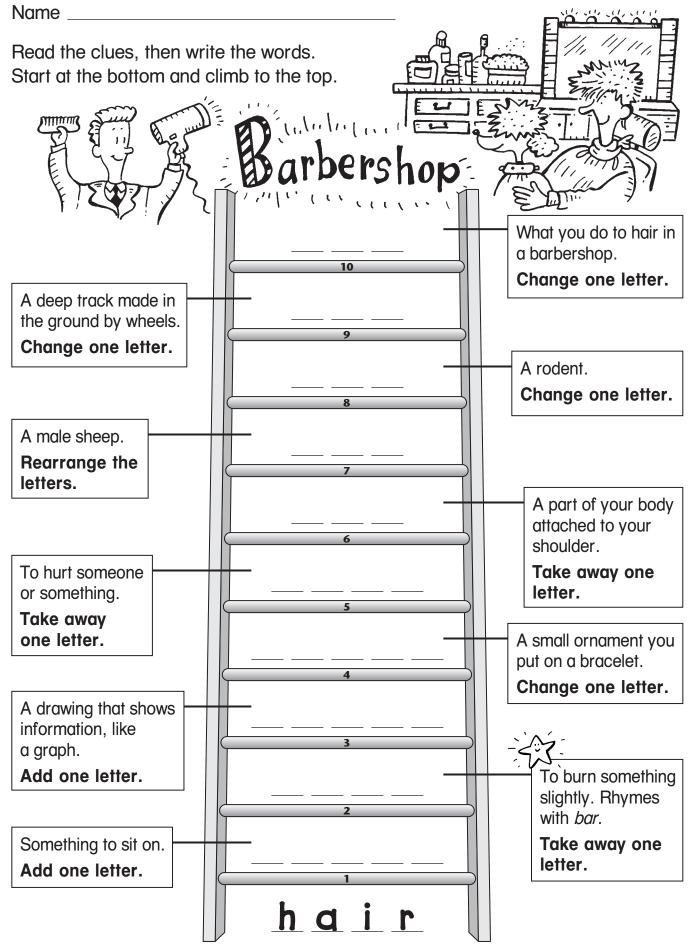


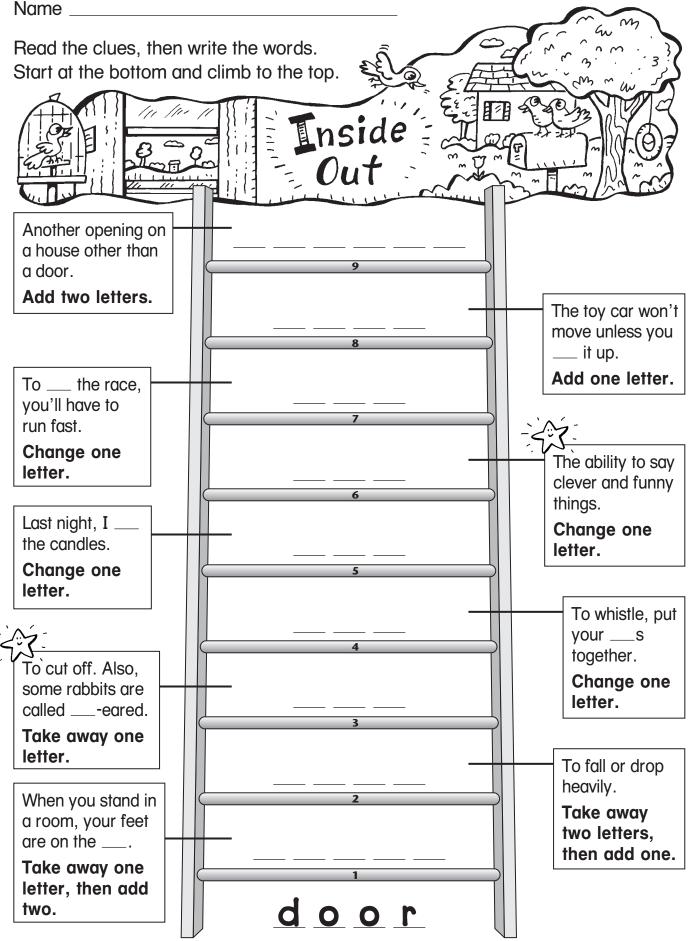


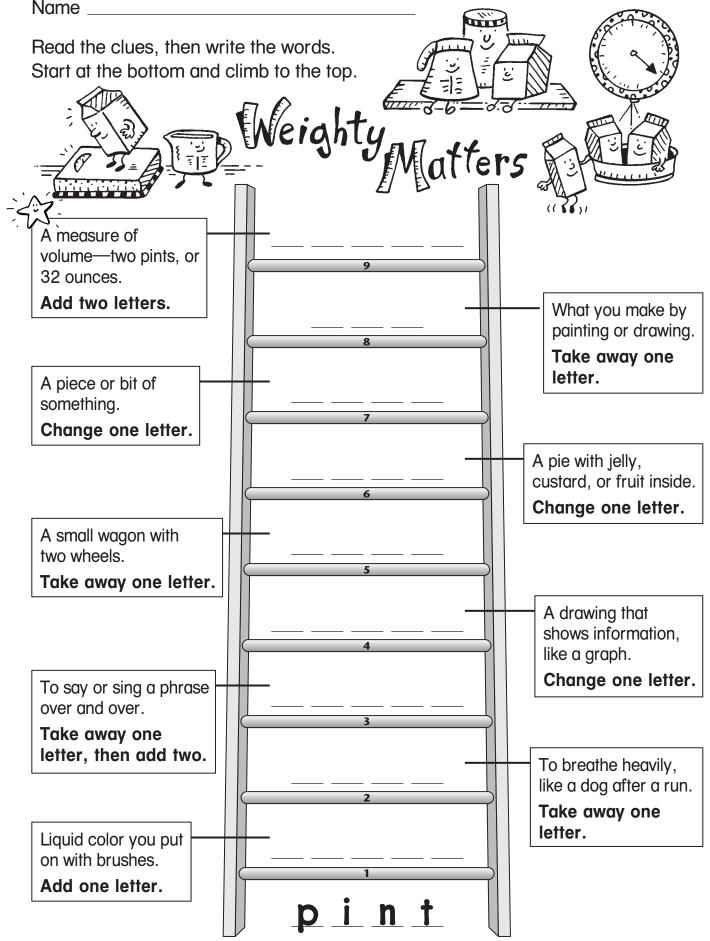


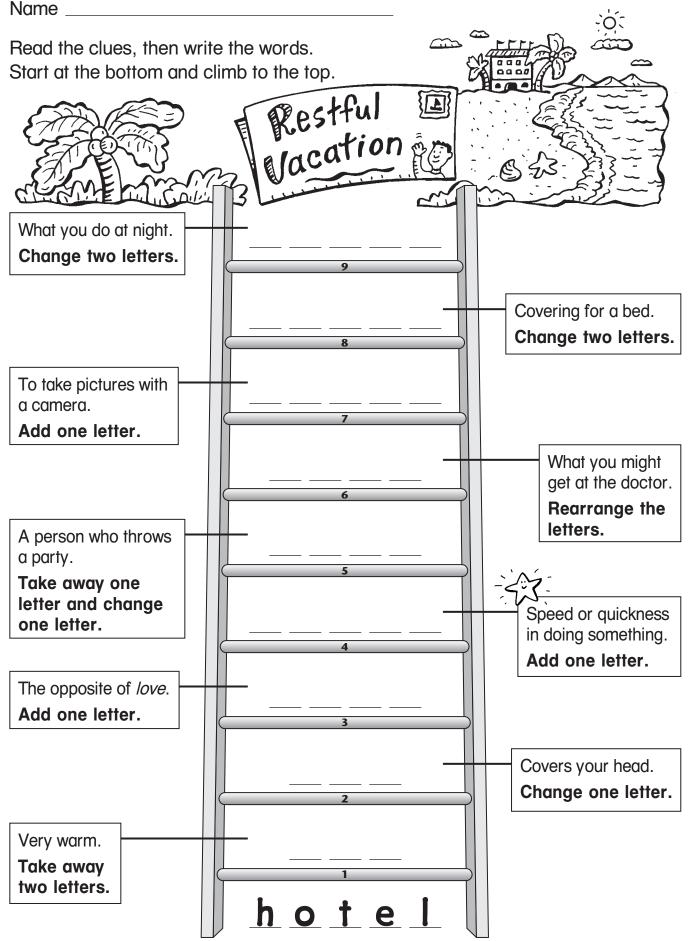


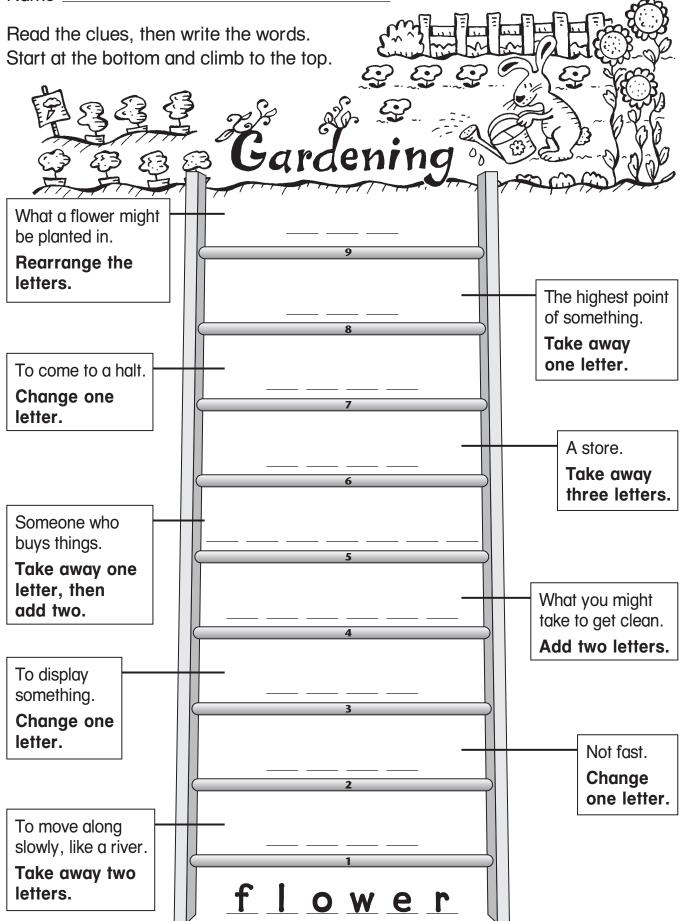


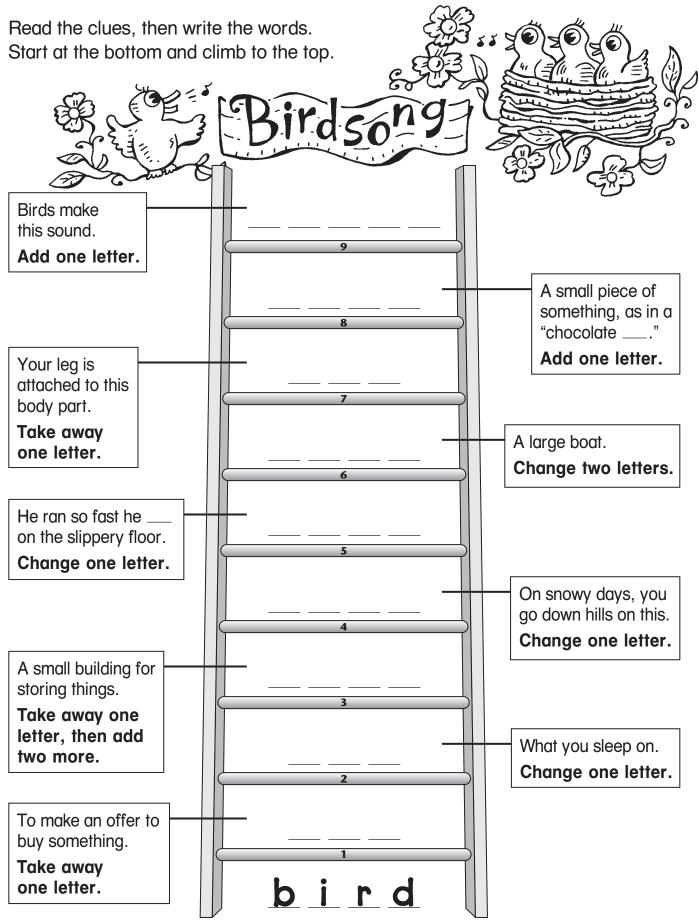


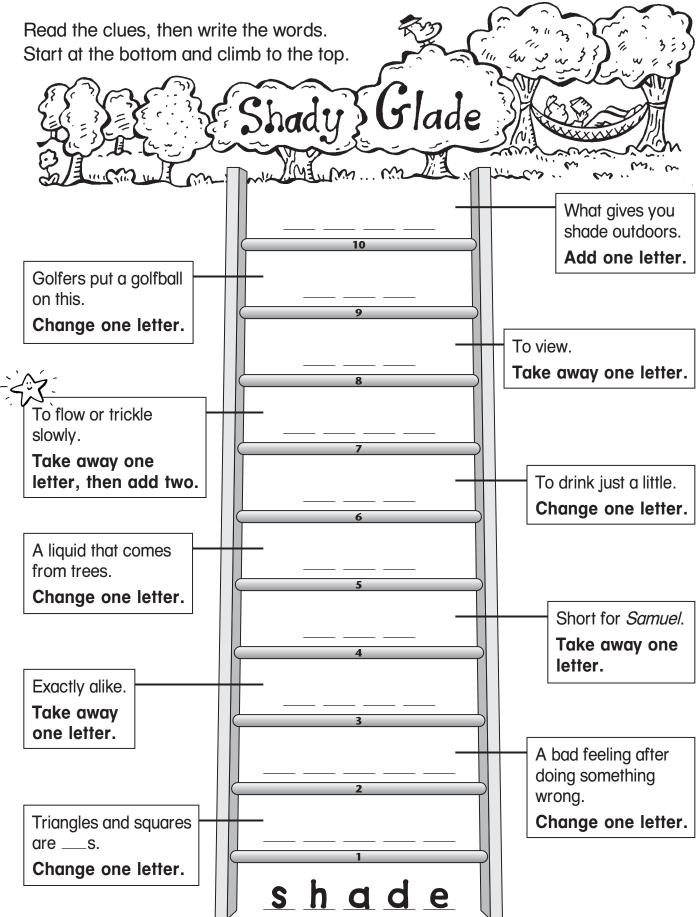


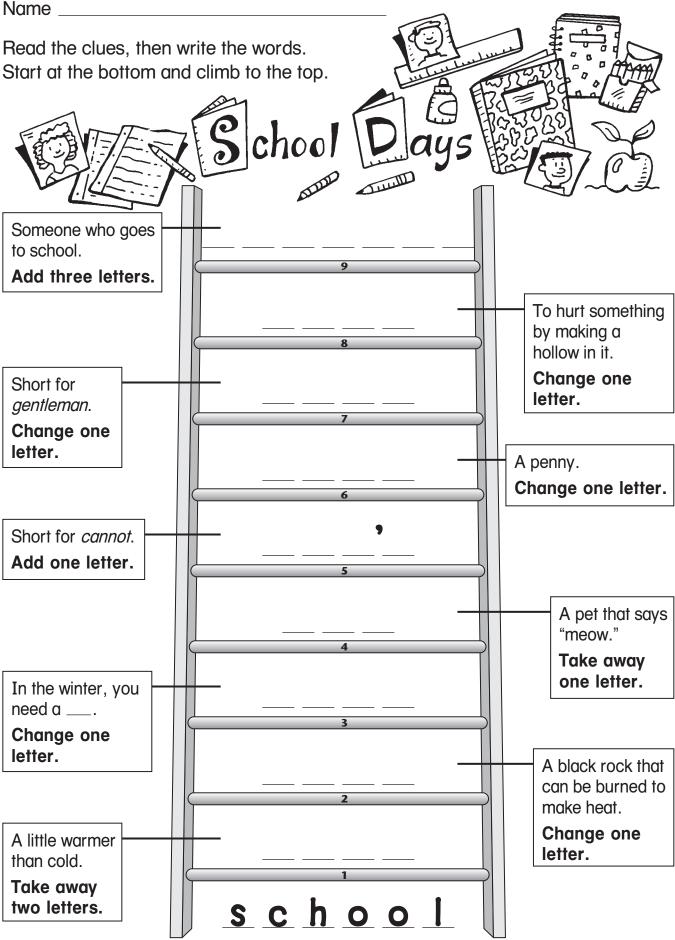




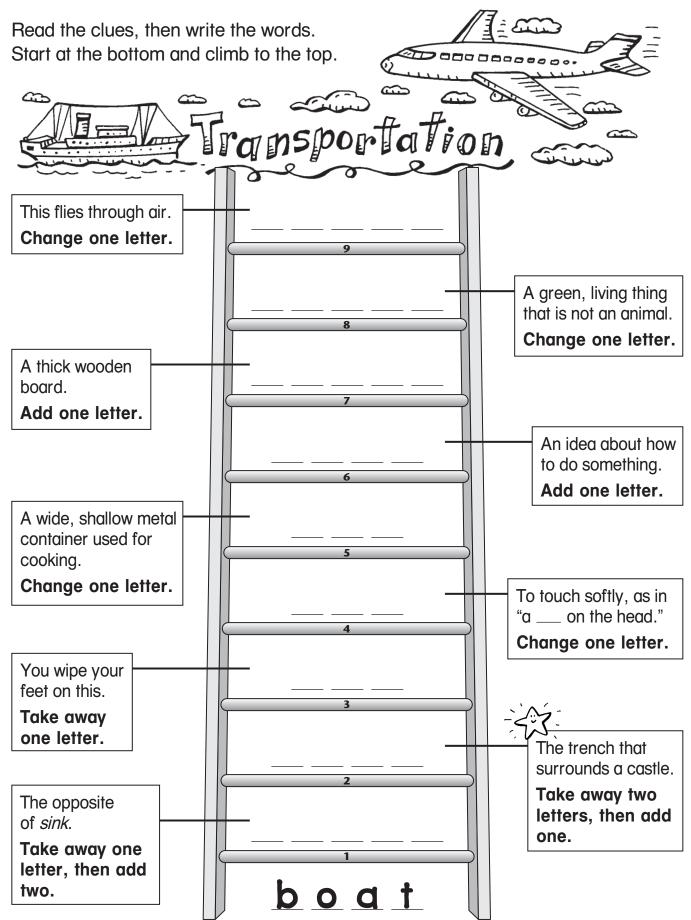


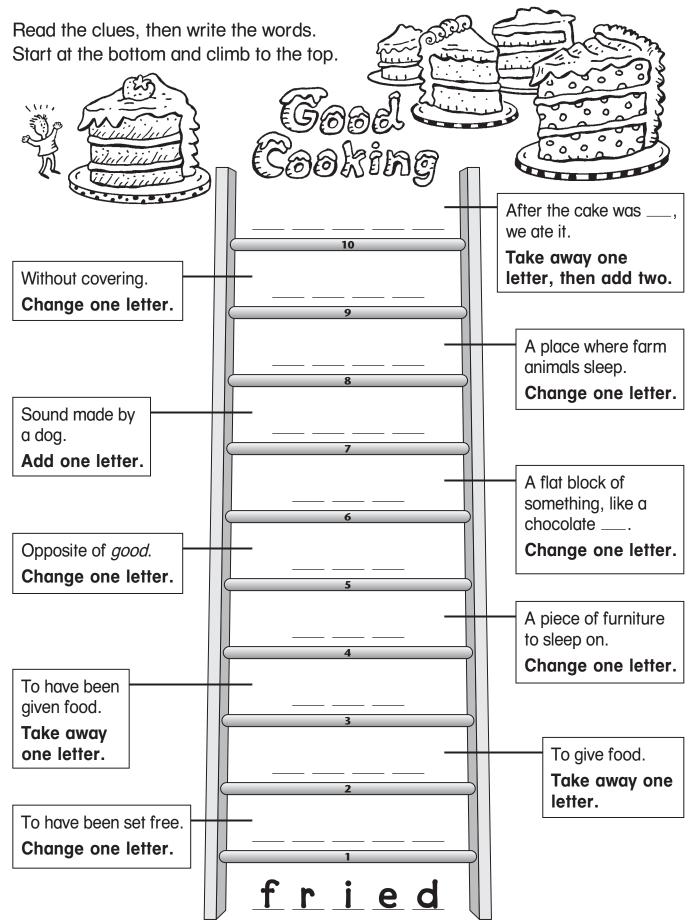


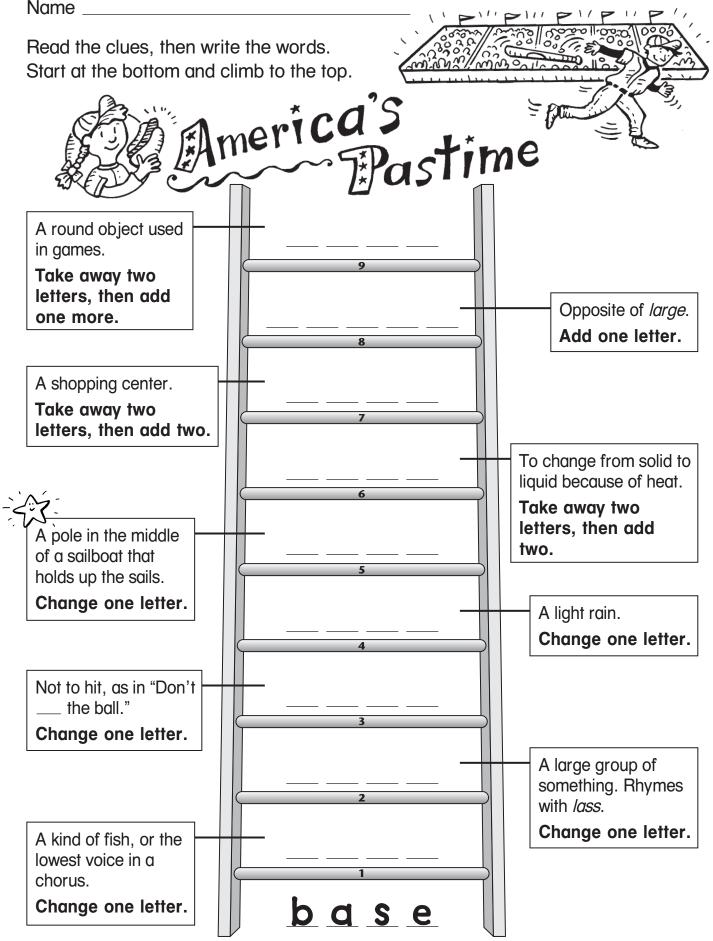


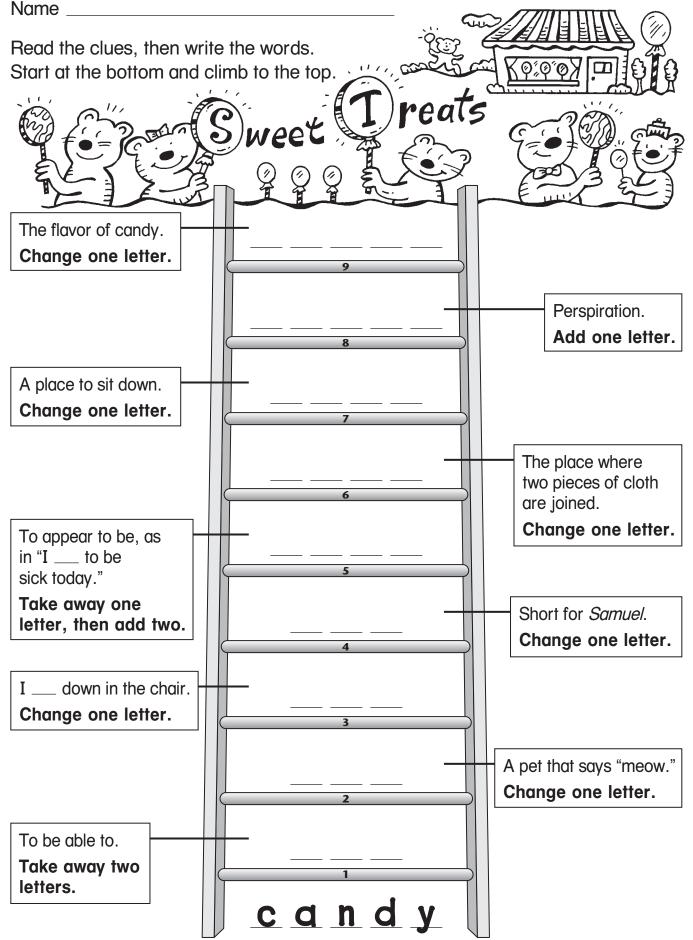


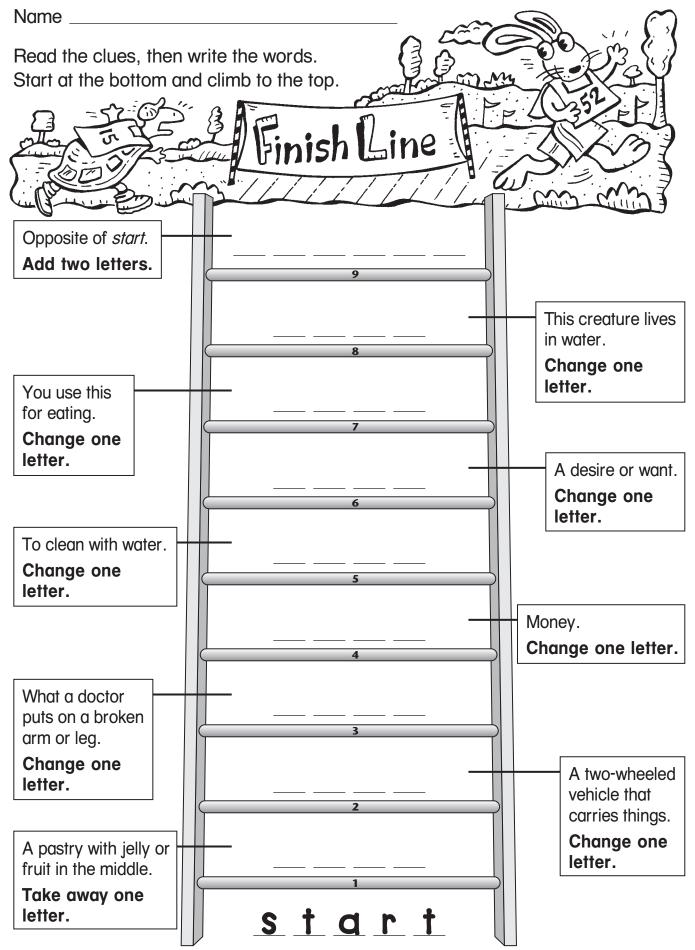
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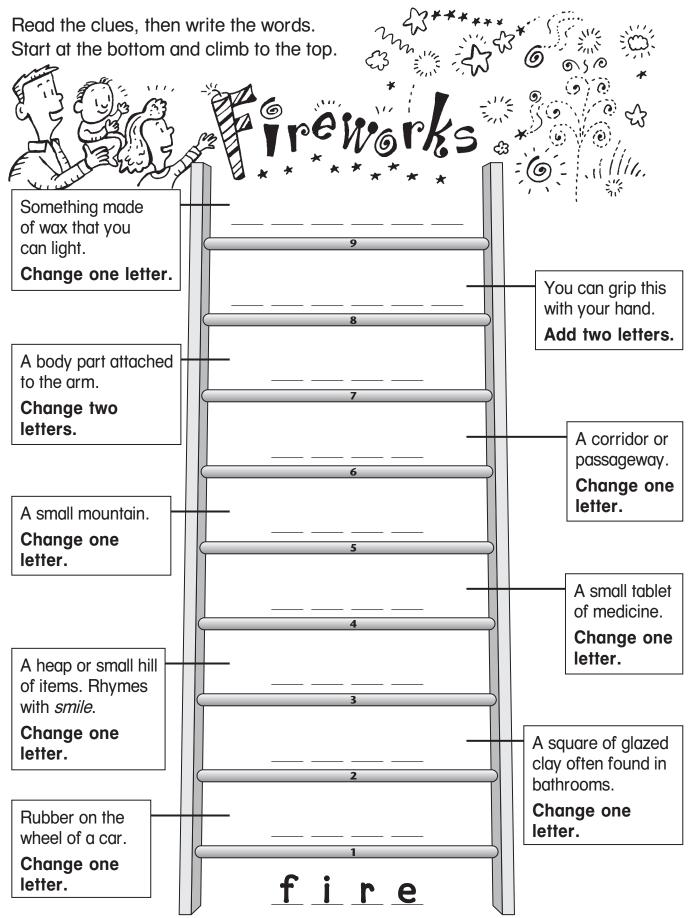


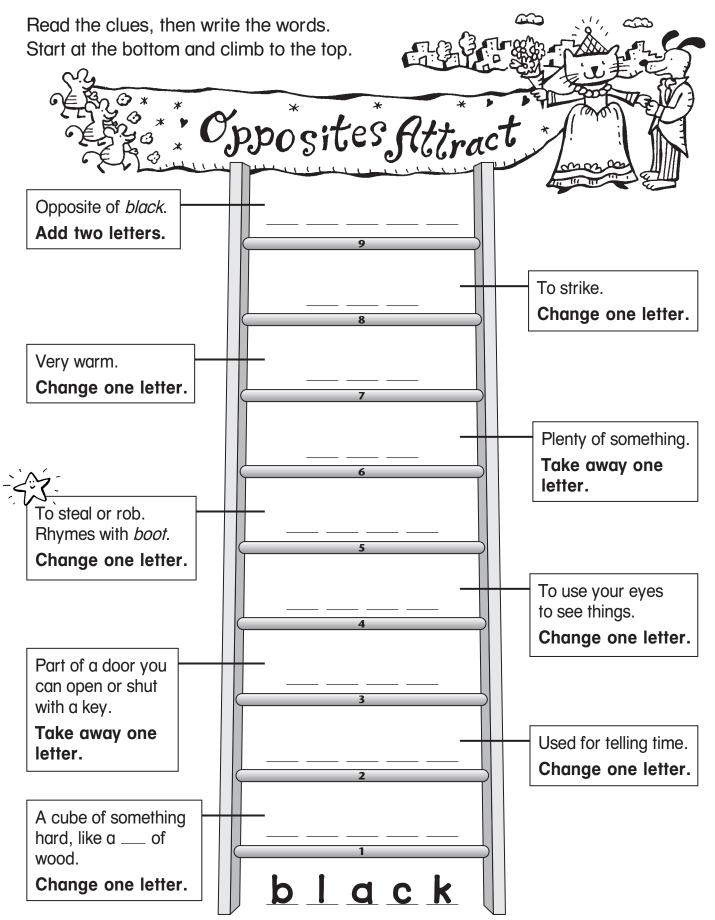


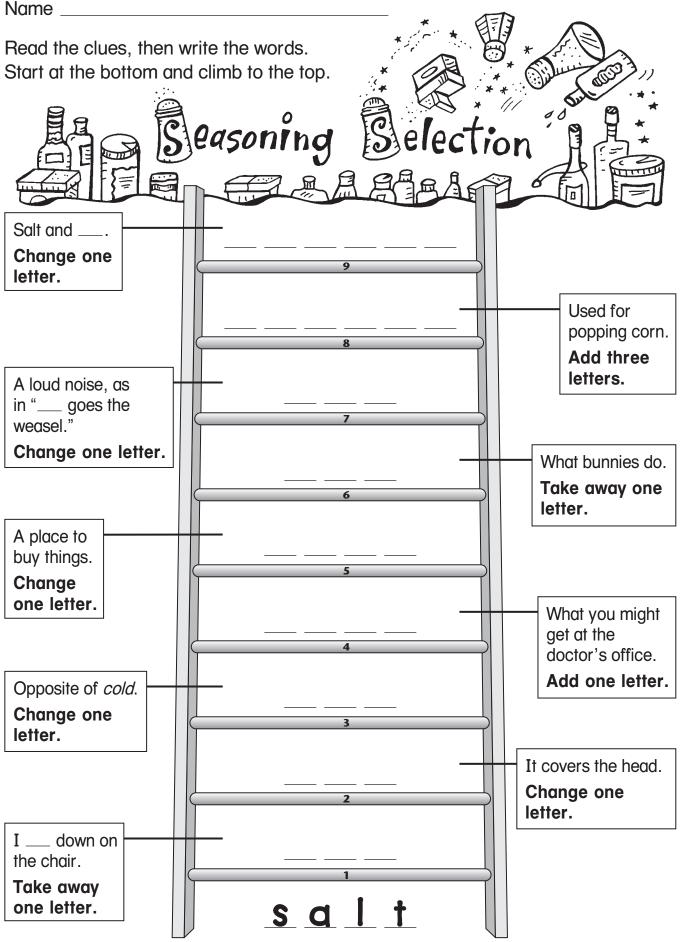


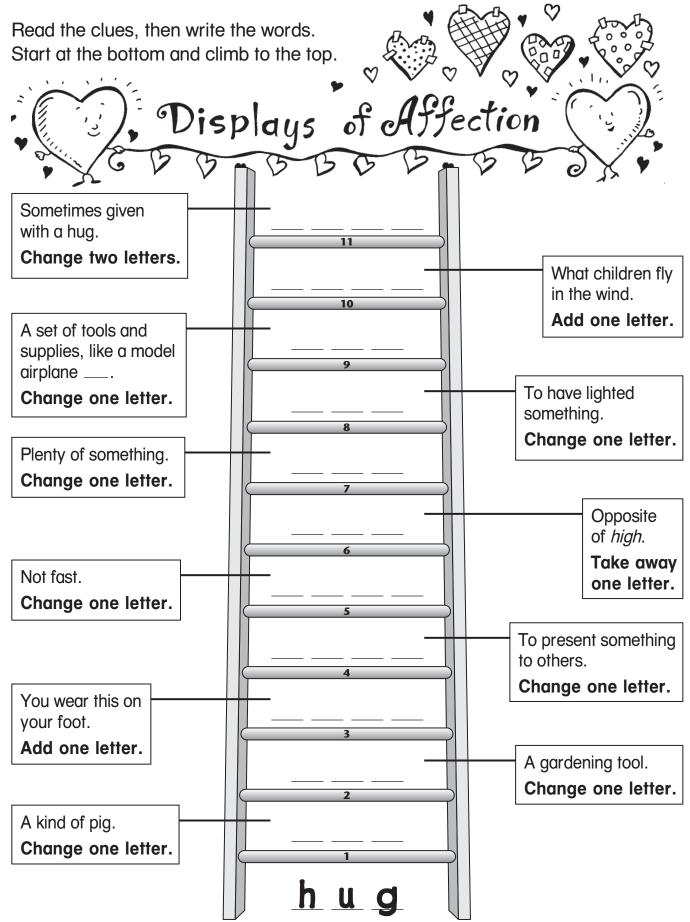


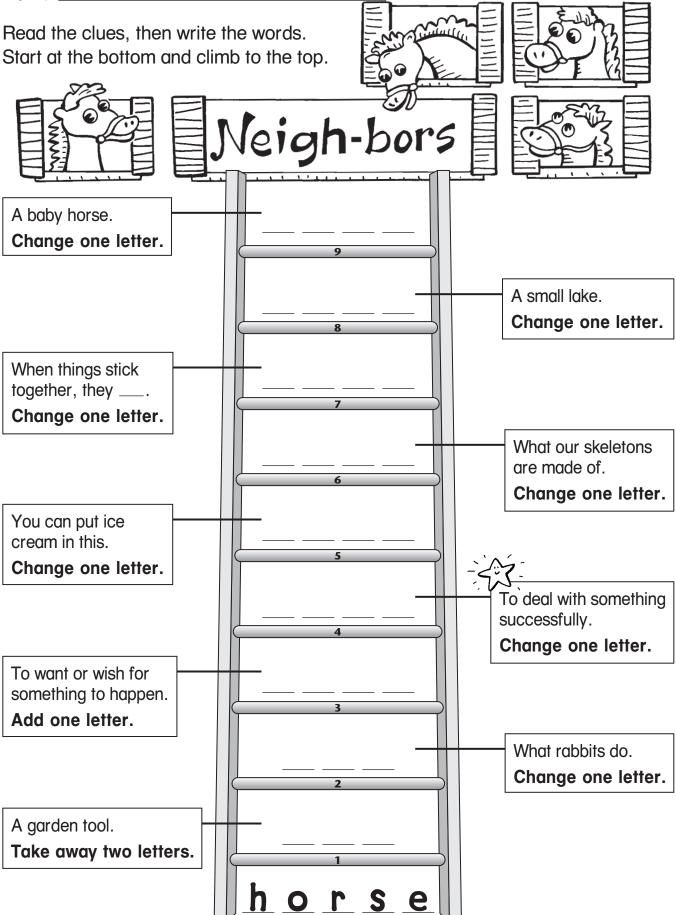
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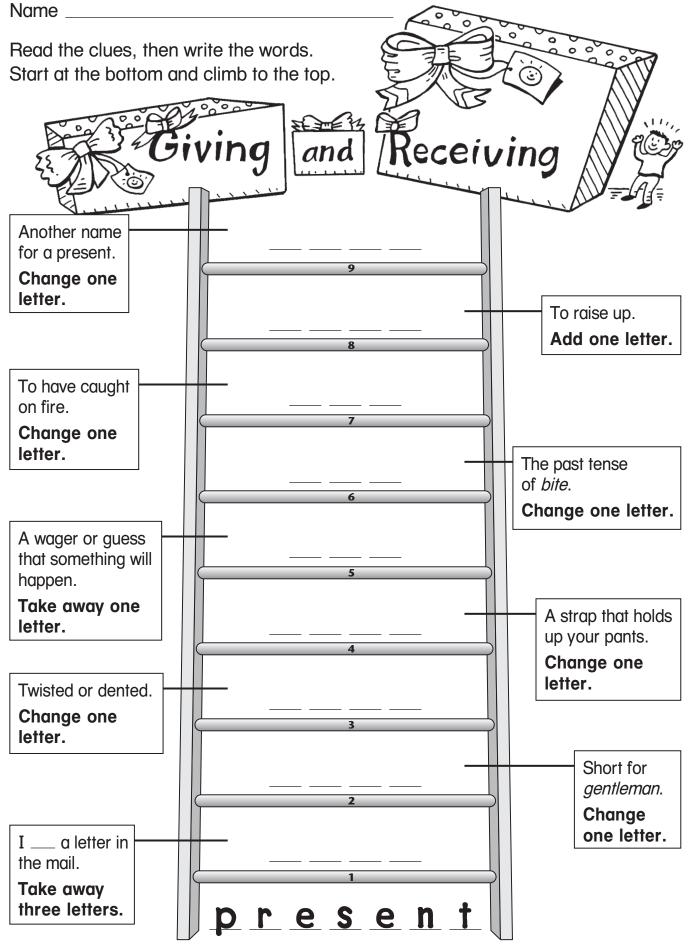


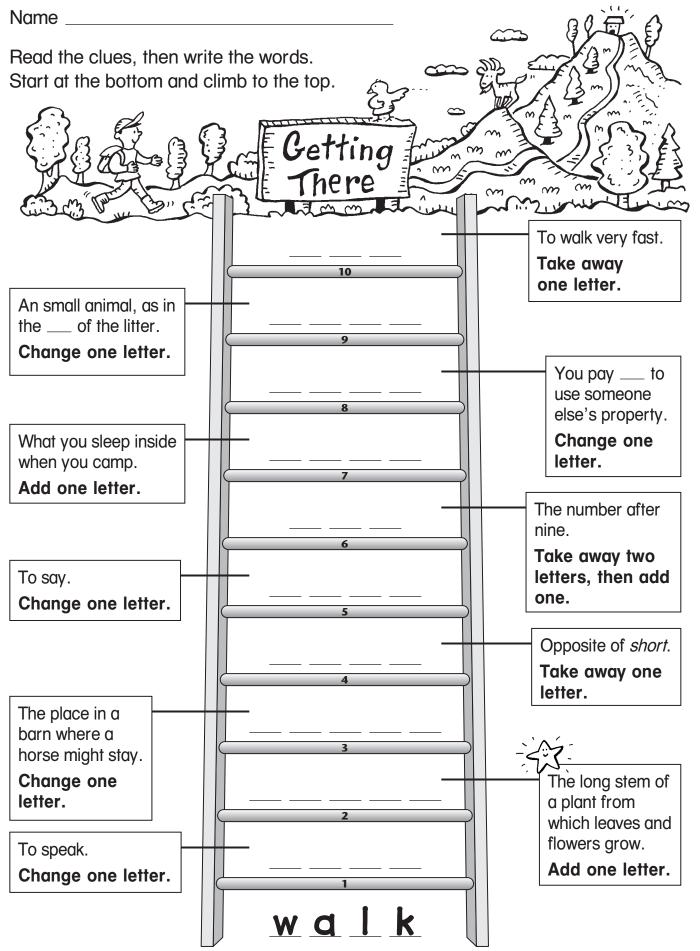


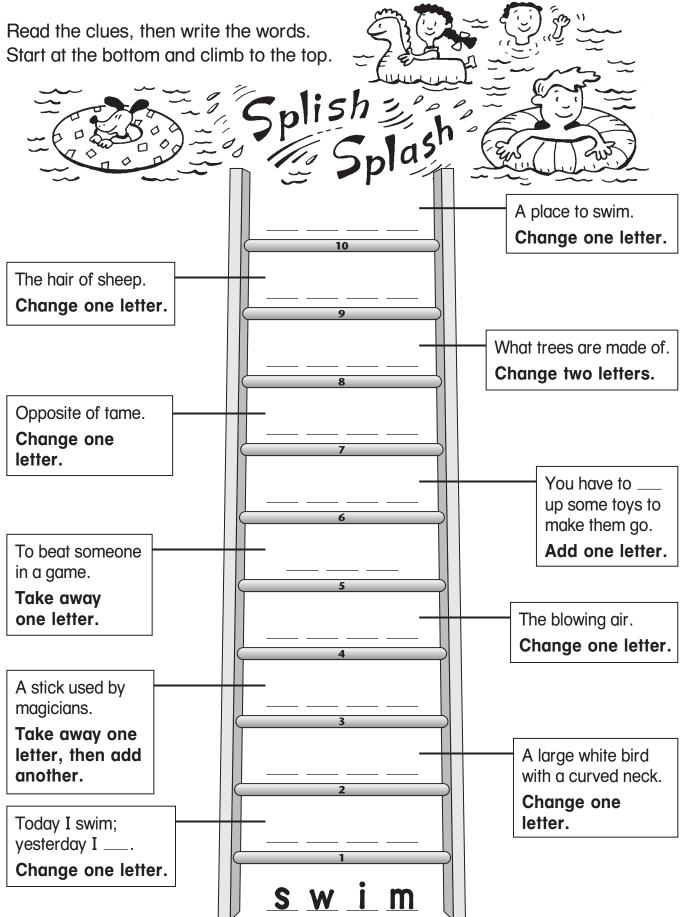


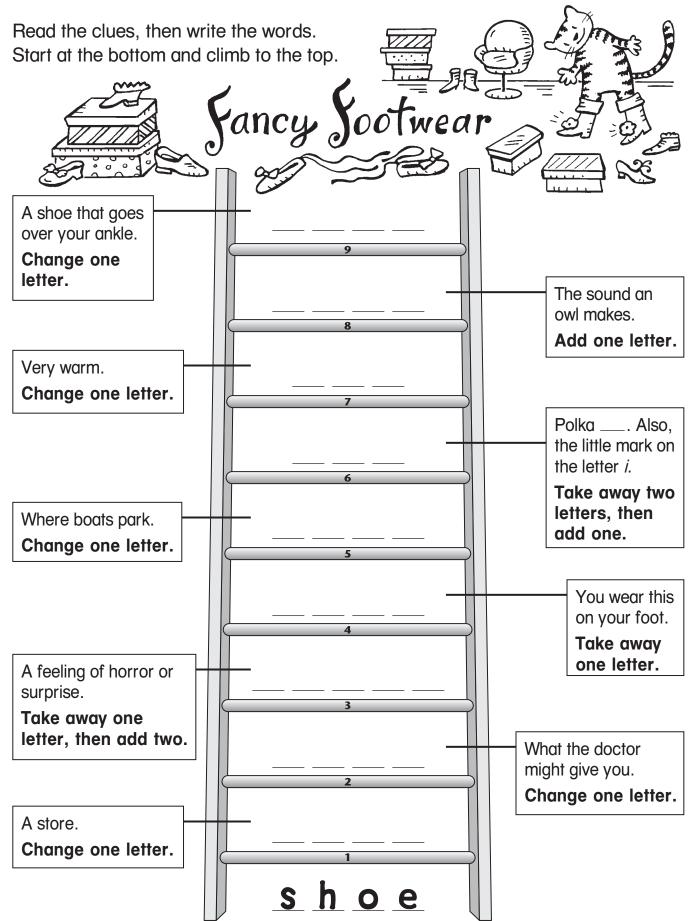


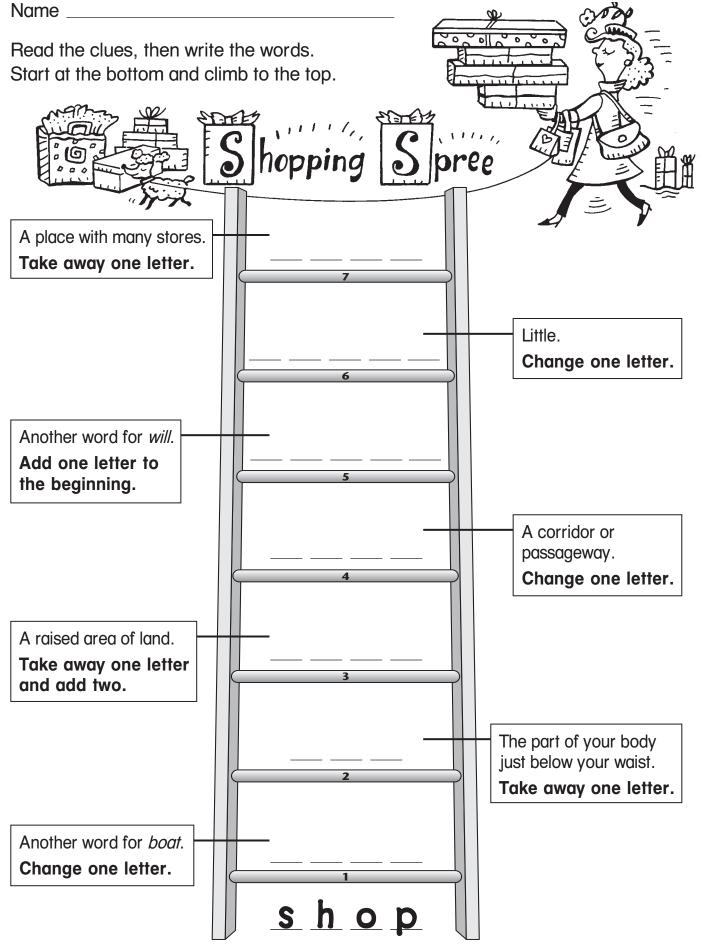


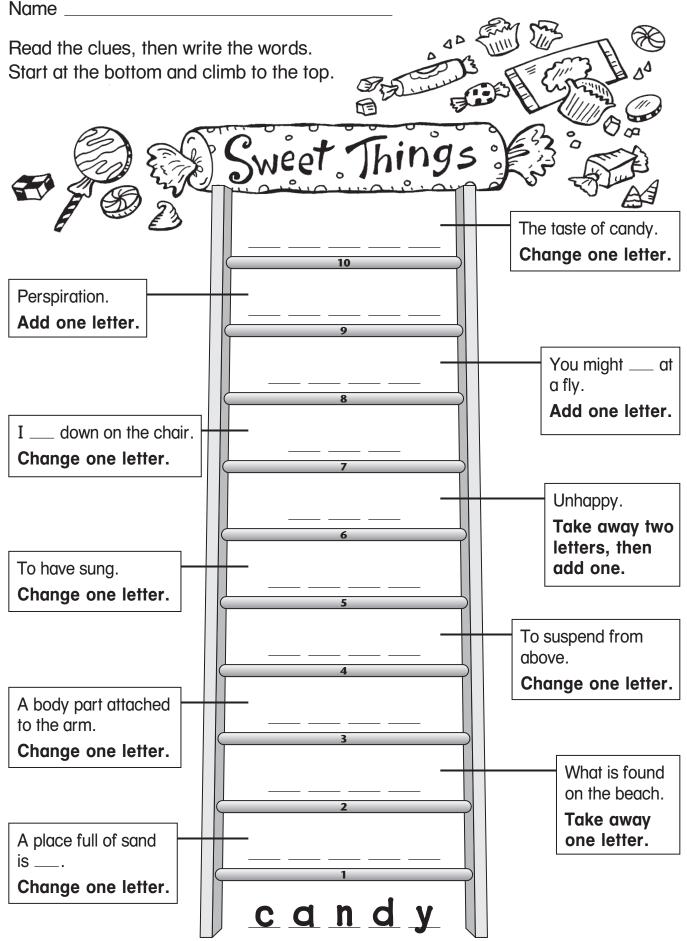


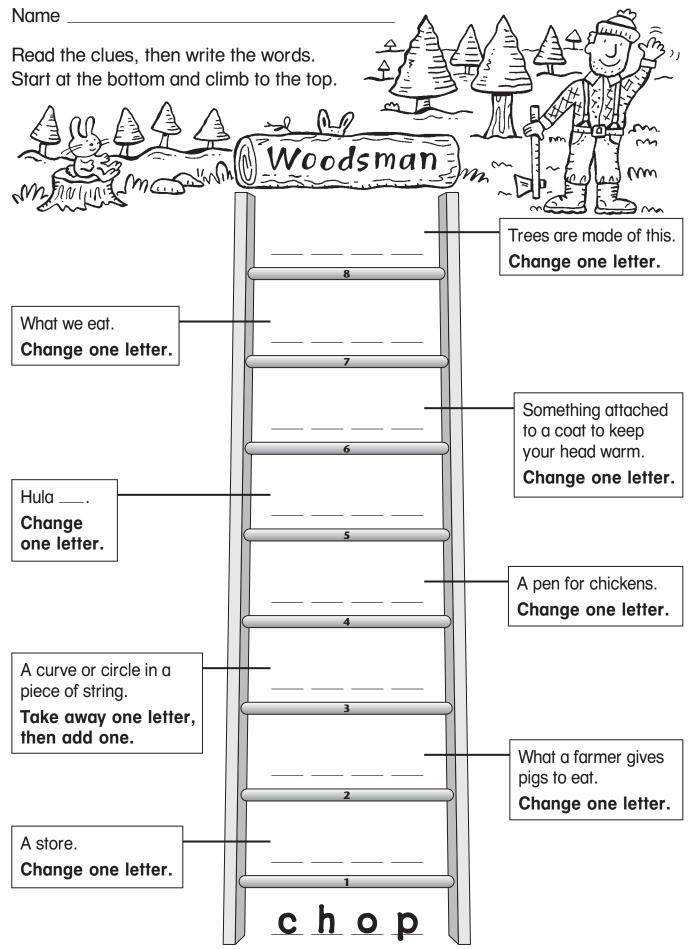




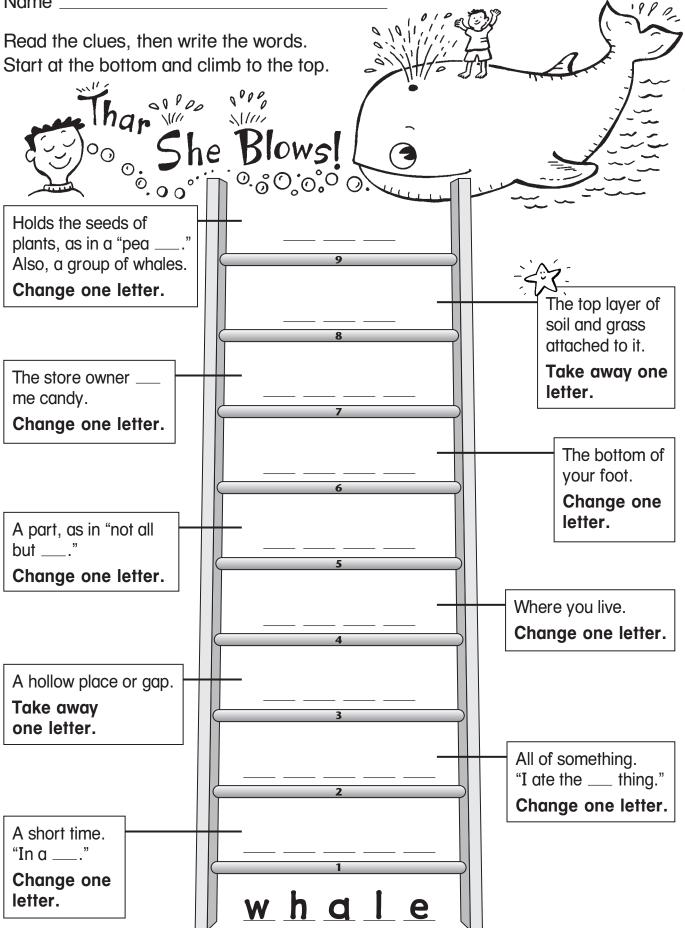


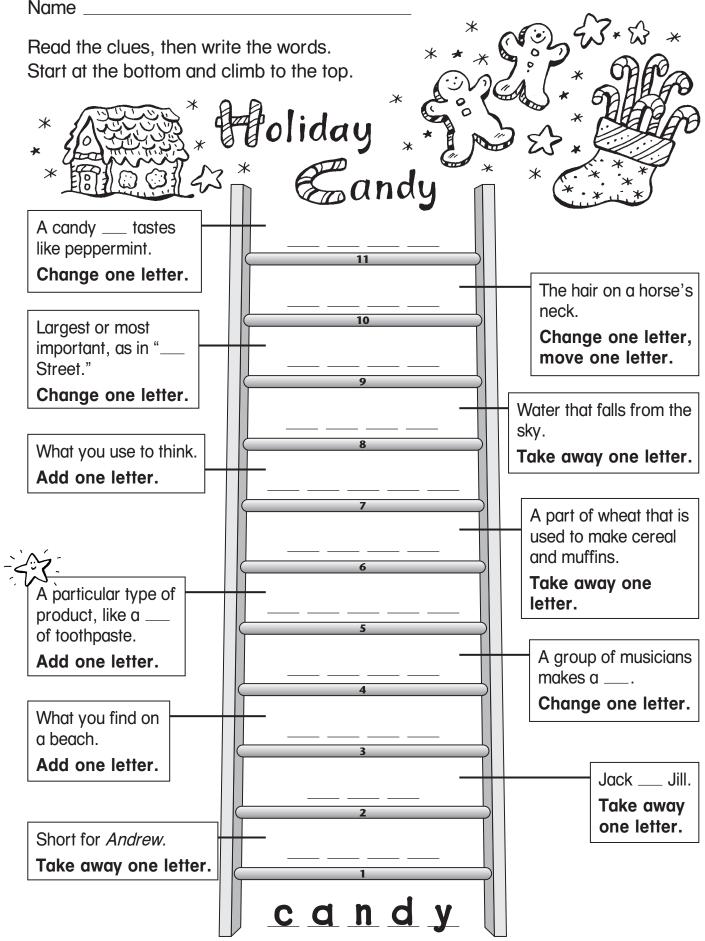


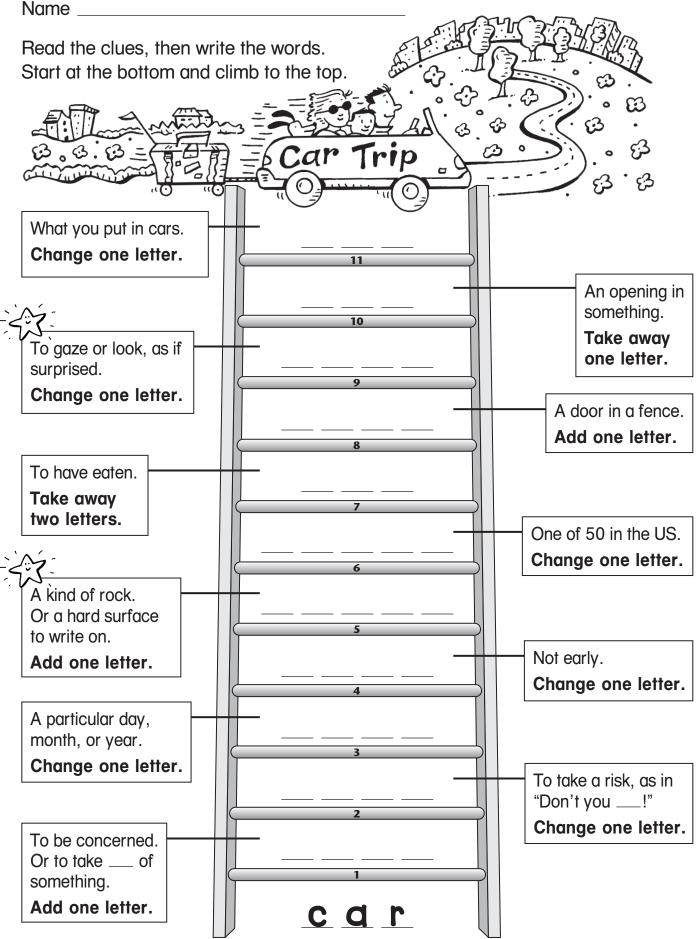


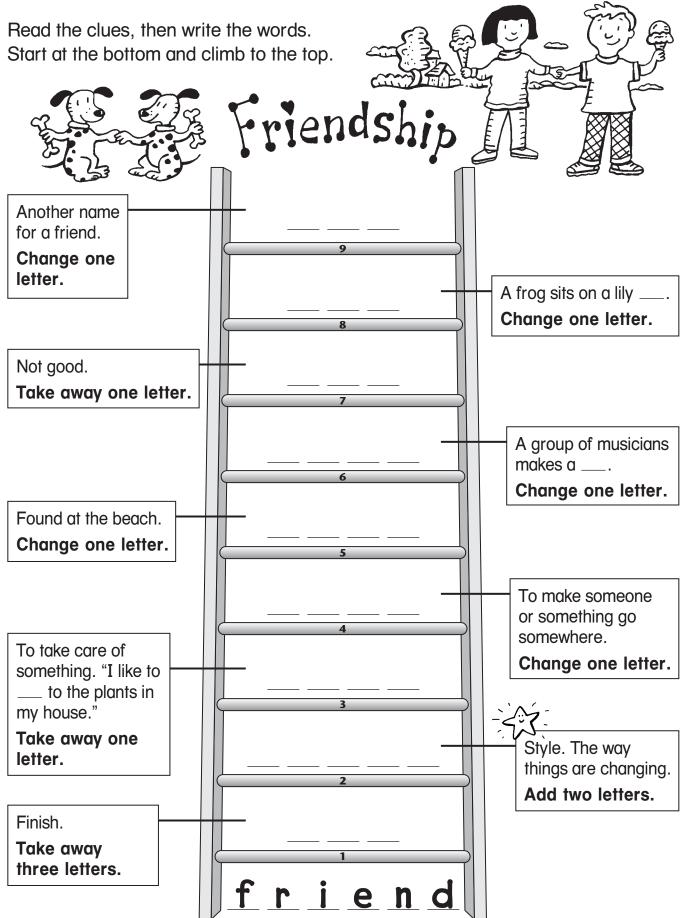


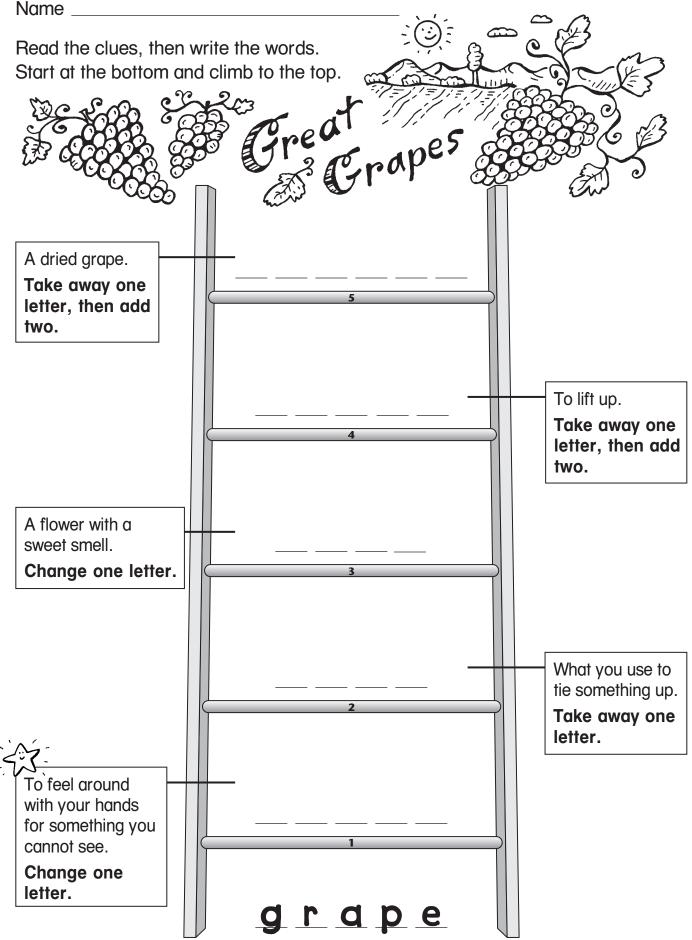


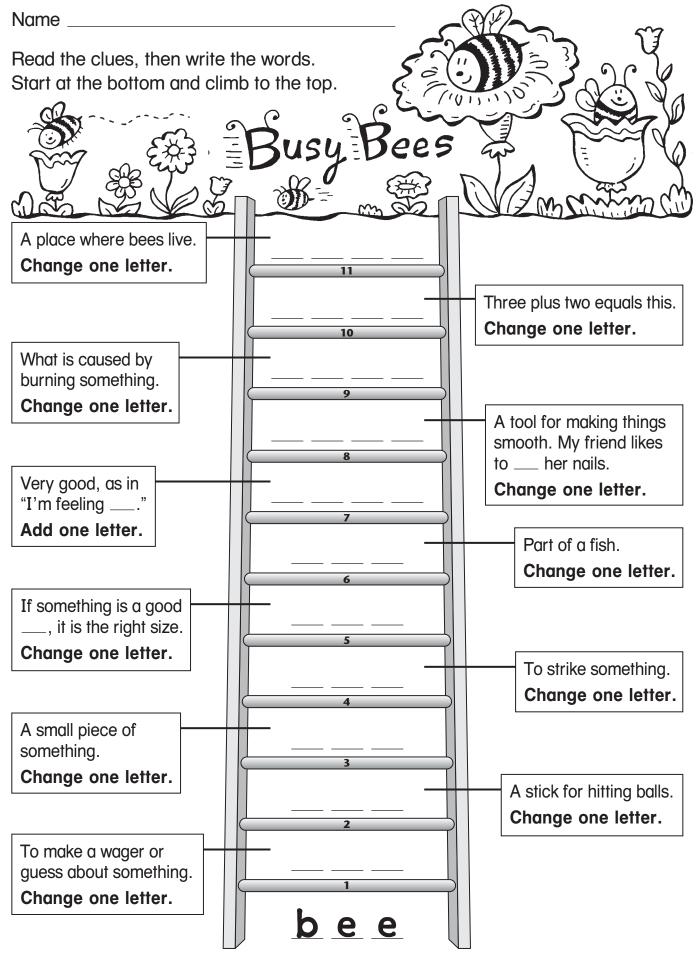


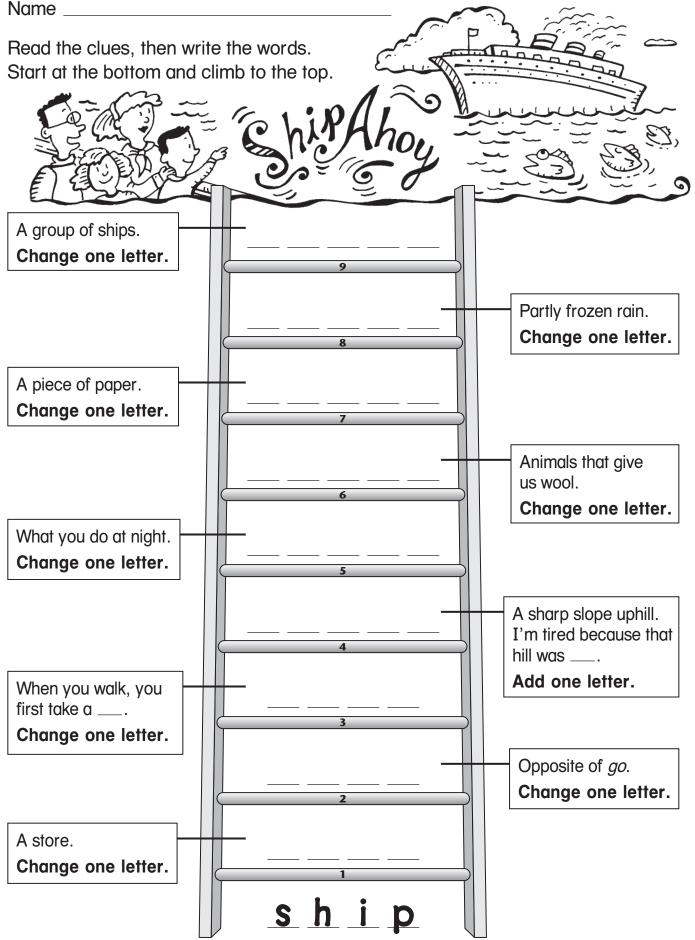


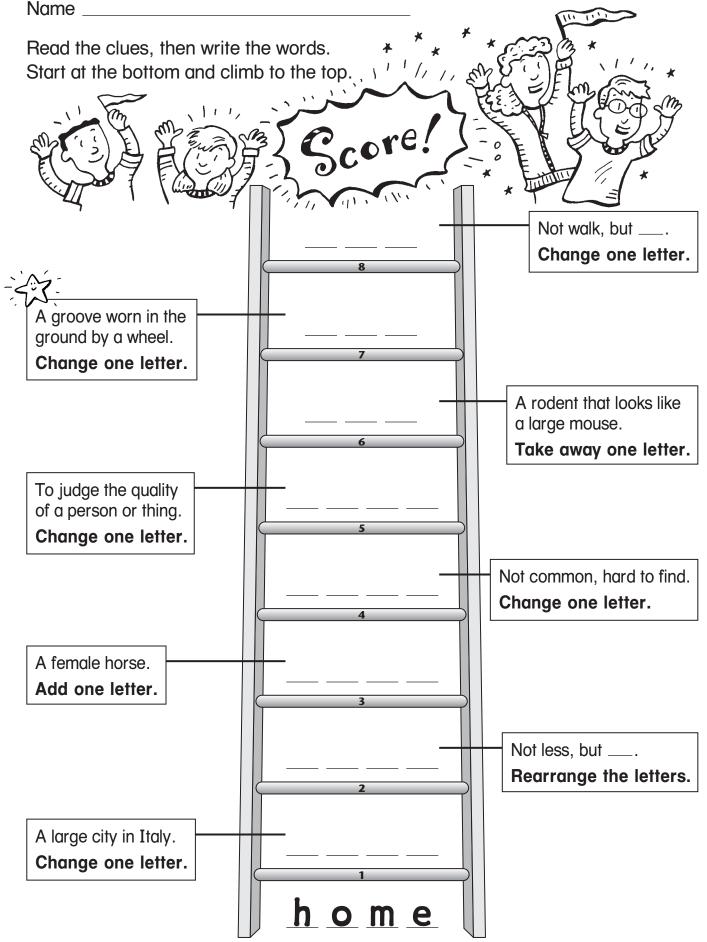


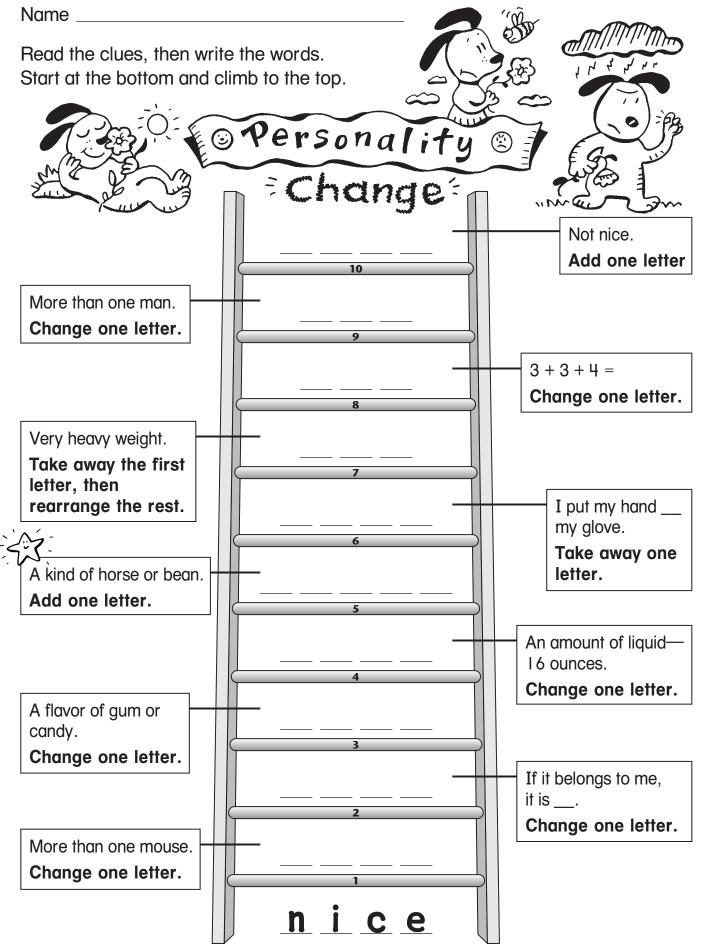


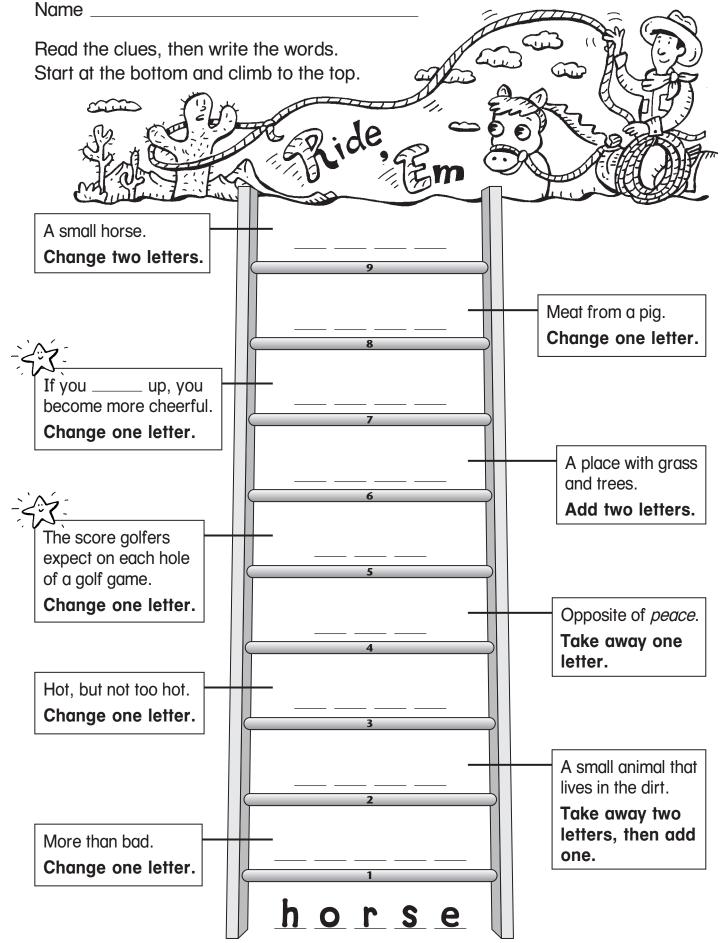


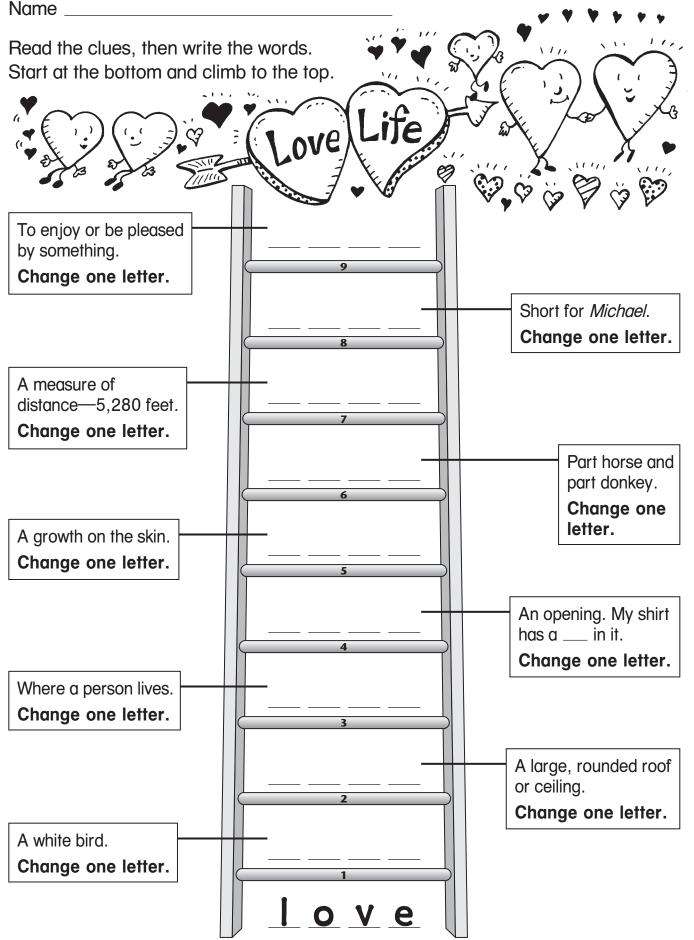


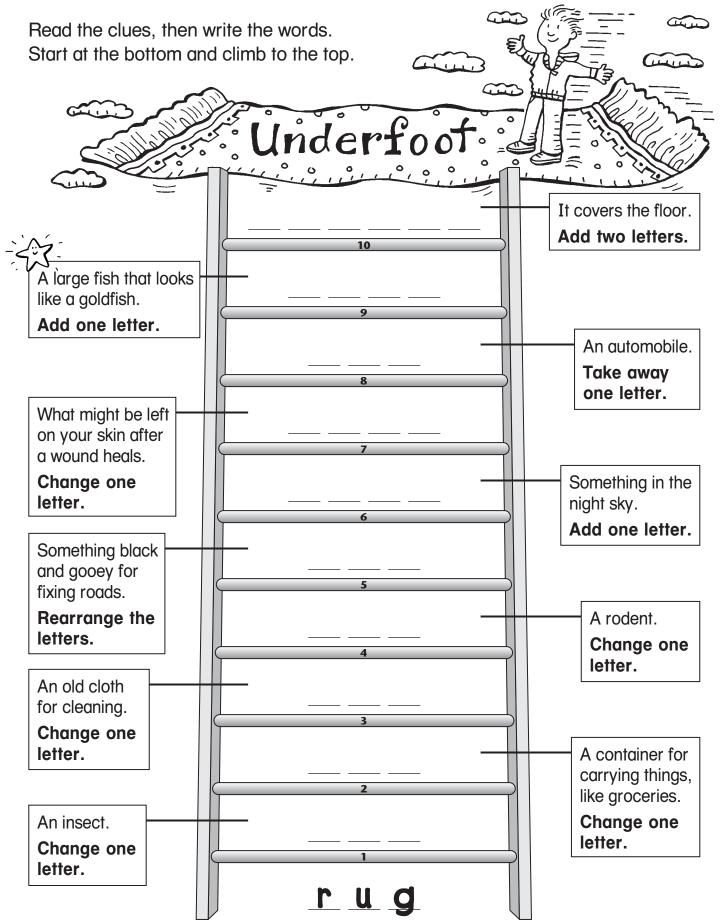


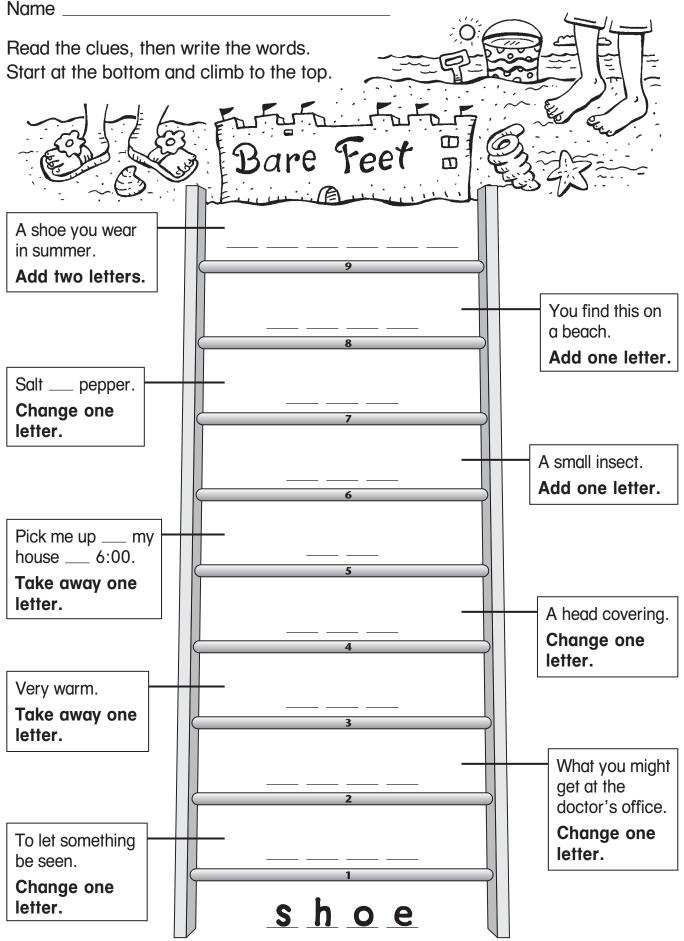


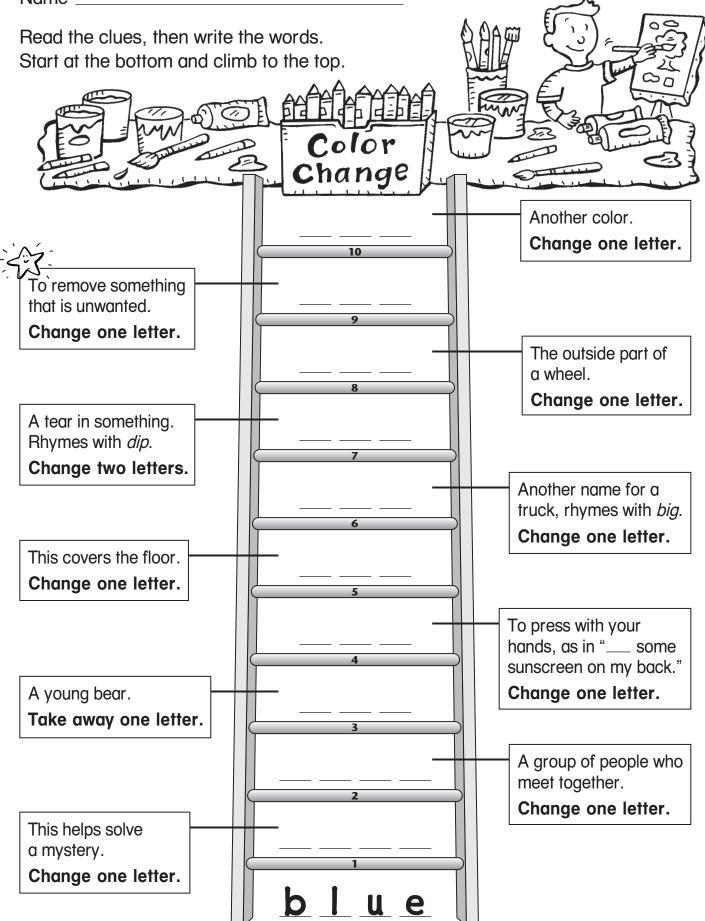


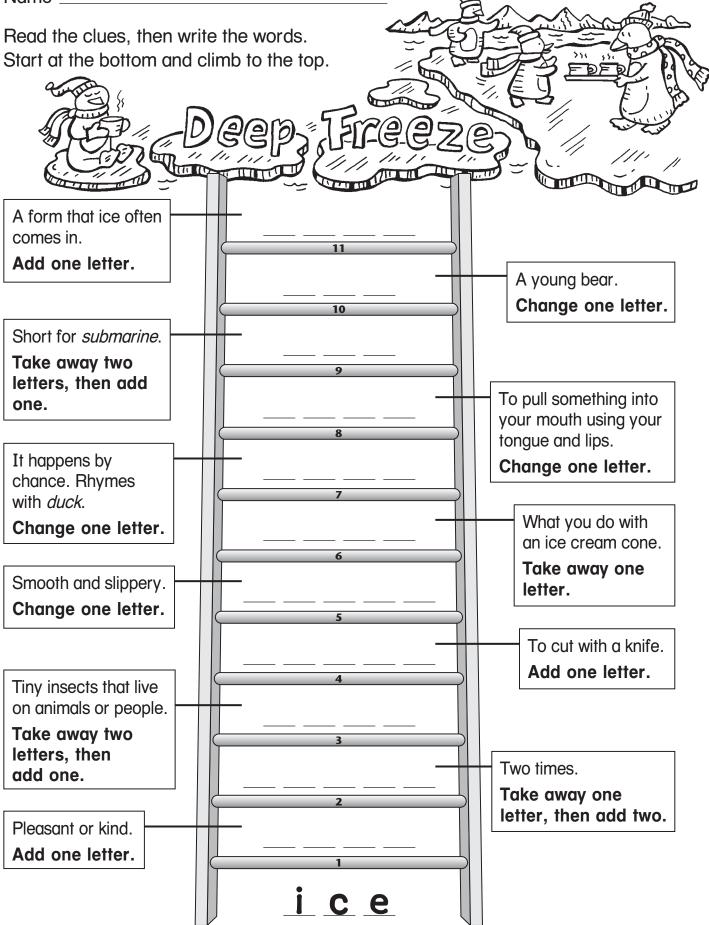


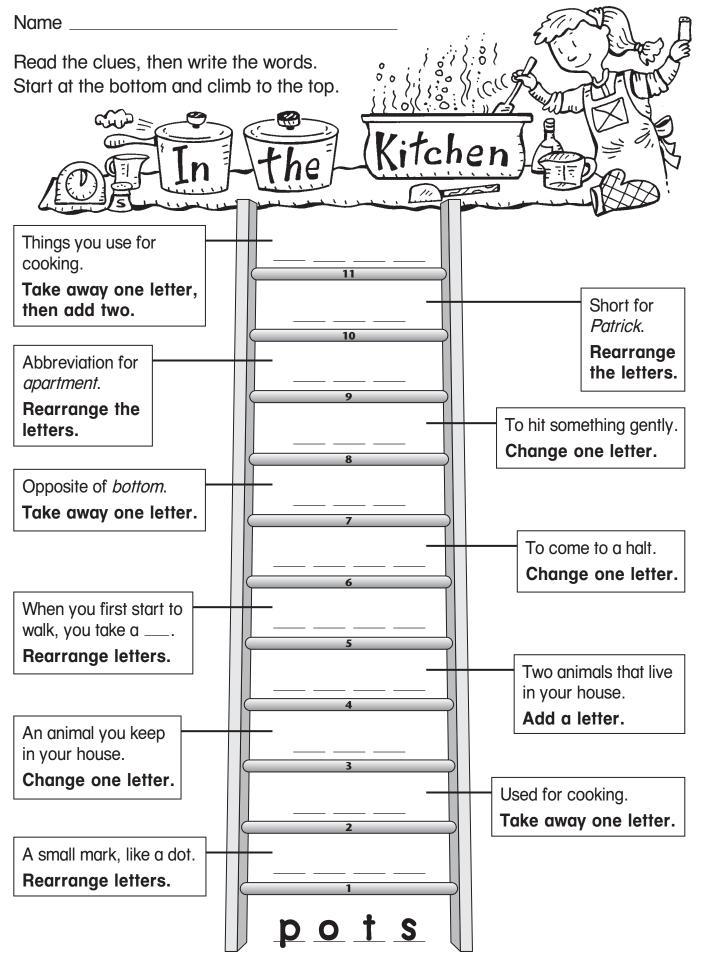


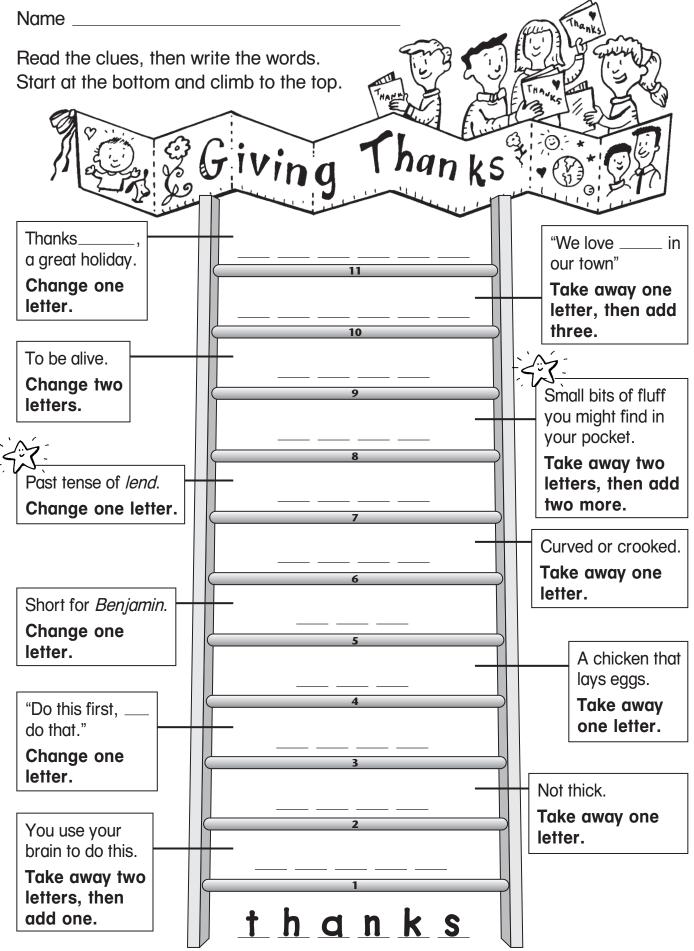


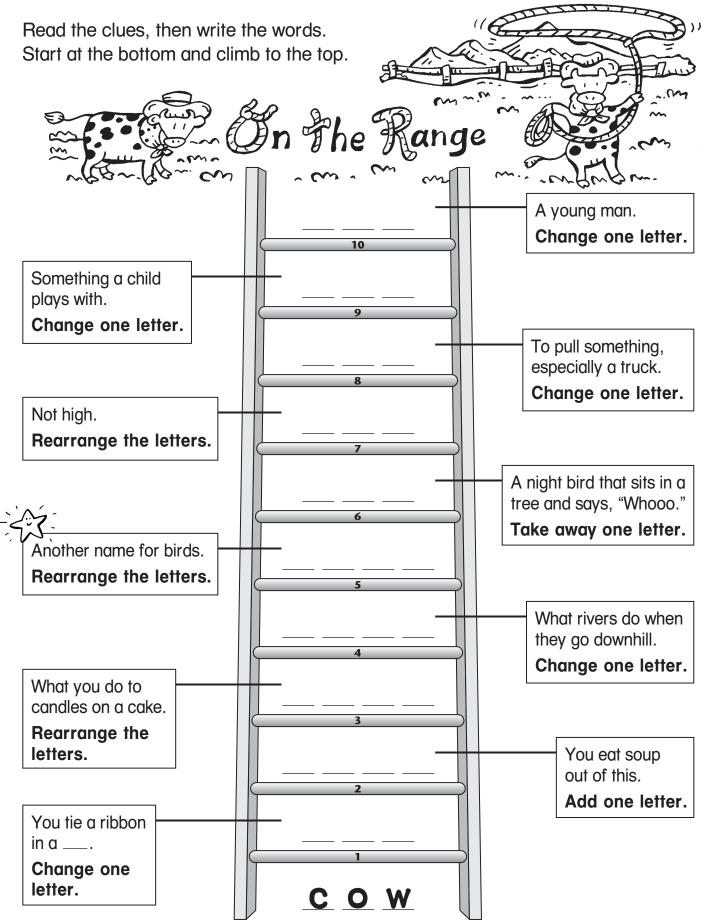


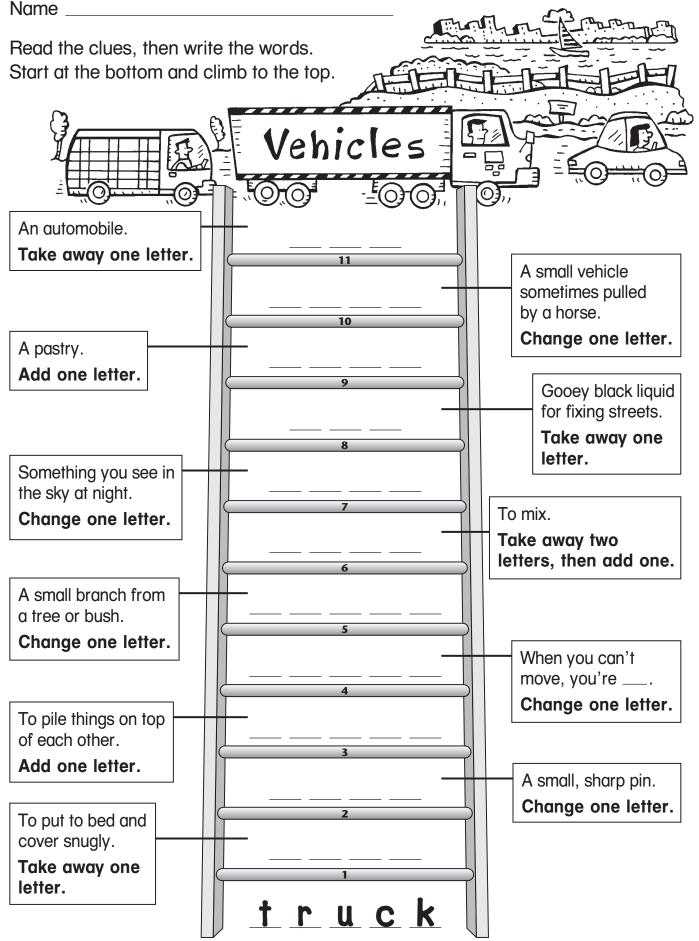


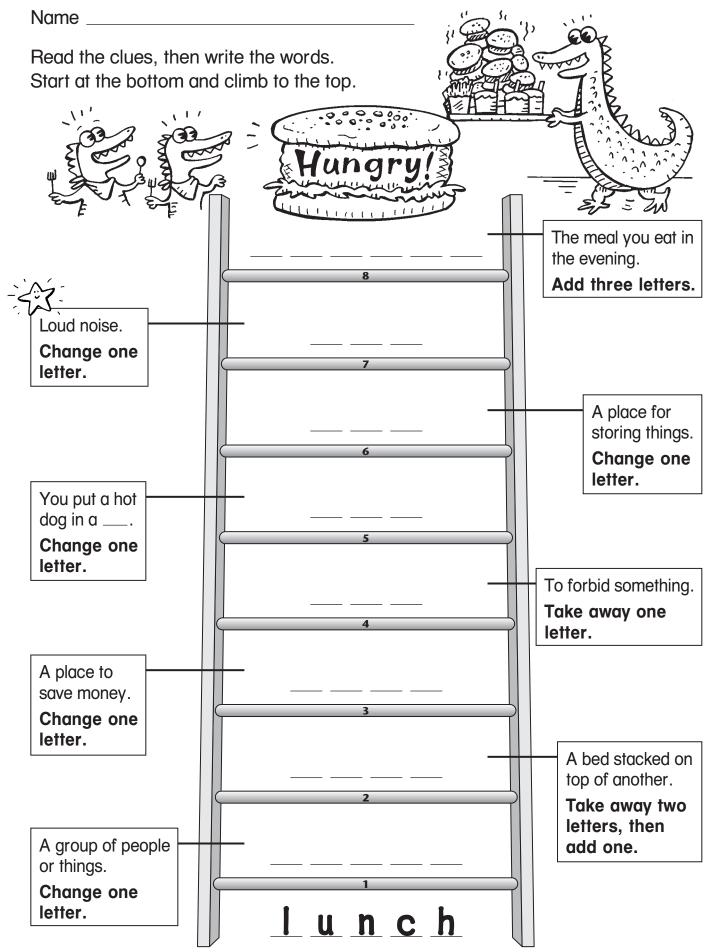


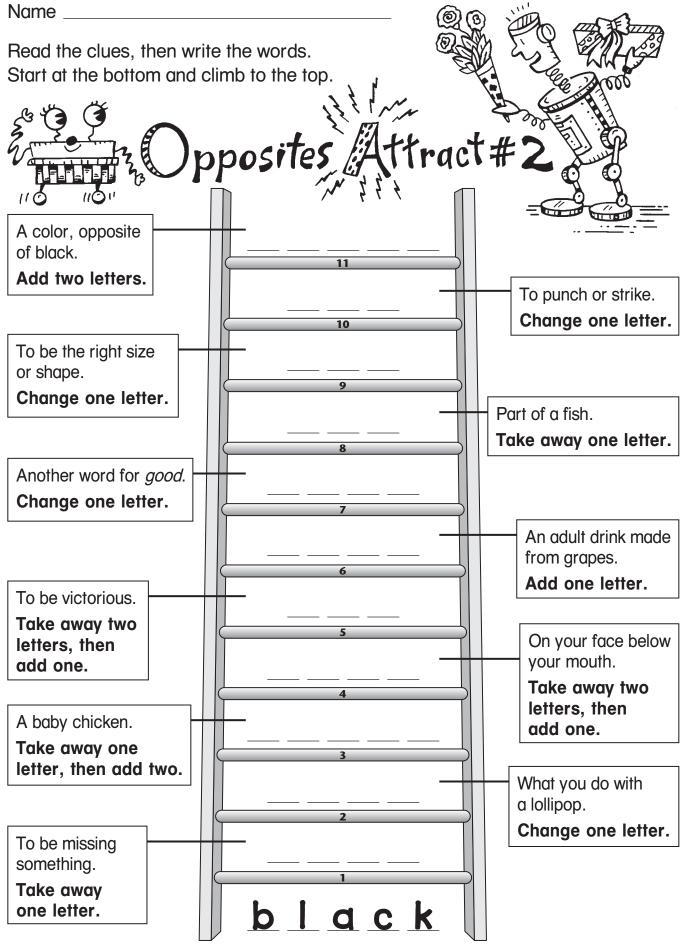




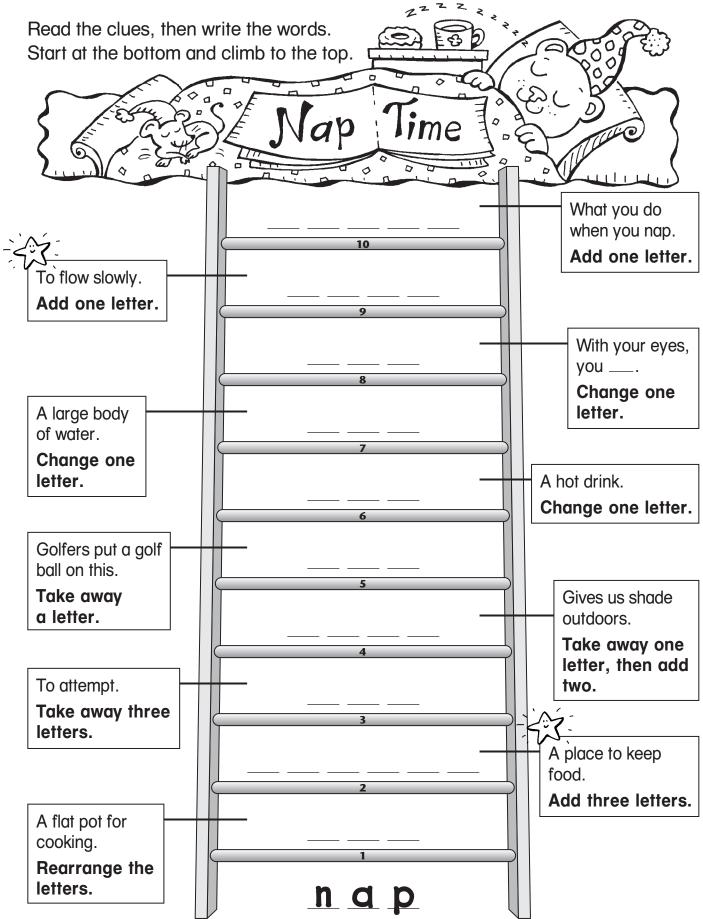


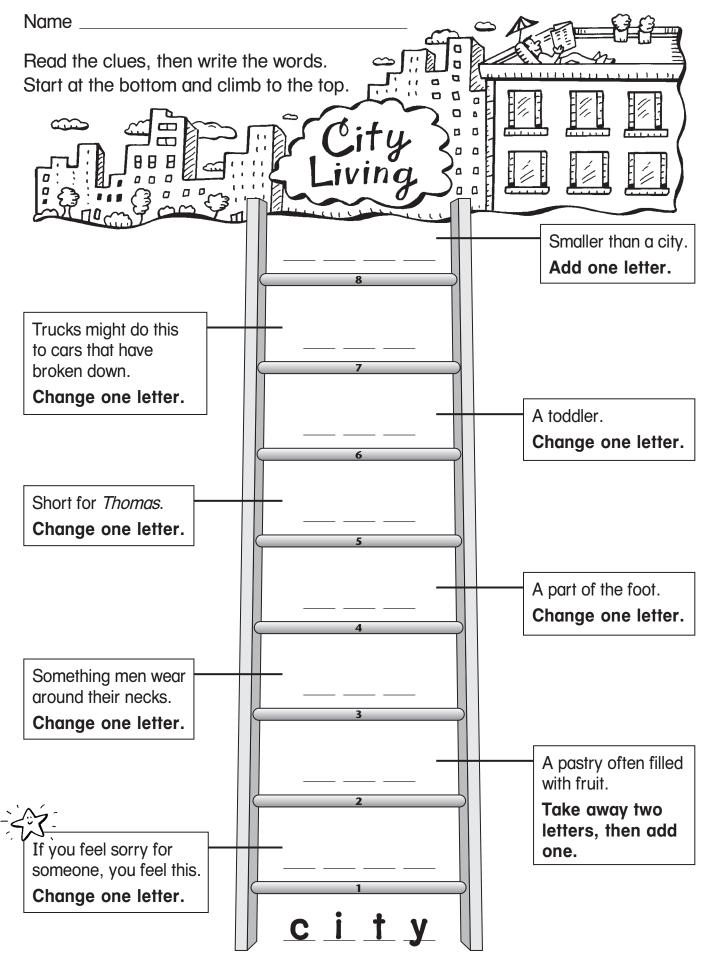


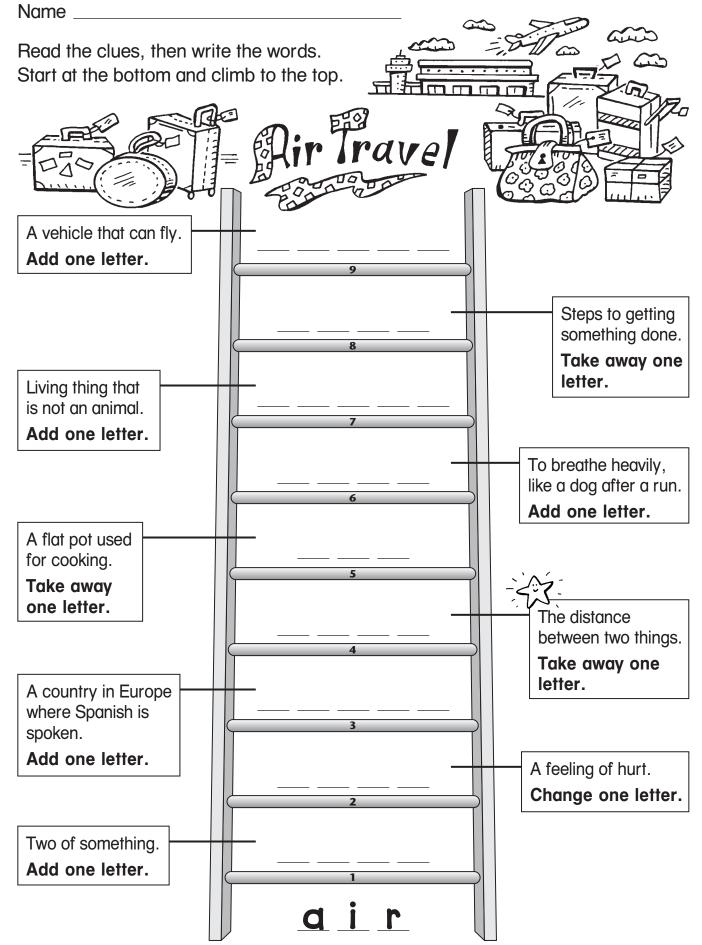


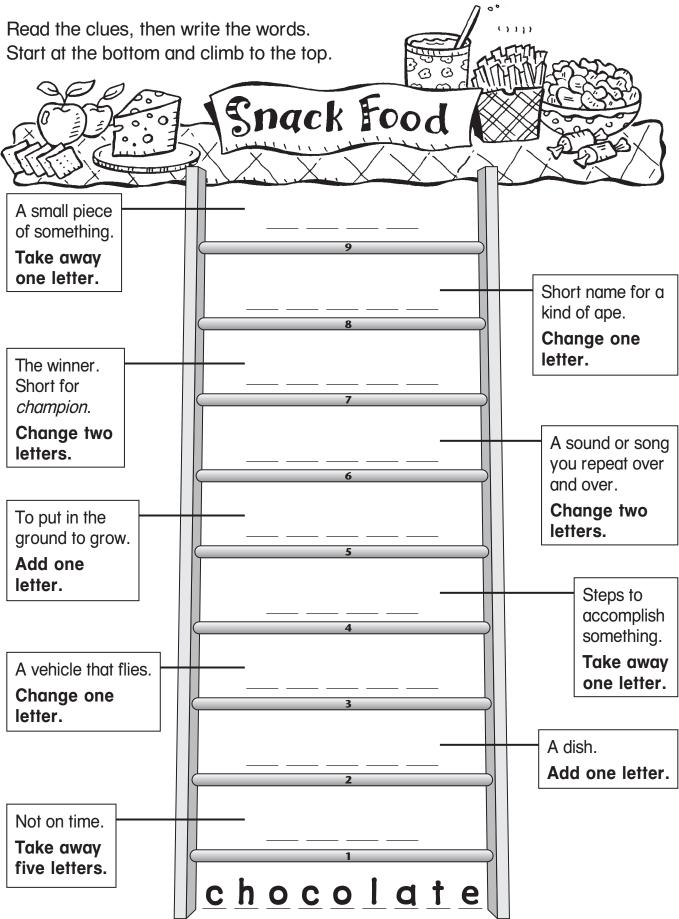


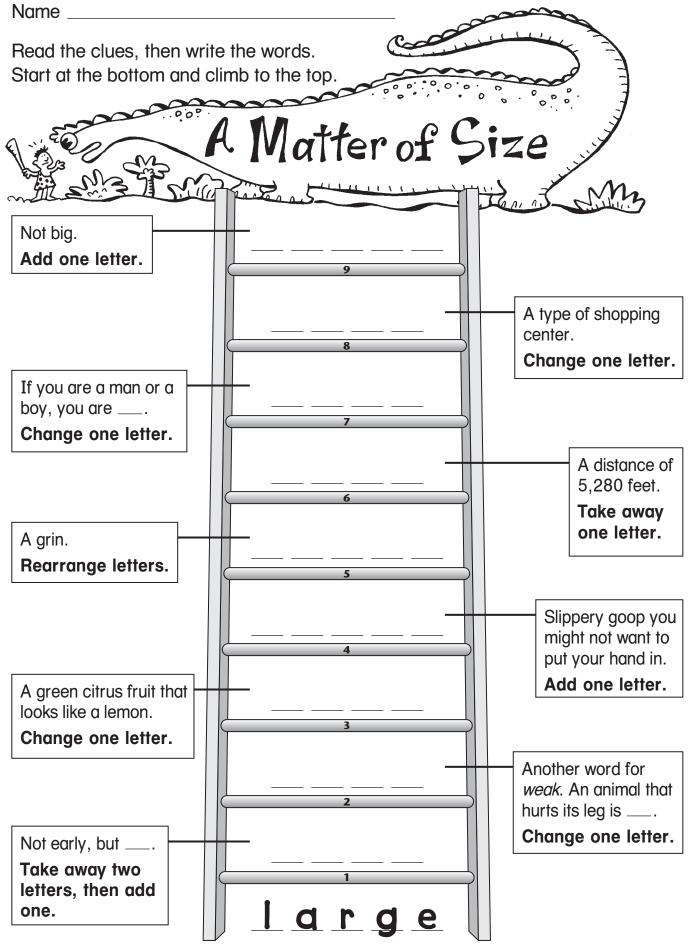


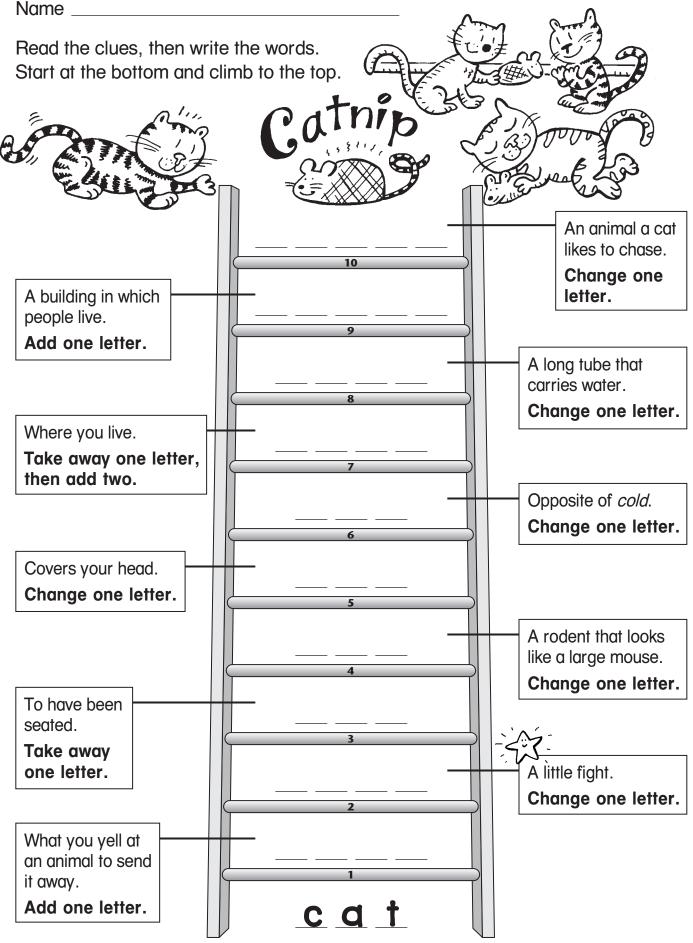


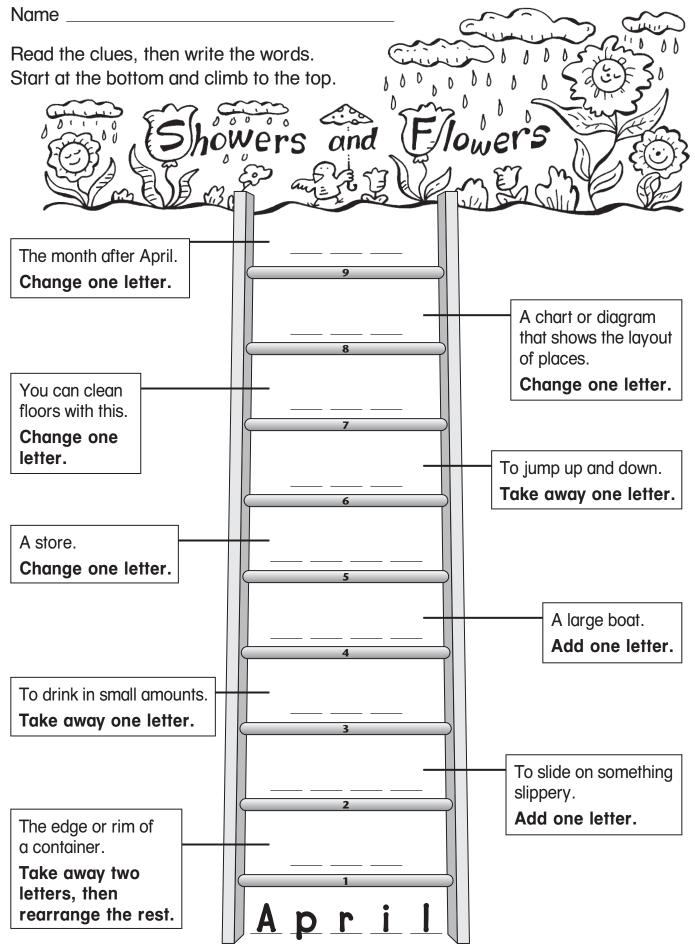




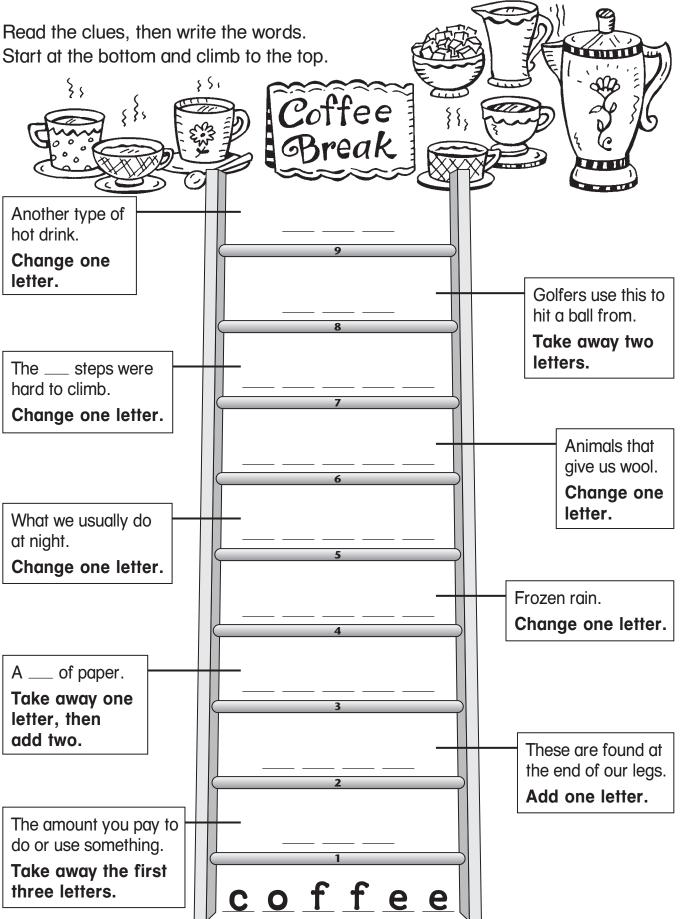


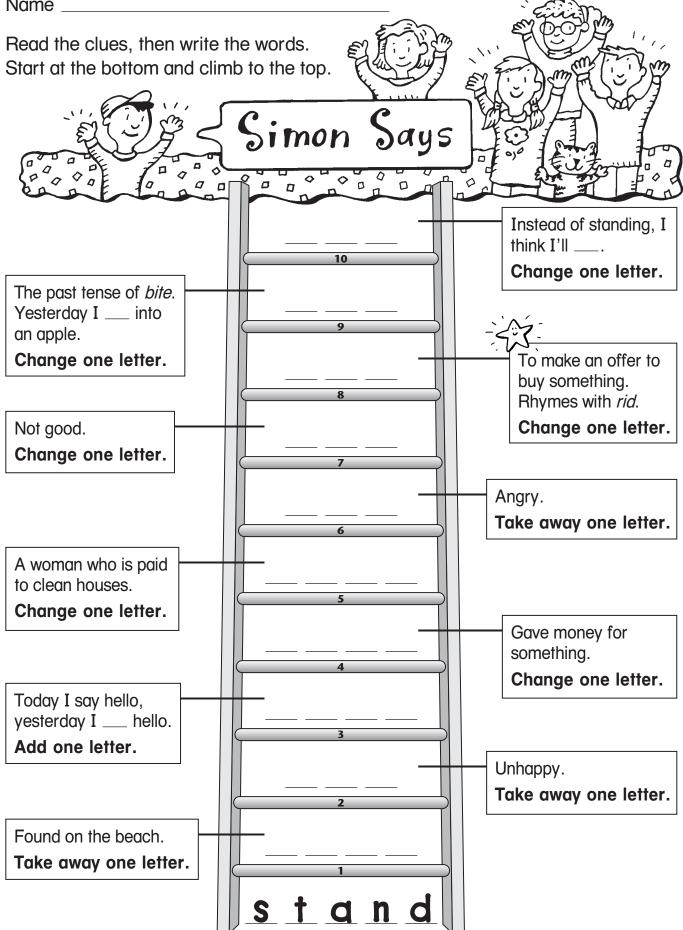




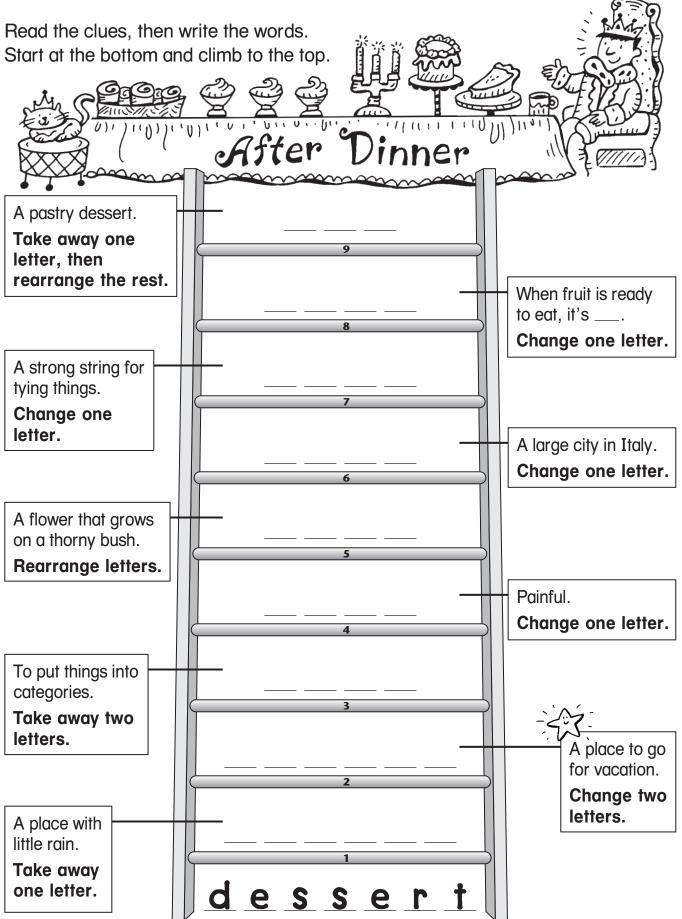


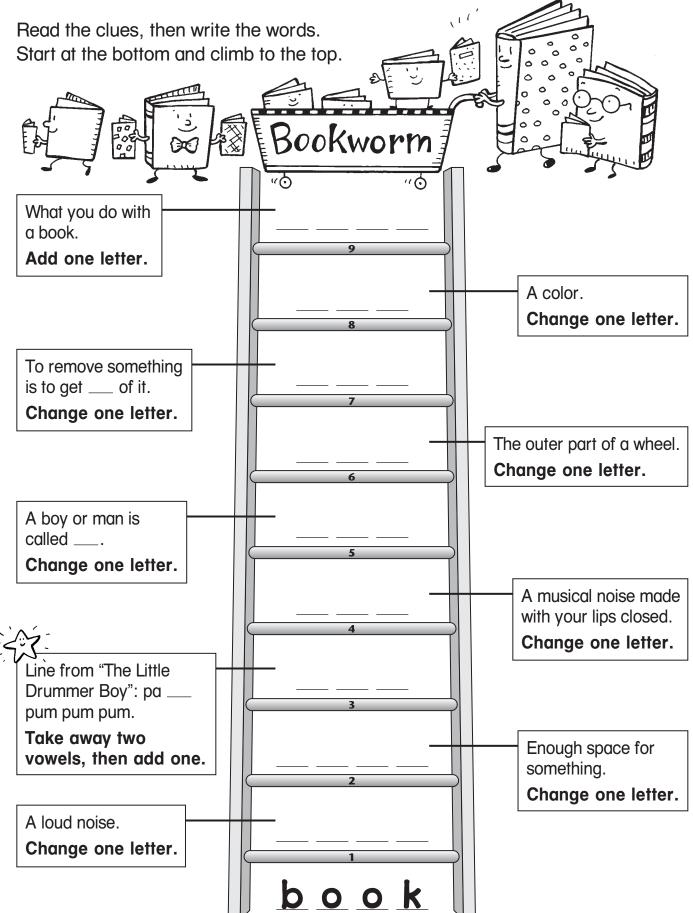




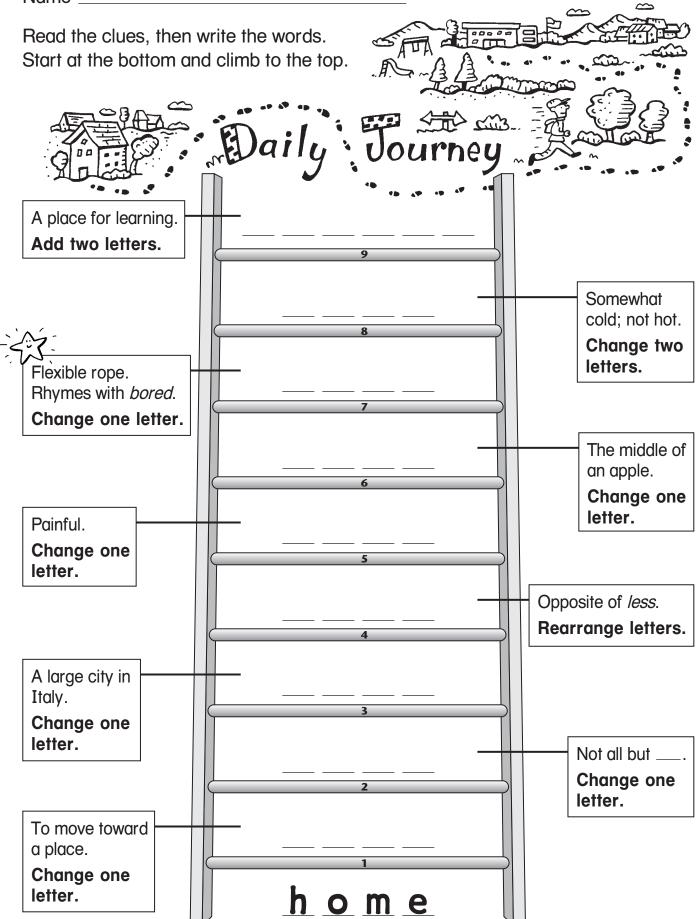


Read the clues, then write the words. Start at the bottom and climb to the top. Wet and Wetter Very damp. Take away one letter. To have gone somewhere. Change one letter. If you desire something, you ____ it. Change one letter. A small, hard lump on the skin. Change one letter. Not all of something. **Rearrange letters.** Used to catch animals. Take away one letter. To walk with heavy steps. Rhymes with *lamp*. Change one If you run for too letter. long, you can get a painful ____. Add one letter. A sloping surface, like for skateboarding. Change one letter. damp

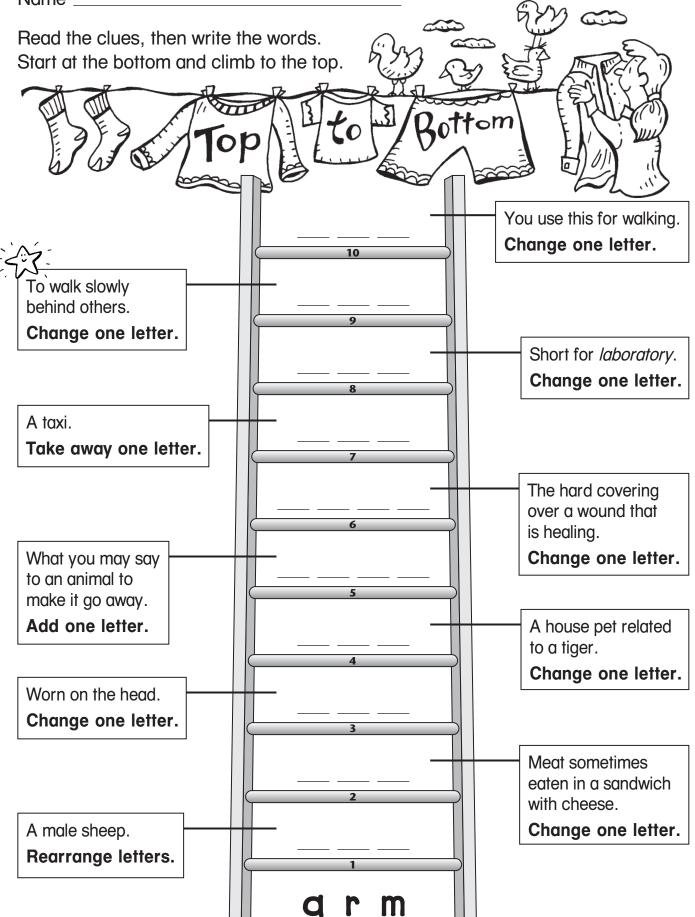


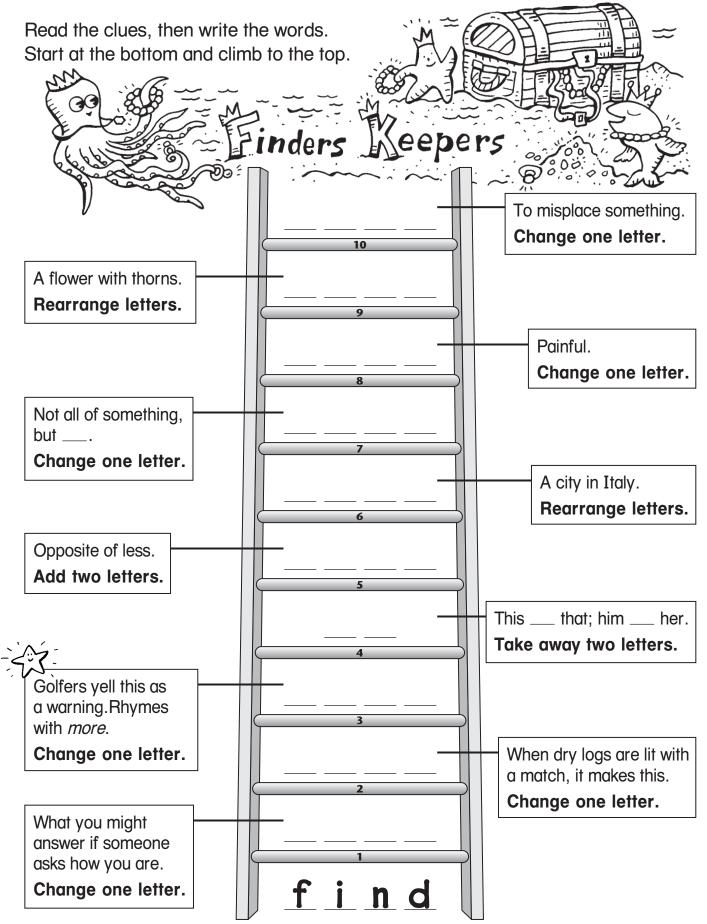


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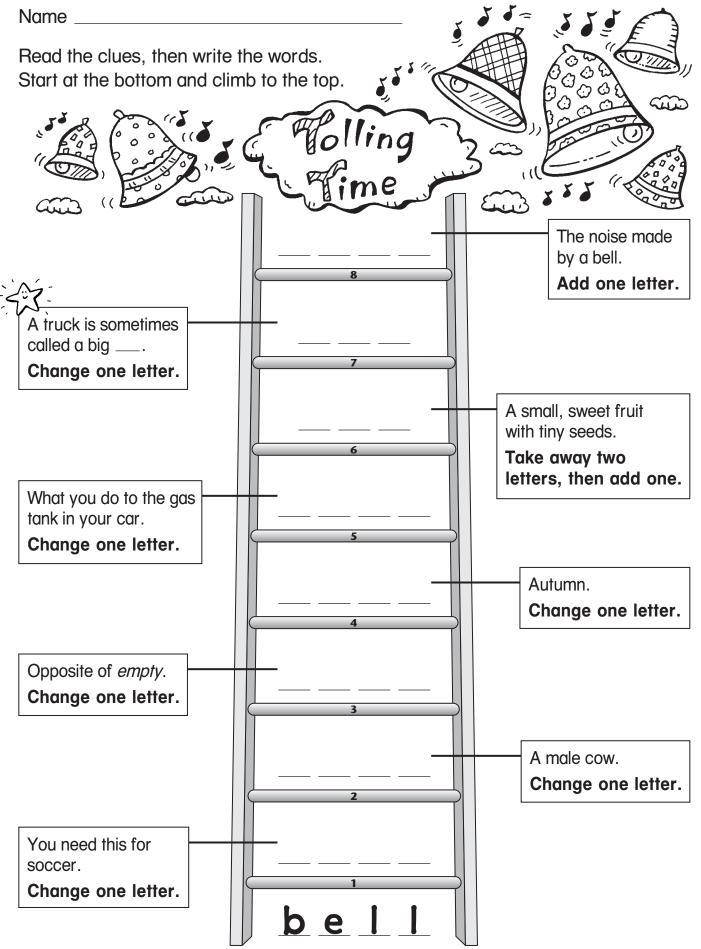


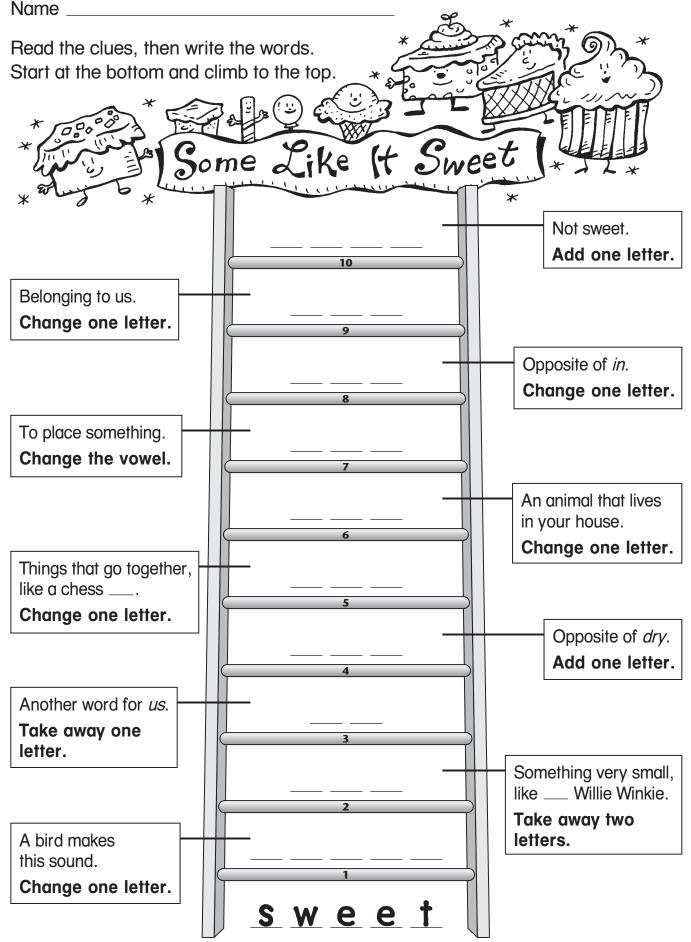


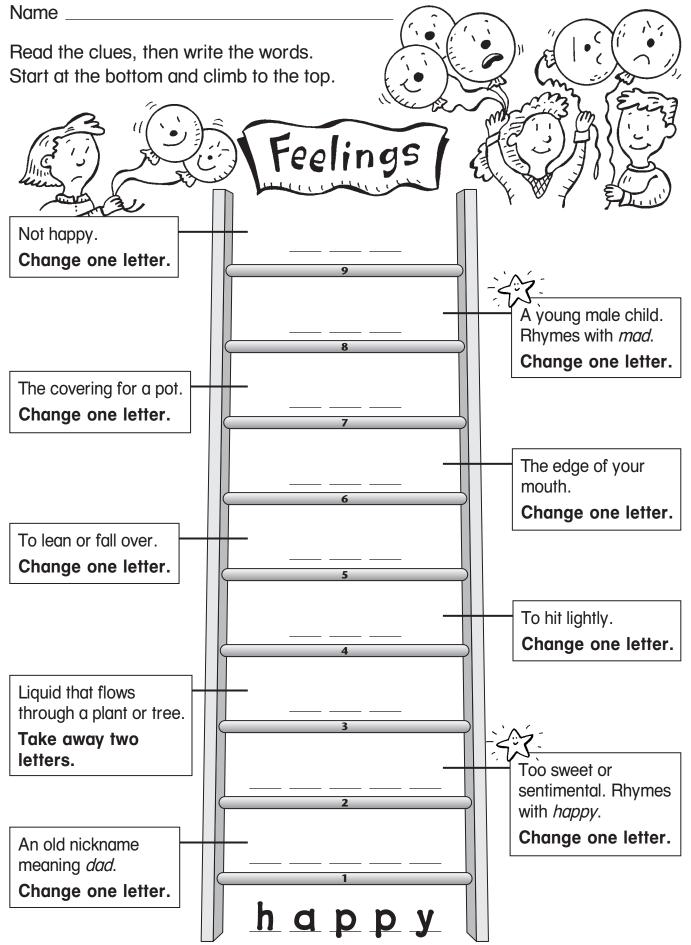


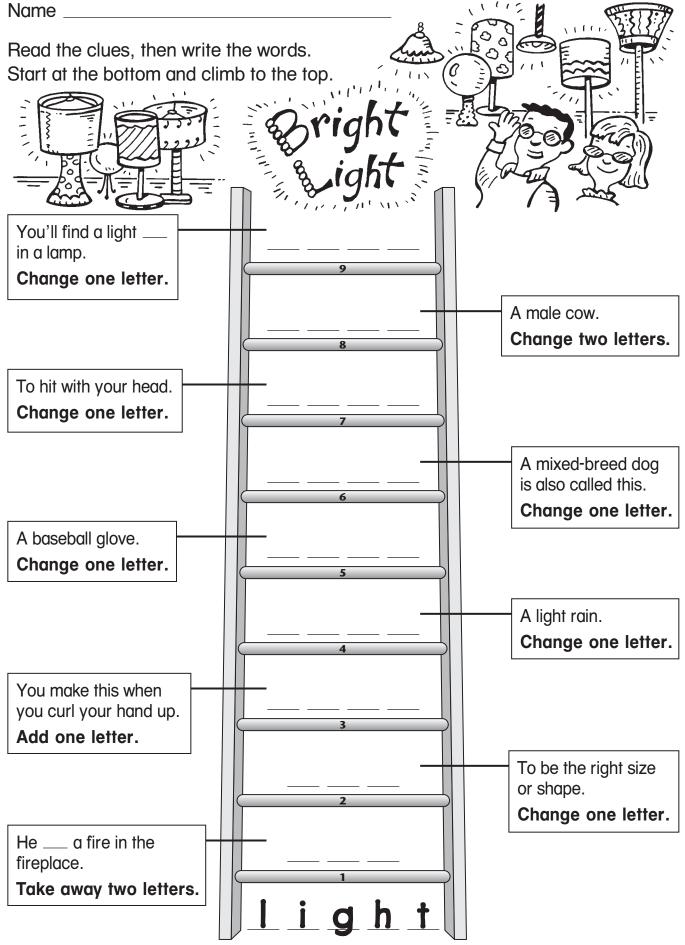


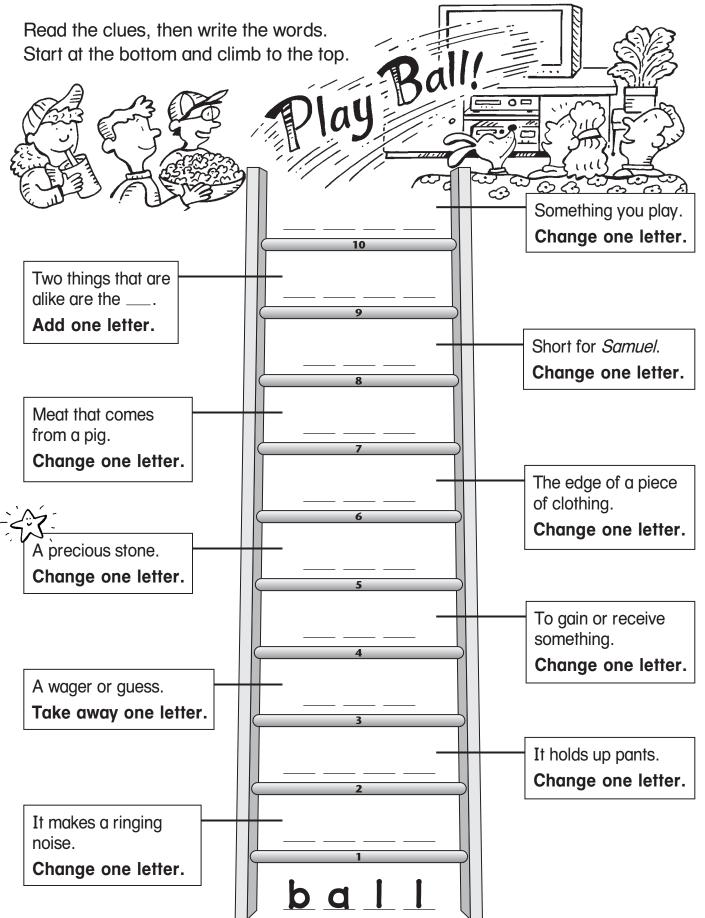
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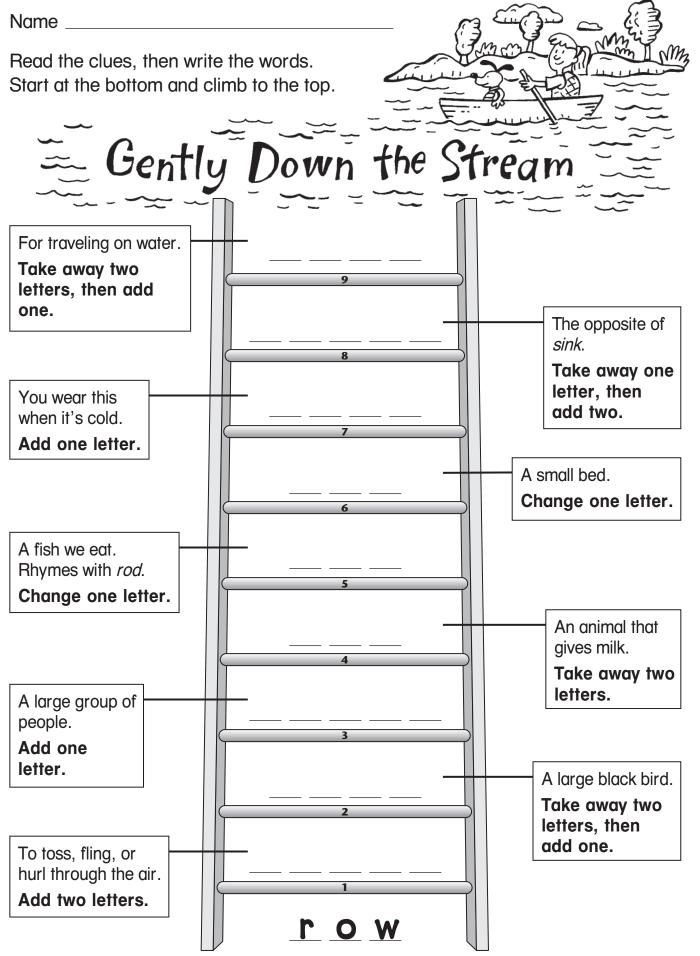


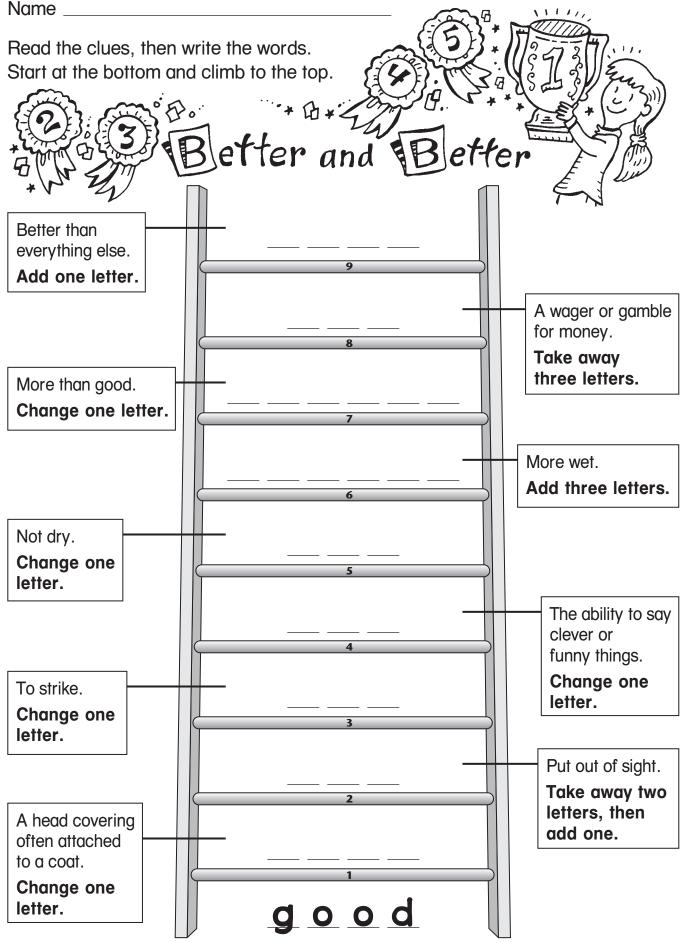


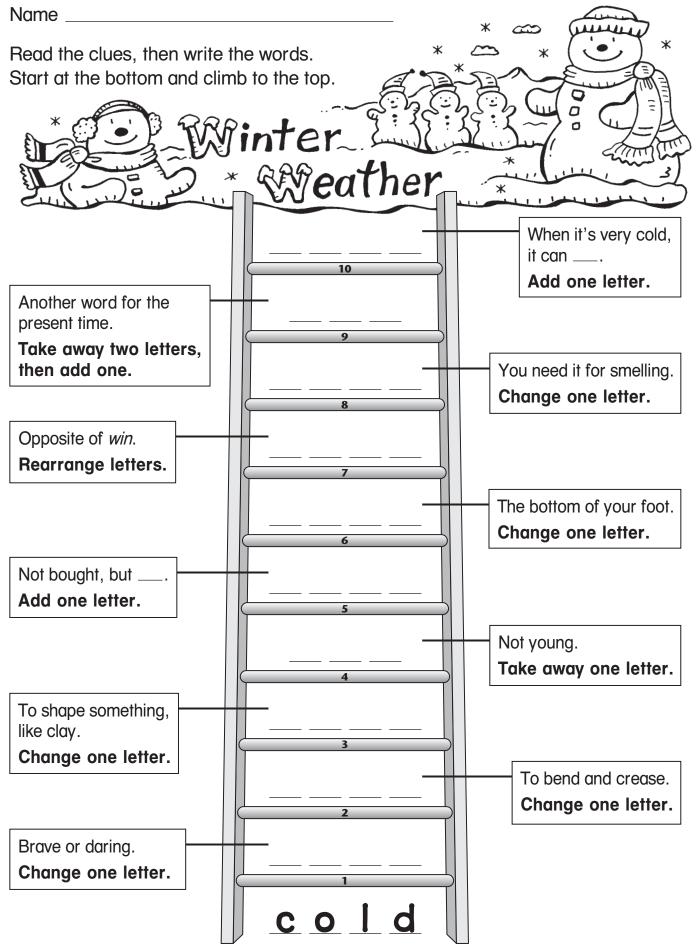


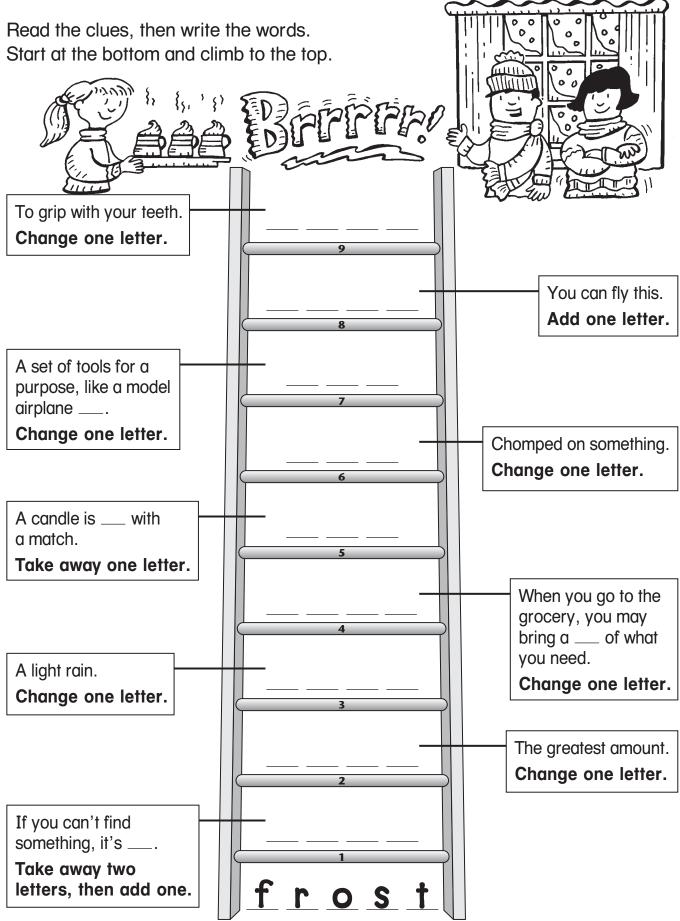


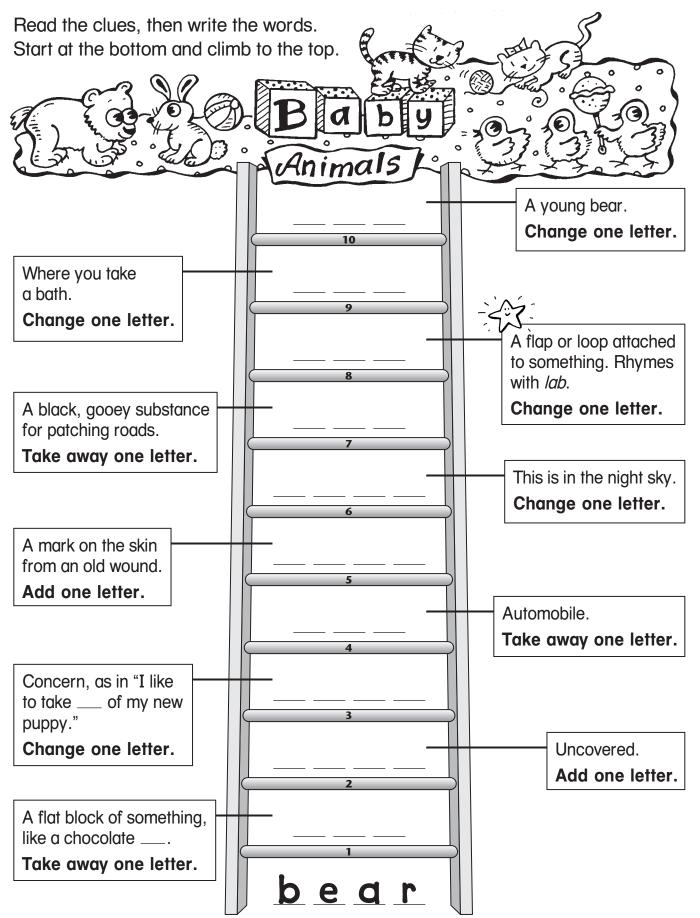




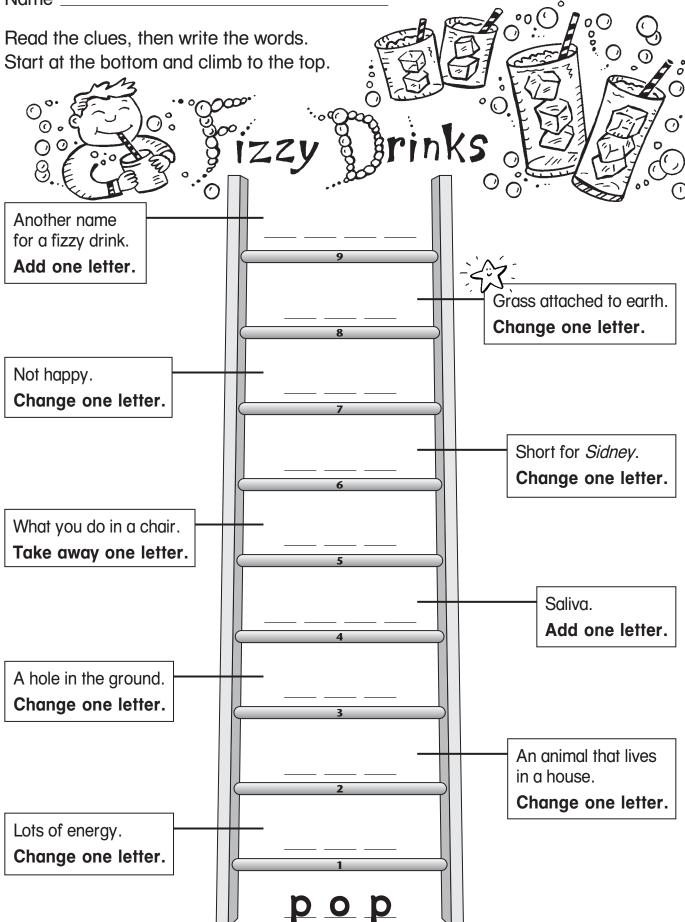




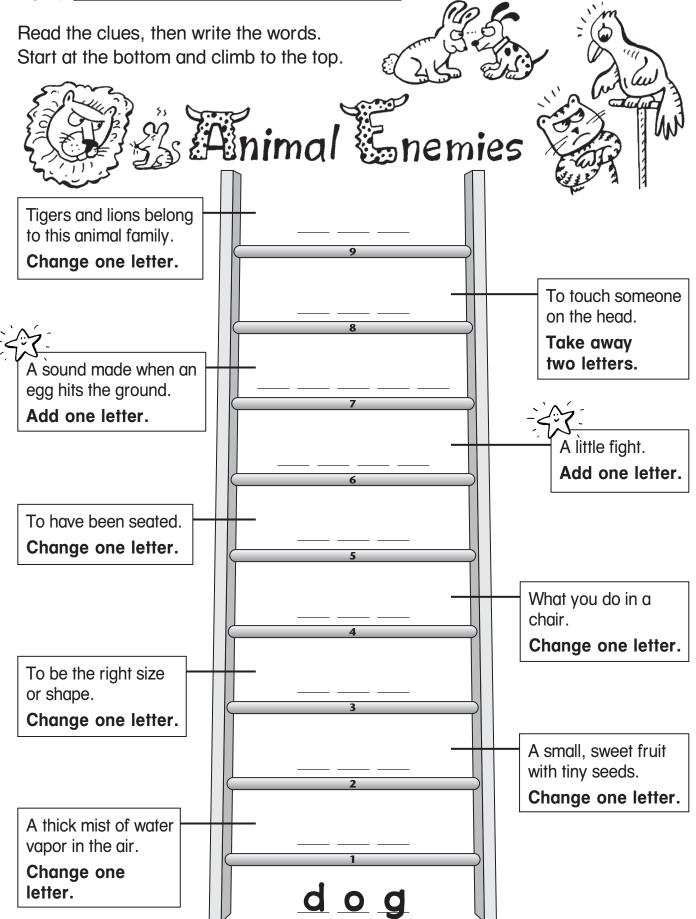


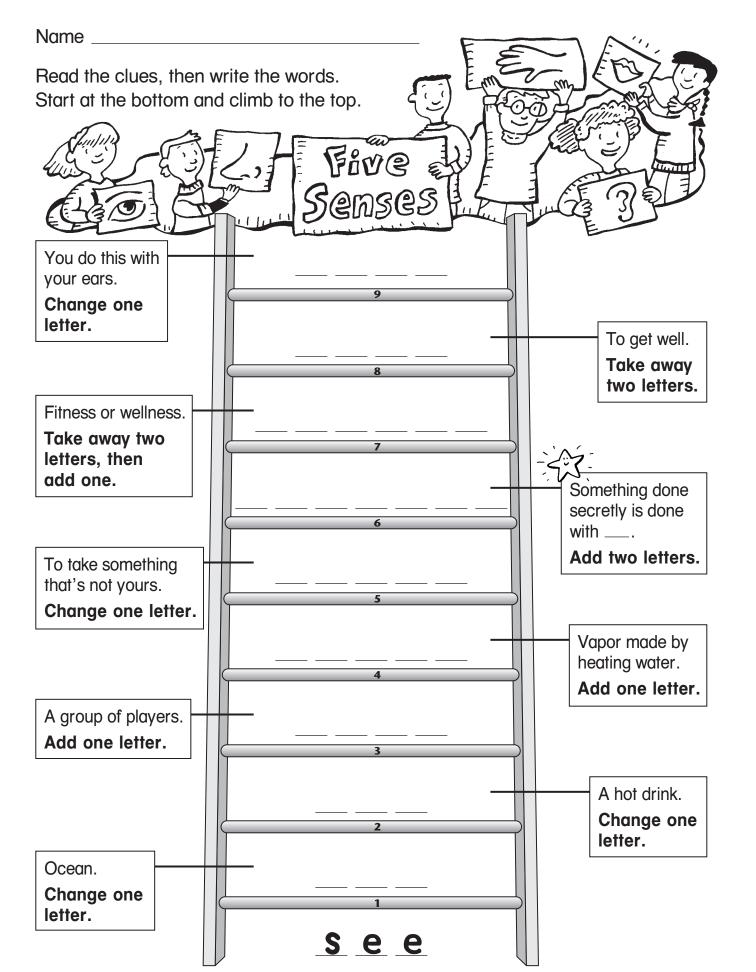


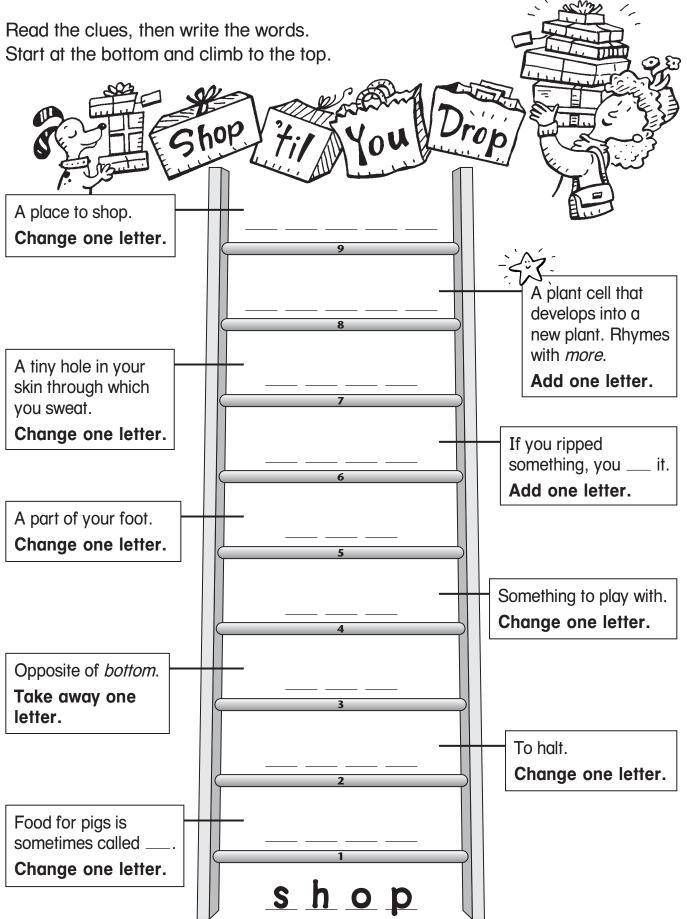


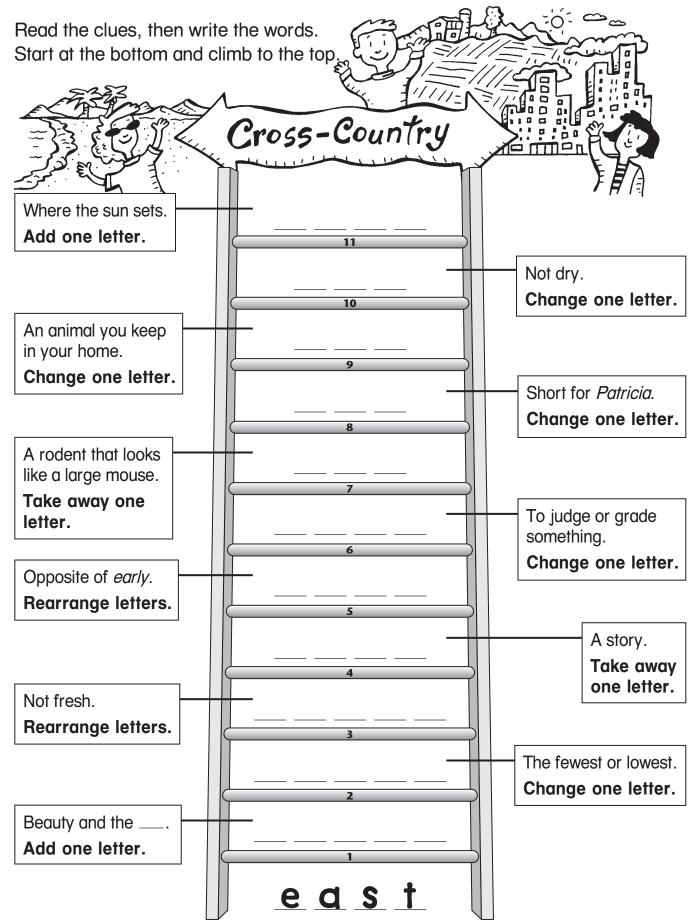




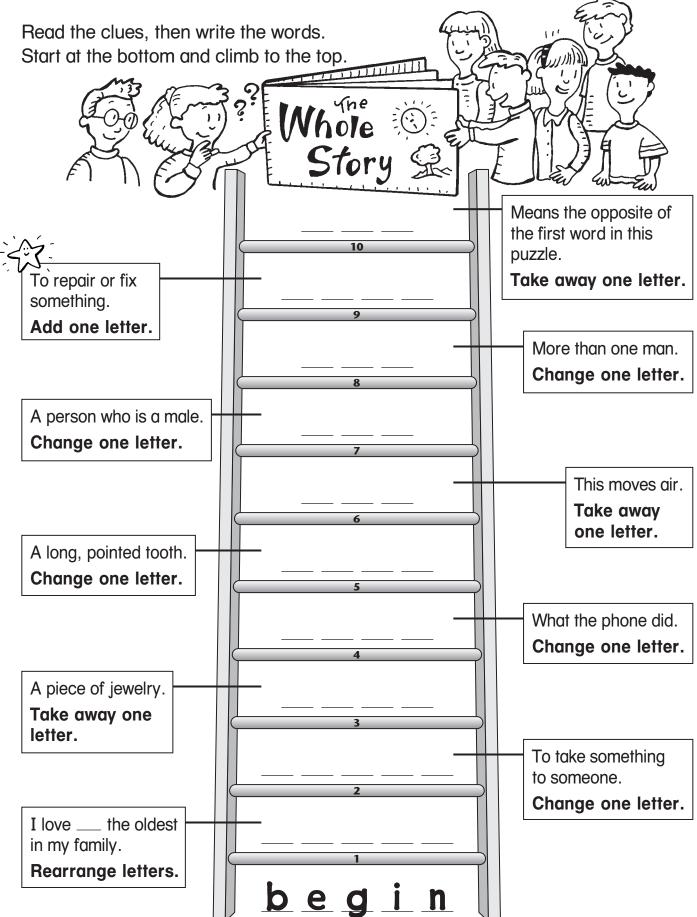


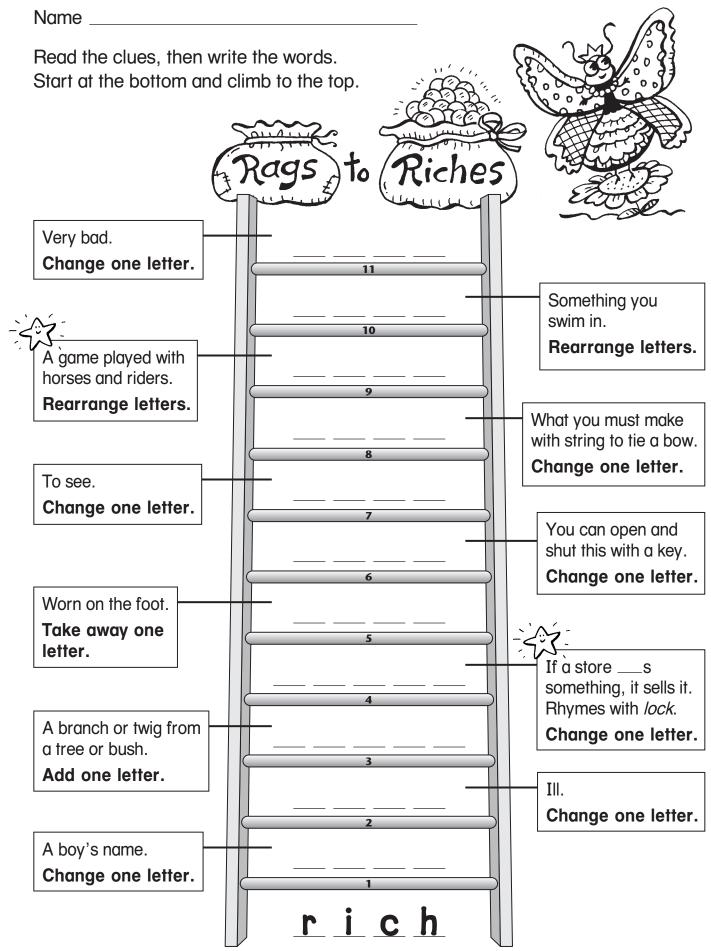


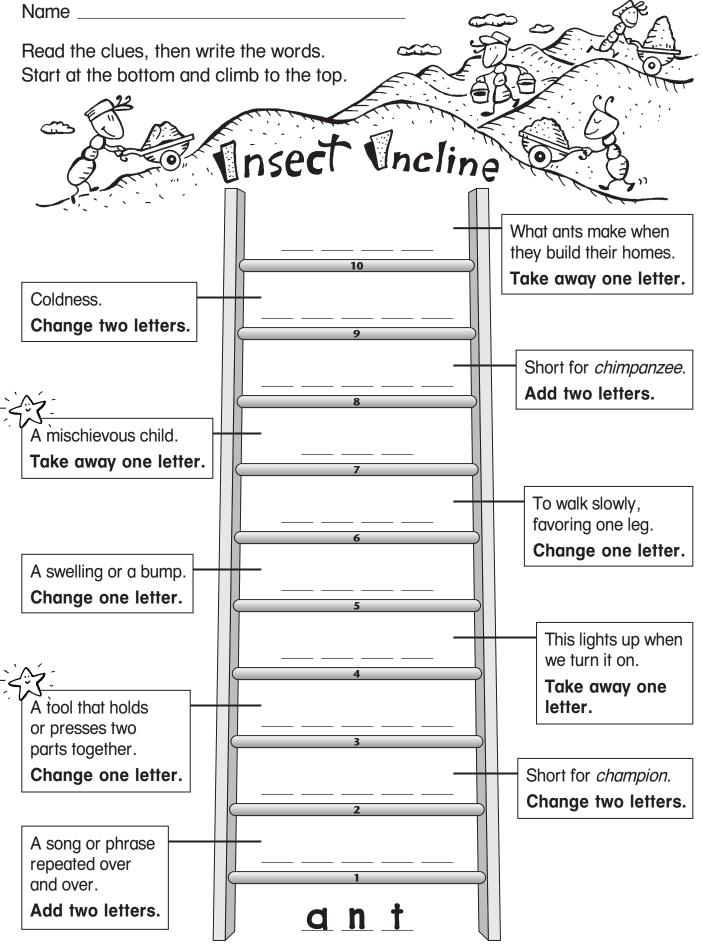


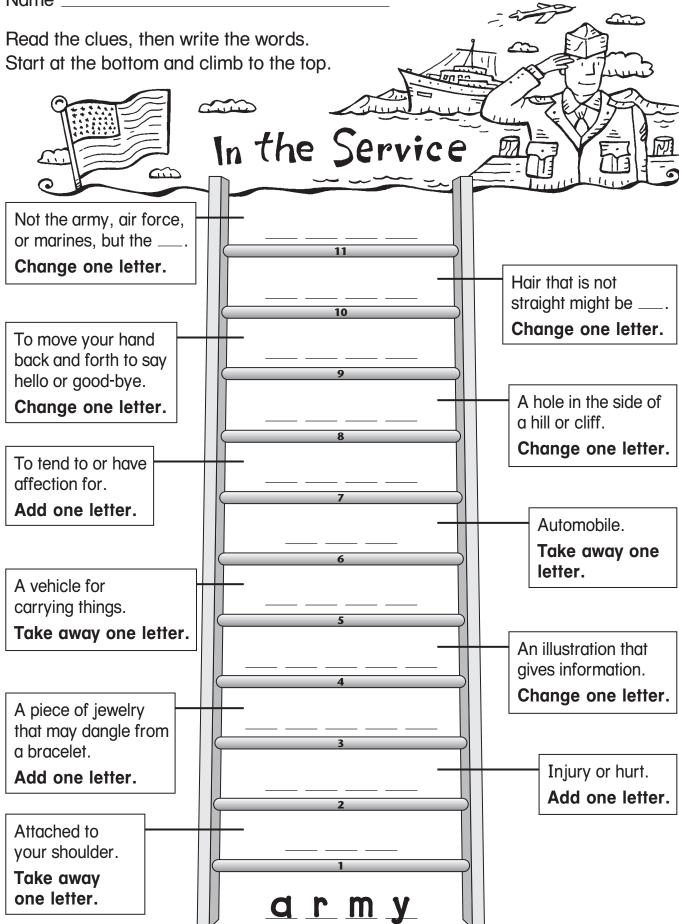


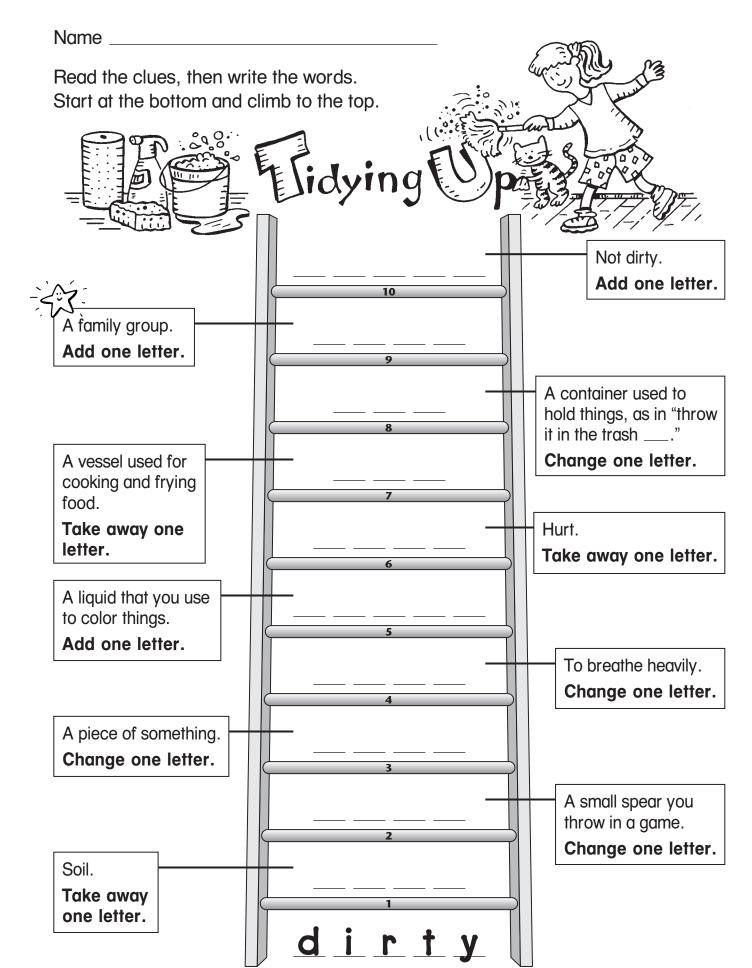
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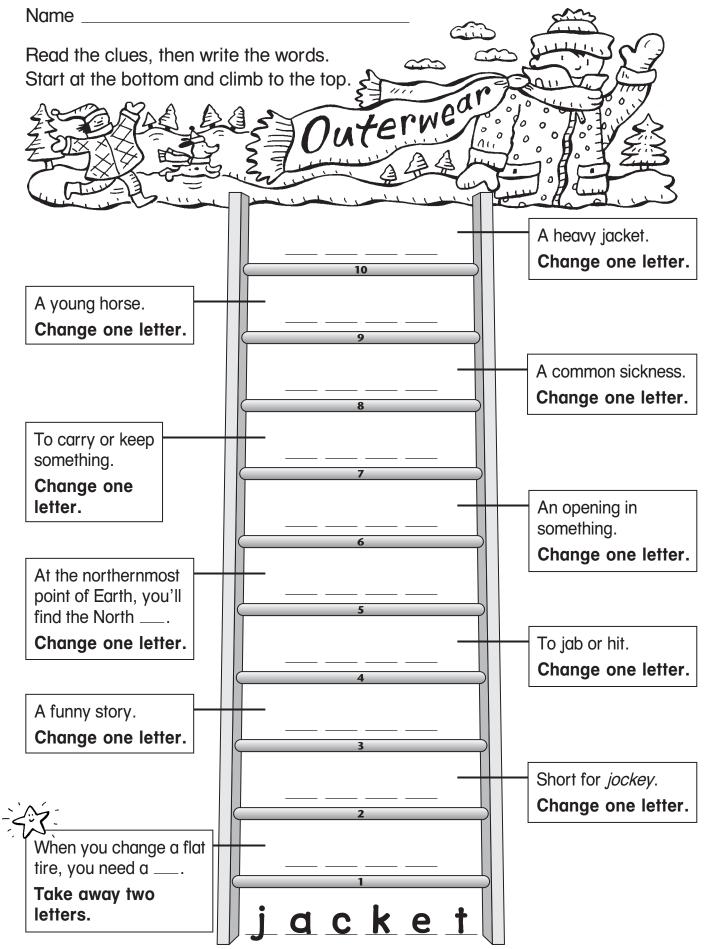


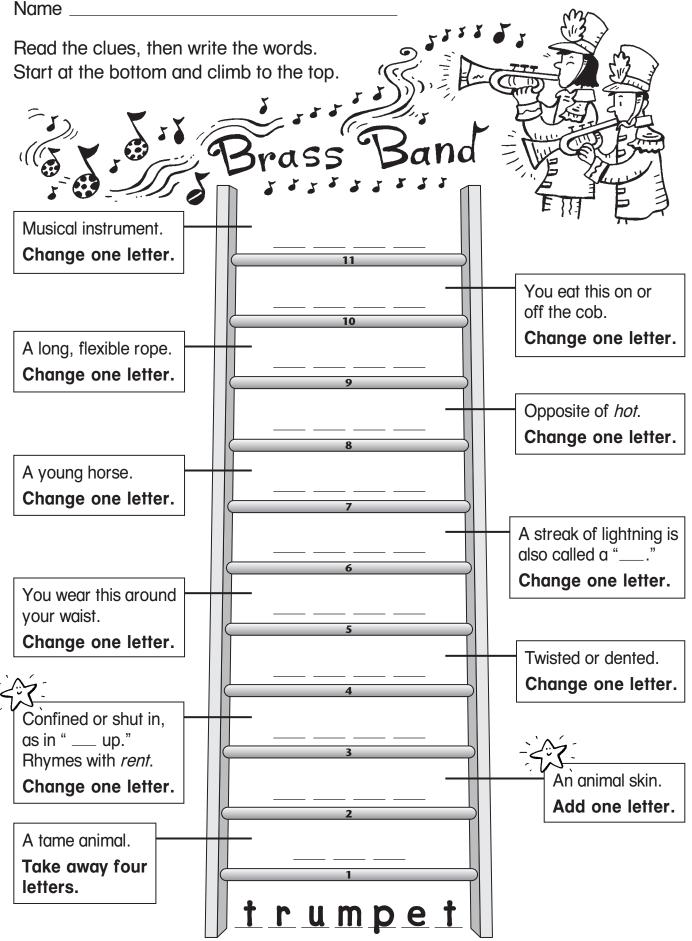




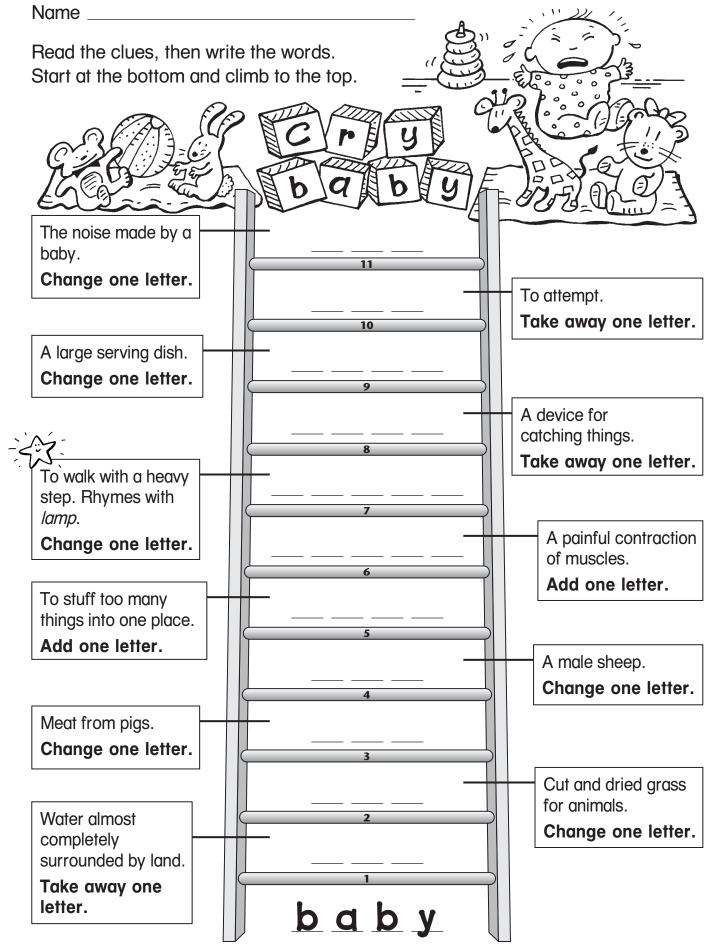


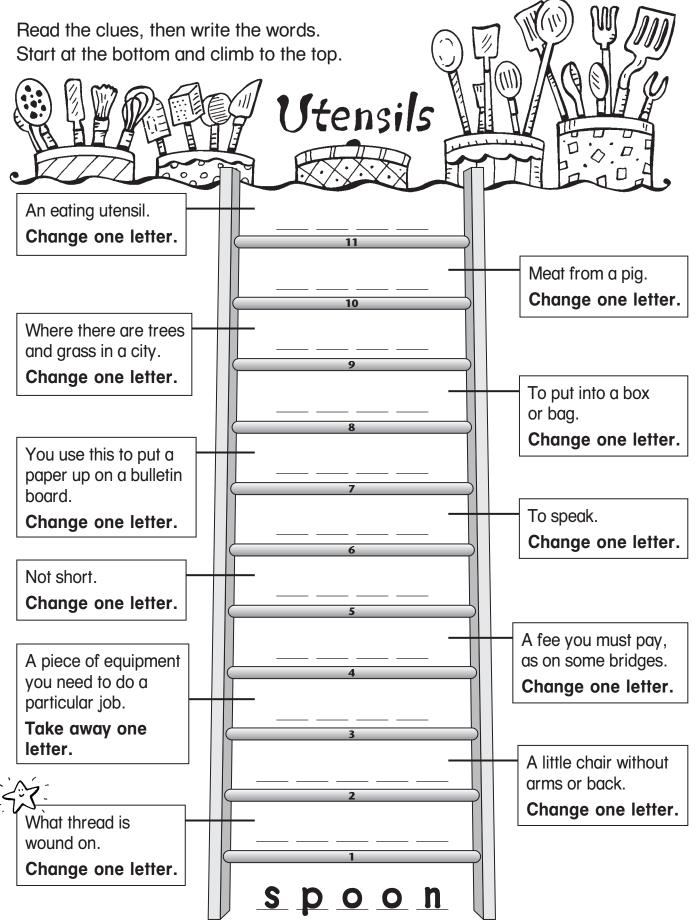


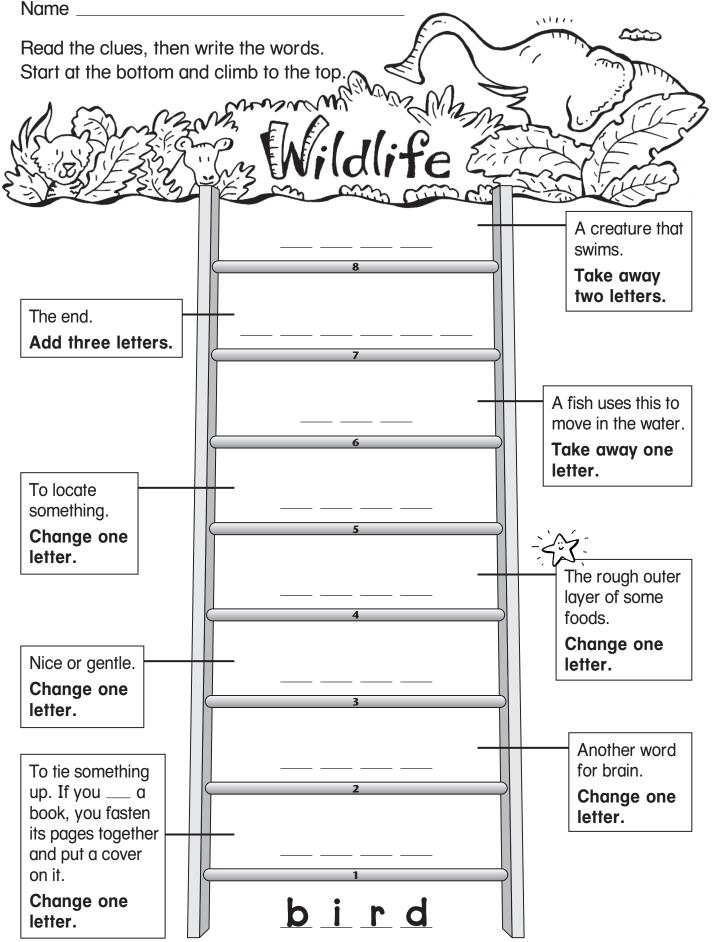


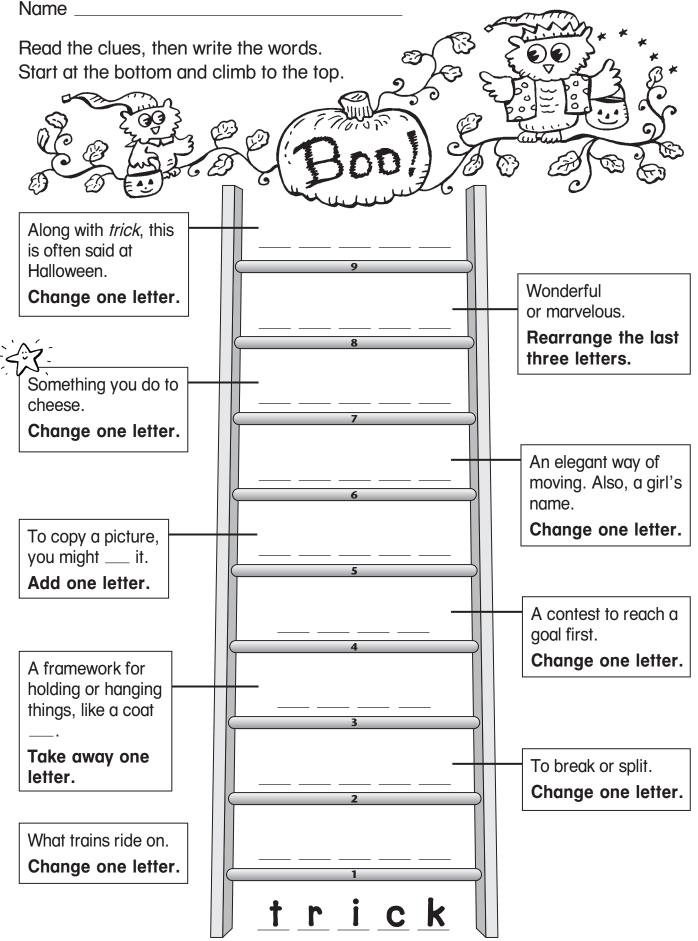


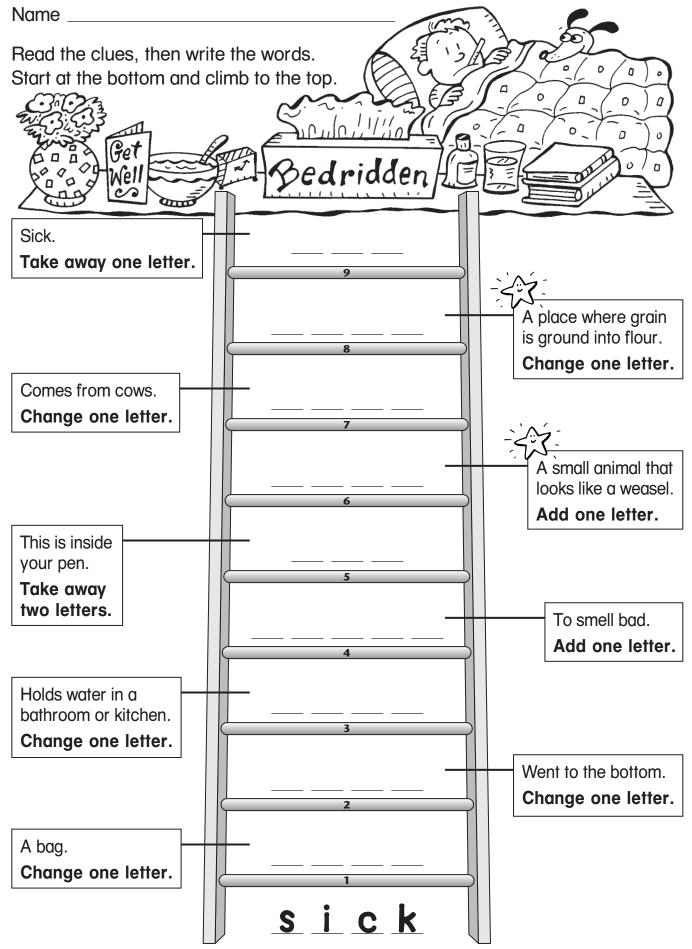
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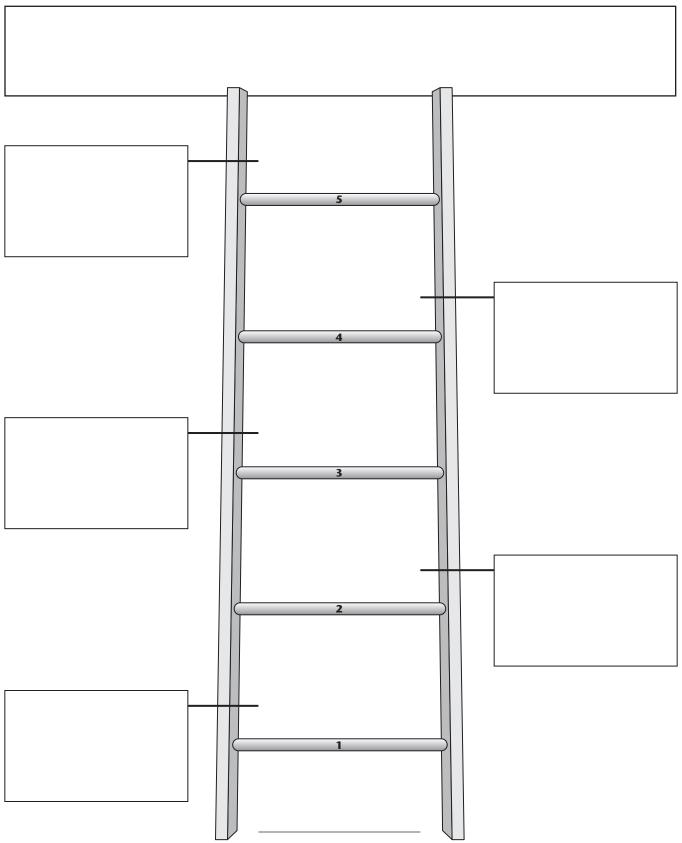






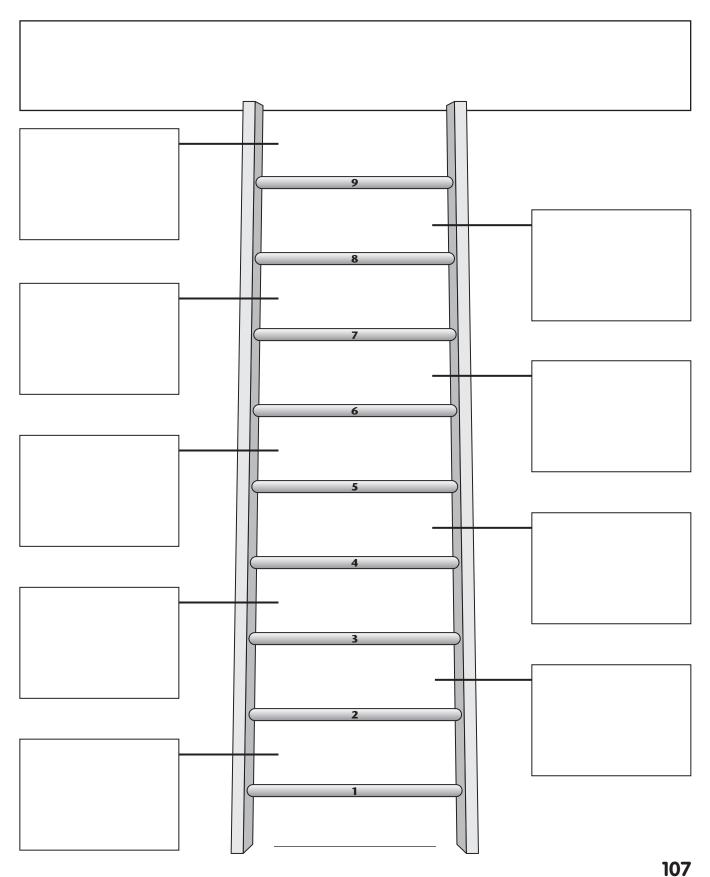


Read the clues, then write the words. Start at the bottom and climb to the top.



Na	me
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Read the clues, then write the words. Start at the bottom and climb to the top.









Counting Up, page 7 few, new, now, mow, meow, men, hen, ten, tan, man, many

Home, Sweet Home, page 8 wigwam, wig, wag, sag, Sam, same, some, home

In the Doghouse, page 9 dog, dot, Don, nod, cod, code, coke, cone, bone

Shrinking Sizes, page 10 little, lit, it, ill, mill, mall, small

All Wet, page 11 wet, we, well, bell, belt, bet, bat, bad, Brad, bran, ran, rain

Go, Team!, page 12 team, meat, tame, take, tale, tall, toll, ton, torn, worn, work

Sweet Seasons, page 13 spring, string, sting, sing, sling, slim, slime, slimmer, simmer, summer

Art Smart, page 14 art, cart, car, cat, scat, sat, saw, raw, straw, draw

Sleepytime, page 15 sleep, seep, sheep, peep, peel, pail, pal, lap, clap, slap, sap, nap

More or Less, page 16 most, mast, mask, cask, cast, coast, cost, lost, last, least

Barbershop, page 17 hair, chair, char, chart, charm, harm, arm, ram, rat, rut, cut Inside Out, page 18 door, floor, flop, lop, lip, lit, wit, win, wind, window

Weighty Matters, page 19 pint, paint, pant, chant, chart, cart, tart, part, art, quart

Restful Vacation, page 20 hotel, hot, hat, hate, haste, host, shot, shoot, sheet, sleep

Gardening, page 21 flower, flow, slow, show, shower, shopper, shop, stop, top, pot

Birdsong, page 22 bird, bid, bed, shed, sled, slid, ship, hip, chip, chirp

Shady Glade, page 23 shade, shape, shame, same, Sam, sap, sip, seep, see, tee, tree

School Days, page 24 school, cool, coal, coat, cat, can't, cent, gent, dent, student

Transportation, page 25 boat, float, moat, mat, pat, pan, plan, plank, plant, plane

Good Cooking, page 26 fried, freed, feed, fed, bed, bad, bar, bark, barn, bare, baked

America's Pastime, page 27 base, bass, mass, miss, mist, mast, melt, mall, small, ball

Sweet Treats, page 28 candy, can, cat, sat, Sam, seem, seam, seat, sweat, sweet



Finish Line, page 29 start, tart, cart, cast, cash, wash, wish, dish, fish, finish

Fireworks, page 30 fire, tire, tile, pile, pill, hill, hall, hand, handle, candle

Opposites Attract, page 31 black, block, clock, lock, look, loot, lot, hot, hit, white

Seasoning Selection, page 32 salt, sat, hat, hot, shot, shop, hop, pop, popper, pepper

Displays of Affection, page 33 hug, hog, hoe, shoe, show, slow, low, lot, lit, kit, kite, kiss

Neigh-bors, page 34 horse, hoe, hop, hope, cope, cone, bone, bond, pond, pony

Giving and Receiving, page 35 present, sent, gent, bent, belt, bet, bit, lit, lift, gift

Getting There, page 36 walk, talk, stalk, stall, tall, tell, ten, tent, rent, runt, run

Splish Splash, page 37 swim, swam, swan, wand, wind, win, wind, wild, wood, wool, pool

Fancy Footwear, page 38 shoe, shop, shot, shock, sock, dock, dot, hot, hoot, boot

Shopping Spree, page 39 shop, ship, hip, hill, hall, shall, small, mall Sweet Things, page 40 candy, sandy, sand, hand, hang, sang, sad, sat, swat, sweat, sweet

Woodsman, page 41 chop, shop, slop, loop, coop, hoop, hood, food, wood

Thar She Blows!, page 42 whale, while, whole, hole, home, some, sole, sold, sod, pod

Holiday Candy, page 43 candy, Andy, and, sand, band, brand, bran, brain, rain, main, mane, cane

Car Trip, page 44 car, care, dare, date, late, slate, state, ate, gate, gape, gap, gas

Friendship, page 45 friend, end, trend, tend, send, sand, band, bad, pad, pal

Great Grapes, page 46 grape, grope, rope, rose, raise, raisin

Busy Bees, page 47 bee, bet, bat, bit, hit, fit, fin, fine, file, fire, five, hive

Ship Ahoy, page 48 ship, shop, stop, step, steep, sleep, sheep, sheet, sleet, fleet

Score!, page 49 home, Rome, more, mare, rare, rate, rat, rut, run

Personality Change, page 50 nice, mice, mine, mint, pint, pinto, into, ton, ten, men, mean





Ride 'Em, page 51 horse, worse, worm, warm, war, par, park, perk, pork, pony

Love Life, page 52 love, dove, dome, home, hole, mole, mule, mile, Mike, like

Underfoot, page 53 rug, bug, bag, rag, rat, tar, star, scar, car, carp, carpet

Bare Feet, page 54 shoe, show, shot, hot, hat, at, ant, and, sand, sandal

Color Change, page 55 blue, clue, club, cub, rub, rug, rig, rip, rim, rid, red

Deep Freeze, page 56 ice, nice, twice, lice, slice, slick, lick, luck, suck, sub, cub, cube

In the Kitchen, page 57 pots, spot, pot, pet, pets, step, stop, top, tap, apt, Pat, pans

Giving Thanks, page 58 thanks, think, thin, then, hen, Ben, bent, lent, lint, live, living, giving

On the Range, page 59 cow, bow, bowl, blow, flow, fowl, owl, low, tow, toy, boy

Vehicles, page 60 truck, tuck, tack, stack, stuck, stick, stir, star, tar, tart, cart, car

Hungry!, page 61 lunch, bunch, bunk, bank, ban, bun, bin, din, dinner **Opposites Attract #2, page 62**

black, lack, lick, chick, chin, win, wine, fine, fin, fit, hit, white

Nap Time, page 63 nap, pan, pantry, try, tree, tee, tea, sea, see, seep, sleep

City Living, page 64 city, pity, pie, tie, toe, Tom, tot, tow, town

Air Travel, page 65 air, pair, pain, Spain, span, pan, pant, plant, plan, plane

Snack Food, page 66 chocolate, late, plate, plane, plan, plant, chant, champ, chimp, chip

A Matter of Size, page 67 large, late, lame, lime, slime, smile, mile, male, mall, small

Catnip, page 68 cat, scat, spat, sat, rat, hat, hot, home, hose, house, mouse

Showers and Flowers, page 69 April, lip, slip, sip, ship, shop, hop, mop, map, May

Coffee Break, page 70 coffee, fee, feet, sheet, sleet, sleep, sheep, steep, tee, tea

Simon Says, page 71 stand, sand, sad, said, paid, maid, mad, bad, bid, bit, sit

Wet and Wetter, page 72 damp, ramp, cramp, tramp, trap, part, wart, want, went, wet



After Dinner, page 73 dessert, desert, resort, sort, sore, rose, Rome, rope, ripe, pie

Bookworm, page 74 book, boom, room, rum, hum, him, rim, rid, red, read

Daily Journey, page 75 home, come, some, Rome, more, sore, core, cord, cool, school

Top to Bottom, page 76 arm, ram, ham, hat, cat, scat, scab, cab, lab, lag, leg

Finders Keepers, page 77 find, fine, fire, fore, or, more, Rome, some, sore, rose, lose

Tolling Time, page 78 bell, ball, bull, full, fall, fill, fig, rig, ring

Some Like It Sweet, page 79 sweet, tweet, wee, we, wet, set, pet, put, out, our, sour

Feelings, page 80 happy, pappy, sappy, sap, tap, tip, lip, lid, lad, sad

Bright Light, page 81 light, lit, fit, fist, mist, mitt, mutt, butt, bull, bulb

Play Ball!, page 82 ball, bell, belt, bet, get, gem, hem, ham, Sam, same, game

Good, Clean Fun, page 83 clean, lean, bean, beat, bet, bat, cat, cart, dart, dirt, dirty Gently Down the Stream, page 84

row, throw, crow, crowd, cow, cod, cot, coat, float, boat

Better and Better, page 85 good, hood, hid, hit, wit, wet, wetter, better, bet, best

Winter Weather, page 86 cold, bold, fold, mold, old, sold, sole, lose, nose, now, snow

Brrrrr!, page 87 frost, lost, most, mist, list, lit, bit, kit, kite, bite

Baby Animals, page 88 bear, bar, bare, care, car, scar, star, tar, tab, tub, cub

Fizzy Drinks, page 89 pop, pep, pet, pit, spit, sit, Sid, sad, sod, soda

Animal Enemies, page 90 dog, fog, fig, fit, sit, sat, spat, splat, pat, cat

Five Senses, page 91 see, sea, tea, team, steam, steal, stealth, health, heal, hear

Shop 'til You Drop, page 92 shop, slop, stop, top, toy, toe, tore, pore, spore, store

Cross-Country, page 93 east, beast, least, stale, tale, late, rate, rat, pat, pet, wet, west

The Whole Story, page 94 begin, being, bring, ring, rang, fang, fan, man, men, mend, end



Rags to Riches, page 95 rich, Rick, sick, stick, stock, sock, lock, look, loop, polo, pool, poor

Insect Incline, page 96 ant, chant, champ, clamp, lamp, lump, limp, imp, chimp, chill, hill

In the Service, page 97 army, arm, harm, charm, chart, cart, car, care, cave, wave, wavy, navy

Tidying Up, page 98 dirty, dirt, dart, part, pant, paint, pain, pan, can, clan, clean

Outerwear, page 99 jacket, jack, jock, joke, poke, pole, hole, hold, cold, colt, coat

Brass Band, page 100 trumpet, pet, pelt, pent, bent, belt, bolt, colt, cold, cord, corn, horn **Crybaby, page 101** baby, bay, hay, ham, ram, cram, cramp, tramp, trap, tray, try, cry

Utensils, page 102 spoon, spool, stool, tool, toll, tall, talk, tack, pack, park, pork, fork

Wildlife, page 103 bird, bind, mind, kind, rind, find, fin, finish, fish

Boo!, page 104 trick, track, crack, rack, race, trace, grace, grate, great, treat

Bedridden, page 105 sick, sack, sank, sink, stink, ink, mink, milk, mill, ill

