

Appendix 1: Word formation

A Introduction

Look at these examples.

*Lots of people believe that God **exists**.*

*Lots of people believe in the **existence** of God.*

Exist is a verb and **existence** is a noun. The word **existence** has two parts: **exist** and **ence**. We call **ence** a 'suffix'. We add it to end of the verb **exist** to form a noun.

We can also use suffixes to form verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

*The system is being **modernized**. (= made modern)*

*I grew up in an **industrial** town. (= a town where there is a lot of industry)*

*The man was behaving **strangely**. (= in a strange way)*

There are many different suffixes, such as **ence**, **ize**, **al**, **ly**, **tion** and **ment**. Some of them can be used to form many different words. For example, there are a lot of nouns ending in **tion**: **action**, **education**, **explanation**, **information**, **instruction**, etc. There are no exact rules about which suffix you can add to which word.

Adding a suffix can also involve other changes to the form of a word.

industry → *industrial* *repeat* → *repetition* *science* → *scientist*.

Now look at these examples.

*They're going to **play** the match on Wednesday.*

*They're going to **replay** the match on Wednesday.*

We can add **re** to the beginning of the verb **play**. We call **re** a 'prefix'. A prefix adds something to the meaning of a word. The verb **replay** means 'play again'. We can also add prefixes to nouns and adjectives. See G and H.

B Noun suffixes

ment	<i>the prospects for employment</i>	<i>reach an agreement</i>	
ion/tion/sion	<i>take part in a discussion</i>	<i>increase steel production</i>	<i>ask for permission</i>
ation/ition	<i>an invitation to a party</i>	<i>people's opposition to the idea</i>	
ence/ance	<i>a preference for houses rather than flats</i>	<i>a distance of ten miles</i>	
ty/ity	<i>no certainty that we shall succeed</i>	<i>keep the door locked for security</i>	
ness	<i>people's willingness to help</i>	<i>recovering from an illness</i>	
ing	<i>enter a building</i>	<i>reach an understanding</i>	

C Nouns for people

er/or	<i>the driver of the car</i>	<i>a newspaper editor</i>
ist	<i>a place full of tourists</i>	<i>a scientist doing an experiment</i>
ant/ent	<i>an assistant to help with my work</i>	<i>students at the university</i>
an/ian	<i>Republicans and Democrats</i>	<i>the electrician rewiring the house</i>
ee	<i>an employee of the company (= someone employed)</i>	
	<i>notes for examinees (= people taking an exam)</i>	

We also use **er** for things, especially machines.

*a hair-**dryer*** *a food **mixer*** *a cassette **player***

D Verb suffixes

Many verbs are formed by adding **ize** or **ise** to an adjective. Some are formed by adding **en**.

ize *European safety rules are being **standardized**.* *They **privatized** the company.*

en *They're **widening** the road here.* *Meeting you has really **brightened** my day.*

E Adjective s

Most of these

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ly ▷ 1098
able/ible

F Adverbs

ly ▷ 108

G Some con

anti (= a
inter (= a
mini (= a
mis (= a
multi (= a
over (= a
post (= a
pre (= a
re (= a
semi (= a
super (= a
under (= a

H Negative

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Adjective suffixes

Most of these adjectives are formed from nouns.

al	a professional musician	Britain's coastal waters
ic	a metallic sound	a scientific inquiry
ive	an informative guidebook	an offer exclusive to our readers
ful	a successful career	feeling hopeful about the future
less	feeling hopeless about the future (= without hope)	powerless to do anything about it
ous	guilty of dangerous driving	luxurious holiday apartments
y	a rocky path	the salty taste of sea water
ly ▷ 109A	a friendly smile	a very lively person
able/ible	an acceptable error (= an error that can be accepted)	a comprehensible explanation
	a valuable painting (= worth a lot of money)	a comfortable chair

F Adverbs

ly ▷ 108 He looked around **nervously**. I moved here quite **recently**.

G Some common prefixes

anti (= against)	anti-roads protestors	anti-government troops
inter (= between)	an international match	interstate highways in the US
mini (= small)	a minicomputer	the minibar in your hotel room
mis (= wrongly)	mishear what someone says	miscalculate the amount
multi (= many)	multicoloured lights	a multimillionaire
over (= too much)	too fond of overeating	overcrowded roads
post (= after)	the post-war world	a postgraduate student
pre (= before)	pre-match entertainment	in prehistoric times
re (= again)	a reunion of old friends	reread a favourite book
semi (= half)	semi-skilled work	sitting in a semicircle
super (= big)	a huge new superstore	a supertanker carrying oil
under (= too little)	thin and underweight	underpaid work

H Negative prefixes

We can also use a prefix to form an opposite. For example, the opposite of clear is unclear (= not clear). Un is the most common negative prefix.

dis	a dishonest way to behave	can't help being disorganized	dislike the idea
	disappear from the scene	a disadvantage of the plan	
il (+ l)	an illegal drug	an illiberal attitude	
im (+ m or p)	an impossible task	an impolite question	
in	an indirect route	the invisible man	a great injustice
ir (+ r)	an irregular shape	an irrelevant remark	
non	non-alcoholic drinks	a non-stop flight	
un	an uncomfortable chair	an unusual event	an undated letter
	uncertain what to do	unpack your suitcase	unzip the bag

APPENDIX I WORD-FORMATION

I.1
A form to which a rule of word-formation is applied is called a **BASE** (as distinct from **STEM**: see Note below), and the chief processes of English word-formation by which the base may be modified are:

- (1) **AFFIXATION** { (a) adding a prefix to the base, with or without a change of word-class (eg: *author* → *co-author*) (App I.12 ff)
(b) adding a suffix to the base, with or without a change of word-class (eg: *drive* → *driver*) (App I.13 ff)
- (2) **CONVERSION**, ie assigning the base to a different word-class without changing its form ('zero affixation', eg: *drive* v → *drive* n) (App I.23 ff)
- (3) **COMPOUNDING**, ie adding one base to another (eg: *tea* + *pot* → *teapot*) (App I.33 ff)

Once a base has undergone a rule of word-formation, the derived word itself may become the base for another derivation; and so, by repetition, it is possible to derive words of considerable morphological and semantic complexity. A moderately complex example is the word *unfriendly* *ness*, the derivation of which we set out as follows:

- (1) *friend* NOUN
(2) *friendly* NOUN → ADJECTIVE
(3) *un-friendly* ADJECTIVE → ADJECTIVE
(4) *un-friendly-ness* ADJECTIVE → NOUN

There are possibilities for mixing processes of derivation in the same word; for instance, compounding and affixation are both found in *colour-blindness*, a word derived from the compound adjective *colour-blind* by the same rule which derives *happiness* from *happy*.

I.3 Word-formation

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Apart from these major word-formation processes, English calls upon a number of minor devices – reduplication, clipping, blending, and acronymy (App I.43 ff) – as means of forming new words on the basis of old.

Note

We distinguish the base of a derived word from the stem, which is the part of the word remaining after every affix has been removed; *friend* in the above example. In a word which has only one affix, such as *friendly*, the stem (*friend*) is also the base; *friendly* is the base, but not the stem, of *unfriendly*.

Prefixation

I.2

Prefixes do not generally alter the word-class of the base. Productive prefixes normally have a light stress on their first (or only) syllable, the main stress of the word coming on the base; *pre-fabricated*. This stress pattern will be assumed in the examples in the following tables, unless words are marked to the contrary.

I.3

Negative prefixes

	meaning	added to:	examples
UN-	'the opposite of'	adjectives	<i>unfair</i>
(cf App I.4)	'not'	participles	<i>unassuming</i>
			<i>unexpected</i>
NON-	'not'	various classes	<i>non-smoker</i>
			<i>non-drip (paint)</i>
IN-	(as for <i>un-</i>)	adjectives	<i>insane</i>
	(as for <i>un-</i>)	adjectives	<i>disloyal</i>
DIS-	(cf App I.4)	verbs	<i>dislike</i>
		abstract nouns	<i>disfavour</i>
A-	'lacking in'	adjectives	<i>amoral</i>
		nouns	<i>asymmetry</i>

Note

[a] Non- can normally be regarded as corresponding to clause negation: *non-smoker* = one who does not smoke. It frequently contrasts with *un-* in expressing binary (non-gradable) contrast, rather than the opposite end of a scale: eg: *non-scientific* vs *scientific*.

[b] In- is realized as *h-* before *N*, eg: *illogical*, *im-* before bilabials, eg: *improper*, and *ir-* before *l*, eg: *irrelevant*.

1.4 Reversative or privative prefixes

	meaning	added to:	examples
UN-	'to reverse action' 'to deprive of'	verbs	write unhorse
DE-	'to reverse action'	verbs abstract nouns	defrost deforestation
DIS-	(as for <i>mis-</i>)	verbs participles nouns	disconnect discoloured discontent

1.5 Pejorative prefixes

	meaning	added to:	examples
MIS-	'wrongly' 'astray'	verbs abstract nouns participles	misshyform misconduct misleading
MAL-	'bad(ly)'	verbs abstract nouns participles adjectives	maltrait malfunction malformed malodorous
PSEUDO-	'false, imitation'	nouns adjectives	pseudo-intellectual (n or adj)

Note
For other prefixes with pejorative overtones, see ARCH-, OVER-, UNDER-, and HYPER- (App I.6). Like *pseudo-* is QUASI-

1.6 Prefixes of degree or size

	meaning	added to:	examples
ARCH-	'highest, worst'	nouns (mainly human)	archduke, arch-enemy
SUPER-	'above, more than, (cf' App I.8) better'	nouns adjectives	'superman', 'supermarket', supernatural
OUT-	'to do something faster, longer, etc than ...'	verbs (mainly intrans)	outrun, outlive

1.7 Word-formation

	meaning	added to:	examples
SUR-	'over and above'	nouns	surtax
SUB-	'lower than, (cf' App I.8) less than'	adjectives	subhuman, substandard
OVER-	'too much'	verbs participles adjectives	overeat overdressed overconfident
UNDER-	'too little'	verbs participles	undercook underprivileged
HYPER-	'extremely'	adjectives	hypercritical
ULTRA-	'extremely, beyond'	adjectives	ultra-violet, ultra-modern
MINI-	'little'	nouns	miniskirt

Note
Mini- is often used for humorous coinages. The contrasting prefixes *maxi-* ('large', 'long') and *mini-* ('medium') are less common, eg: *maxi-skirt*.

1.7

Prefixes of attitude

	meaning	added to:	examples
CO-	'with, joint'	verbs nouns	cooperate co-pilot
COUNTER-	'in opposition to'	verbs abstract nouns	'counteract (also counterfact) counter-revolution
ANTI-	'against'	nouns denominal adjectives adverbs	anti-missile (attrib- utive) anti-social anti-clockwise
PRO-	'on the side of'	nouns denominal adjectives	pro-Common Market (attrib) pro-communist

Note
Anti- suggests simply an attitude of opposition, while *counter-* suggests action in opposition to or in response to a previous action.

1.8
Locative prefixes

	meaning	added to:	examples
SUPER-	'over'	nouns	superstructure
SUB-	'beneath, lesser in rank'	nouns adjectives verbs	subway subconscious subtle
INTER-	'between, among'	denominal adjectives verbs nouns	international intermarry interaction
TRANS-	'across, from one place to another'	denominal adjectives verbs	transatlantic transplant

1.9
Prefixes of time and order

	meaning	added to:	examples
FOR-	'before'	mainly verbs abstract nouns	foretell foreknowledge
PRE-	'before'	nouns adjectives	pre-war (attributive) pre-marital
POST-	'after'	nouns adjectives	post-war (attrib) post-classical
EX-	'former'	human nouns	ex-husband
RE-	'again, back'	verbs abstract nouns	rebuild, re-evaluate resettlement

Note

As an exception to the statement in App 1.2, *pre-* and *post-* normally involve conversion from noun to adjective.

1.10

Number prefixes

	meaning	examples
UNI-, MONO-	'one'	unilateral, monothelism
BI-, DI-	'two'	bilingual, dipole
TRI-	'three'	trioxide
MULTI-, POLY-	'many'	multi-racial, polysyllabic

1.13 Word-formation

Note
Bimonthly is notoriously ambiguous. In that it can mean either 'every two months' or 'twice every month'. *Biweekly* has the same ambiguity. *Bimonthly* normally has only the meaning 'every two years' (in contrast with *biannual* 'twice a year'), but many speakers find it as ambiguous as *bimonthly*.

1.11
Other prefixes

	meaning	examples
AUTO-	'self'	autobiography
NEO-	'new, revived'	neo-Gothic
PAN-	'all, world-wide'	pan-African
PROTO-	'first, original'	prototype
SEMI-	'half'	semi-circle
VICE-	'deputy'	vice-president

1.12

Conversion prefixes

	added to → to form	examples
BE-	(a) nouns → participial adjectives (b) verbs → transitive verbs	(a) bewigged bespectacled (b) bedazzle becalm bewitch
EN-	nouns → verbs	enlarge
A-	verbs → predicative adjectives	afloat

Suffixation

1.13

Classification of suffixes

Unlike prefixes, suffixes frequently alter the word-class of the base; for example, the adjective *kind*, by the addition of the suffix *-ness*, is changed into an abstract noun *kindness*.

We shall group suffixes not only by the class of word they form (as noun suffixes, verb suffixes, etc) but also by the class of base they are typically added to (DENOMINAL, *ie* from nouns, DEADJECTIVAL, DEVERBAL suffixes, etc). More usefully, we may extend this latter terminology,

where convenient, to the derived words themselves, and talk of *worker* as a DEVERBAL noun, *hopeful* as a DENOMINAL adjective, etc.

On stress with suffixation, see App II.2.

Note

[a] Inflectional suffixes, if any, always follow derivational suffixes: *worker*.

[b] Deverbal nouns do not include the 'gerund' class of nouns ending in *-ing* (*swimming*, etc.) which are designated VERBAL NOUNS (13.23). Because of the complete productivity of the verbal noun category, the relation between verbal nouns and the corresponding verbs is considered to be purely grammatical rather than derivational. Another class of words having arguably the same status of full productivity is that of AGENTIAL NOUNS (App I.1.6): *worker*, etc. Notice that although not all verbs have a corresponding institutionalized (or 'permanent') agential noun (*trick* ~ *'trickster, flour* ~ *'flourer*), it is always possible to create an *ad hoc* or 'temporary' agential noun in a frame such as *a (regular) . . . er of N*:

John regularly flouts authority ~ *John is a flouter

John is a regular flouter of authority

1.14

Noun → noun suffixes

added to →
to form

meaning

examples

[A] occupational

-STER, nouns →

-EER personal nouns

'person engaged in an occupation or activity'

-ER nouns → nouns

(cf App 1.1.6) varied meanings, eg 'inhabitant of X'

teenager, Londoner

[B] diminutive or feminine

-LET count nouns →

count nouns

'small, unimportant'

booklet, piglet

-LETTE nouns → nouns

(a) 'small, compact'

kitchenette, staterette

(b) 'imitation' (material)

francelette

(c) 'female'

usherette

-ISS animate nouns →

animate nouns

'female'

waitress

-Y, -IE nouns → nouns

daddy, granite

1.15 Word-formation

added to →
to form

meaning

examples

[C] status, domain

-HOOD nouns →

abstract nouns

'status'

boyhood

-SHIP (as for *-hood*)

'status, condition'

friendship, dictatorship

-DOM (as for *-hood*)

'domain, condition'

kingdom, stardom

-OCRACY (as for *-hood*)

'system of government'

democracy

-(E)RY chiefly nouns →

(a) abstract nouns

(b) concrete count nouns

(c) non-count nouns

(a) 'behaviour'

(b) 'place of activity or abode'

(c) 'collectivity'

(a) slavery

(b) refinery, nursery

(c) machinery

[D] Other

-ING count nouns →

non-count nouns

'the substance of which N is composed'

panelling

-FUL count nouns →

count nouns

'the amount which N contains'

mouthful

Note

[a] The diminutive suffix *-ling* is added to various word-classes, usually with a mildly contemptuous flavour: *pinching, underling*.

[b] The suffix *-y/-ie* largely restricted to familiar contexts, indicates endearment or familiarity. It is frequently added to a clipped form of the base eg: *moetes* (esp. AME: 'moving pictures').

1.15

Noun/adjective → noun/adjective suffixes

added to → to form

meaning

examples

-ITE nouns (chiefly names) →

personal nouns

'member of community, faction/type'

Israeli, socialist

-(I)AN nouns (chiefly proper) →

personal nouns, non-gradable adjectives

'pertaining to . . .'

Indonesian, republican

-IUSE (as for *-(I)an*)

'nationality'

Chinese

	<i>added to</i> → <i>to form</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
-IST	nouns/adjectives → personal nouns/adjectives	'member of a party, occupation'	<i>socialist</i> <i>violinist</i>
-ISM	nouns/adjectives → abstract nouns	'attitude, political movement'	<i>idealism</i> , <i>communism</i>

Note

Many nouns in *-ism* correspond to a noun in *-ist* which denotes an adherent of the principle, etc involved: *communist/communism*.

1.16**Verb → noun suffixes**

	<i>added to</i> → <i>to form</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
-ER, -OR	verbs (mainly dynamic) → nouns (mainly personal)	agentive and instrumental	<i>driver</i> <i>receiver</i> <i>actor</i>
-ANT	verbs → nouns	agentive and instrumental	<i>inhabitant</i> , <i>disinfectant</i>
-EE	verbs → personal nouns	passive	<i>employee</i>
-ATION	verbs → (a) abstract nouns (b) collective nouns	(a) 'state, action' (b) 'institution'	(a) <i>exploration</i> (b) <i>organization</i>
-MENT	verbs → nouns (chiefly abstract)	'state, action'	<i>amazement</i>
-AL	verbs → nouns (chiefly count abstract)	'action'	<i>refusal</i> , <i>dismissal</i>
-ING	verbs → (a) abstract nouns (b) concrete nouns	(a) 'activity' (b) 'result of activity'	(a) <i>driving</i> (b) <i>building</i>
-AGE	verbs → non-count abstract nouns	'activity, result of activity'	<i>drainage</i>

1.19 Word-formation**1.17****Adjective → noun suffixes**

	<i>added to</i> → <i>to form</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
-NESS	adjectives → abstract nouns	'state, quality'	<i>happiness</i>
-ITY	(as for <i>-ness</i>)	'state, quality'	<i>sanity</i>

1.18**Verb suffixes**

	<i>added to</i> → <i>to form</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
-IFY	nouns, adjectives → verbs (chiefly transitive)	causative	<i>simplify</i>
-IZE (BrE: also <i>-ise</i>)	(as for <i>-ify</i>)	causative	<i>popularize</i>
-EN	adjectives → verbs (a) transitive (b) intransitive	(a) causative (b) 'become X'	(a) <i>deafen</i> (b) <i>sadden</i>

1.19**Noun → adjective suffixes**

	<i>added to</i> → <i>to form</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
-FUL	nouns (chiefly abstract) → gradable adjectives	'having . . .' 'giving . . .'	<i>useful</i> <i>helpful</i>
-LESS	nouns → adjectives	'without . . .'	<i>childless</i>
-LY	nouns (chiefly concrete) → gradable adjectives	'having the qualities of . . .'	<i>cowardly</i>
-LIKE	(as for <i>-ly</i>)	'having the qualities of'	<i>childlike</i>
-Y	nouns (chiefly concrete non-count) → gradable adjectives	'like . . .' 'covered with . . .'	<i>creamy</i> , <i>hairy</i>

	<i>added to</i> → <i>to form</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
-ISH	nouns (chiefly proper and count) → adjectives		
	(a) non-gradable	(a) 'belonging to ...'	(a) Turkish
	(b) gradable	(b) 'having the character of ...'	(b) foolish
-IAN	nouns (chiefly proper) → adjectives	'in the tradition of ...'	<i>Darwinian</i>

1.20

Some adjective suffixes common in borrowed and neo-classical words

<i>suffix</i>	<i>used to form:</i>	<i>examples</i>
-AL (also <i>-ial, -ical</i>)	primarily non-gradable adjectives	<i>criminal, editorial, musical</i>
-IC	gradable or non-gradable adjectives	<i>heroic</i>
-IVE (also <i>-ative, -itive</i>)	gradable or non-gradable adjectives	<i>attractive, affirmative, sensitive</i>
-OUS (also <i>-eous, -ious</i>)	primarily gradable adjectives	<i>virtuous, courteous, vivacious</i>

Note

[a] In some adjectives, *-ic* alternates with *-ical*, with a difference of meaning:

- an economic miracle ~ the car is economical to run
(in the economy) ('money-saving')
a historic building ~ historical research
(with a history) ('pertaining to history')

[b] There are several less common neo-classical affixes, among which *-ary, -ite* and *-ory* are particularly notable: *revolutionary, affectionate, obligatory*. Adjectives in *-ory* alternate (with or without stress shift) with nouns in *-ion, -ation, -atory* ~ *obligation, satellite factory* ~ *satellite factory*.

1.21

Other adjective suffixes

	<i>added to</i> → <i>to form</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
-ABLE, -IBLE	verbs (chiefly transitive) → adjectives	'able/worthy to be V-ed'	<i>readable, forcible</i>
-ISH	gradable adjectives → gradable adjectives	'somewhat ...'	<i>youngish</i>
-ED	nouns or noun phrases → adjectives	'having ...', etc	<i>barbed</i>

1.25 Word-formation

1.22

Adverb suffixes

	<i>added to</i> → <i>to form</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
-LY	adjectives → adverbs of manner, viewpoint, etc	'in a ... manner', etc	<i>happily, strangely</i>
-WARD(S)	adverbs, nouns → adverbs of manner/direction	manner/direction	<i>backward(s)</i>
-WISE	nouns → adverbs of manner	'in the manner of ...', 'as far as ...'	(a) <i>crabwise</i> (b) <i>weather-wise</i>

Note

Also *-style* and *-fashion* ('in the manner/style of') are sometimes used as adverbial suffixes: They are *American-style* (cf 8.20).

1.23

Conversion

Conversion is the derivational process whereby an item changes its word-class without the addition of an affix. For example, the verb *release* (as in *They released him*) corresponds to a noun *release* (as in *They ordered his release*), and this relationship may be seen as parallel to that between the verb *acquire* and the noun *acquisition*.

1.24

Verb → noun

- [A] 'Stative' (from stative verbs to nouns): *doubt, love*
[B] 'Event/activity' (from dynamic verbs): *laugh, walk*
[C] 'Object of V': *answer* ('that which is answered'), *catch*
[D] 'Subject of V': *bore* ('someone who bores/is boring'), *cheat*
[E] 'Instrument of V': *cover* ('something that covers things'), *wrap*
[F] 'Manner of V-ing': *throw, walk*
[G] 'Place of V': *retreat, turn*

1.25

Adjective → noun

Miscellaneous examples are *daily* ('daily newspaper'), *comic* ('comic actor') (*young marrieds* ('young married people'; informal). The