



Selfish

The word *selfish* has one meaning—being self-centered. Many children’s texts emphasize *selfishness* as a negative trait. However, it is important to recognize all emotions, even the negative ones. Students may encounter texts where characters are *selfish* and the lessons within these texts often include encouraging children to develop compassion, gratitude, and sharing skills.

Dr. Seuss is among many popular authors whose stories conclude with such lessons. His story *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* portrays a grumpy, selfish character, the Grinch, who tries to steal Christmas gifts from others in order to ruin Christmas. The story ends as the Grinch learns his lesson and is no longer greedy and selfish.

Follow-Up

- Have you ever known someone who was selfish? Were they selfish all the time or only in certain situations?
- Is there ever a time when being selfish could be a positive thing?

The Spanish Connection

The word *selfish* is the word *self*, descendant of the Common Germanic word, with the suffix *-ish*, meaning “of or belonging to a person or thing.” The first use of the word *selfish* was by Presbyterians in the year 1641. The Spanish word for *selfish* is *egoísta*. *Egoísta* is not a Spanish cognate for *selfish*, but it is a cognate of the word *egotistic*, a synonym.

Word Changes

The word *selfish* includes the root word *self* and the suffix *-ish*. In this context, *self* is not being used as a suffix, as it often is (e.g., herself, himself, oneself, etc.). *Self* as a suffix forms singular personal pronouns. *Self* as a root word refers to the characteristics of a person and what makes them unique.

Some idioms relating to being *selfish* are connected to greed. For example, the idiom “cash in on” means to exploit a situation and this carries the negative connotation that the person “cashing in on” the situation is being greedy or *selfish*. Other idioms are more closely linked to the concept of selfishness. Having “an ax to grind” refers to having a *selfish* reason for doing or saying something.



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Selfish

Selfish as in being overly concerned about oneself without considering others (adj)

- greedy
- self-interested
- self-centered
- self-absorbed
- self-infatuated
 - egotistic
 - egotistical
 - stingy
- ungenerous
- parsimonious

IDIOMS

- An ax to grind
- In it for oneself
- Cash in on

SPANISH CONNECTIONS

- egotistic / egotista





S4-10

Selfish

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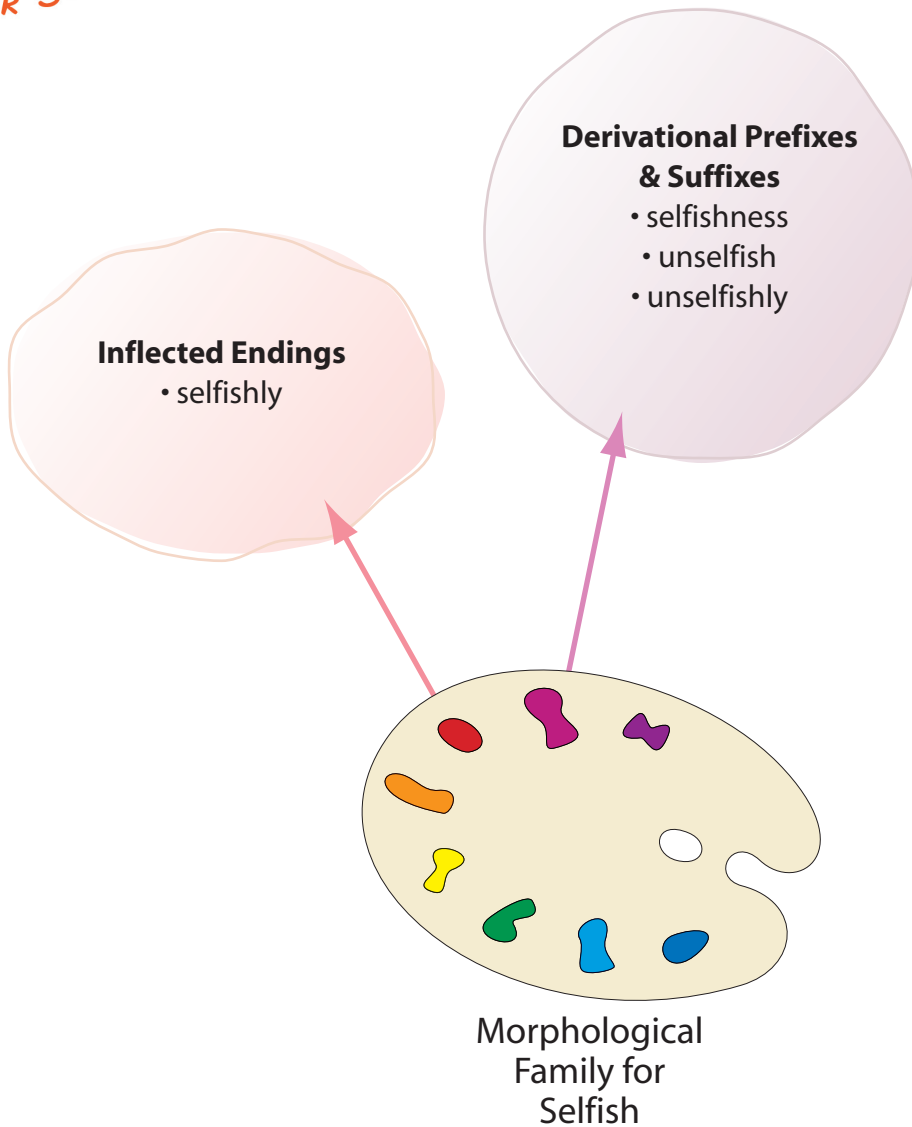
Selfish

IDIOMS

SPANISH CONNECTIONS



Selfish



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