Forming Adjectives Using –ful or -less

What is a suffix?

A suffix is a group of letters we add to the end of a word to change its meaning.

There are lots of different suffixes. Today we are going to look more carefully at the suffixes:

-ful

and

-less

Suffixes –ful and -less

Look at these words:

use

help

These words can be used as a verb or a noun.
When we add one of our suffixes, the word becomes an adjective.

They could not **use** the broken car.

verb

The broken car was **useless**.

adjective

He couldn't **help** the injured bird.

verb

He felt **helpless**.

adjective

Suffixes –ful and -less

The suffix -ful often means 'being full of' or having lots of.
For example, **useful** means being full of use or having lots of use.

When we use the suffix -ful on the end of words we only write one letter l.

The suffix -less is often the opposite of -ful and means having none.
So **useless** means having no use.

Suffixes –ful and -less

In your pairs, look at the following sentences and work out which word fits best. Write your answer on your whiteboard.

1. The girl broke her toy train. She was <u>careless.</u>_____. (careful / careless)

2. The boy helped his mum to wash the dishes.
   He was <u>helpful.</u>_____. (helpful / helpless)

3. I cooked my mum breakfast when she was ill.
   She said I was very <u>thoughtful.</u>_____. (thoughtful / thoughtless)

4. The injection I had didn't hurt. It was <u>painless.</u>_____. (painful / painless)

Adding -ful or -less

When we add the suffixes -ful and -less, we usually just add them to the end of the root word.

care ➡️ **careful**

care ➡️ **careless**

mind ➡️ **mindless**

When the root word ends in y, we **usually** change the y to an **i** before adding the suffix.

beauty ➡️ **beaut*i*ful**

plenty ➡️ **plent*i*ful**