

## Word Forms

Prefixes and suffixes that are used in English give clues as to the meaning and, or, the function of words. Typically suffixes indicate the function of a word in a sentence. For instance there are some suffixes that are used only for nouns and others that are used for verbs, adjectives and adverbs. The particular suffix used in forming a word also helps to give meaning to a word, for instance 'competition' and 'competitor' are both nouns that are formed from the verb 'compete'. The '-or' suffix, however, indicates that there is a person performing the action, whereas the '-tion' suffix indicates a condition or state of being. Do note, that some suffixes are used with more than one type of word, so on their own they cannot be used to infer the function of the word in the sentence. In those situations, other context clues are needed to provide the function of that word in a particular sentence. For example, an '-ing' suffix occurs with nouns, verbs and adjectives; in the sentence "Teaching is interacting with interesting people," *teaching* is a noun (a gerund), *interacting* is part of a verb phrase in the present progressive tense, and *interesting* is an adjective that qualifies people.

## Suffixes

The tables below provide the more common noun, verb and adjective suffixes and give the usage and examples. There is only one common suffix for adverbs, and that is '-ly.' It is often added to adjectival suffixes as in 'creative' and 'creatively.'

### Noun Endings

Ending	Usage	Example
-al	the act of doing, or the state of	betrayal, refusal
-ance/-ancy/-ence/-ency	relating to quality, state or condition	performance, infancy, prominence, urgency
-ation	action or process of; result of	creation, reformation
-ice	condition, quality or act	cowardice, notice
-er/-or	person or thing that performs the action	teacher, worker, competitor, legislator
-graph	a writing or record	telegraph, polygraph
-ian	person or thing	politician, amphibian
-ing	having the quality of (gerund ending)	teaching, working
-ism	action or practice, theory or doctrine	nationalism, Hinduism
-ist	one who, or that which does or has to do with	nationalist, typist
-ity	state, condition or quality	inferiority, confidentiality
-ization	nouns formed from verbs; condition, act, process	harmonization, urbanization
-ment	the product or result of; the means of	achievement, government
-ness	relating to quality, state or condition	happiness, sadness
-ogy	the study of	biology, geology

-oid	like, resembling	humanoid, android
-ory	a place for the action of the verb stem	dormitory, repository
-ship	the state, condition or quality of; art or skill of	friendship, marksmanship
-sion/-tion	action or process of; condition or state of being; result of	rejection, completion, connection

### Verb Endings

Ending	Usage	Example
-ate	verbs from some Latin forms	fascinate, participate
-ed	forms the simple past and past participle of regular verbs	walked, has walked
-en	verbs formed from adjectives	soften, weaken
-er	verbs with a habitual or repeated action	stutter, canter
-fy	cause to be or become	beautify, liquefy
-ing	present participle and part of progressive tenses	walking, is walking
-ise/-ize	to cause to become, resemble; make into; to act in the manner of	authorize, sympathize
-s/-es	ending of third person singular, present tense	walks, runs

### Adjective endings

Ending	Usage	Example
-able/-ible/-ble	capable of, fit for, tending to, likely to	trainable, flexible
-al	relating to, having the nature of	musical, personal
-ant	in the act or process of doing	vigilant, militant
-ed	adjectives formed from nouns	interested, bored
-ent	having the quality of	dependent, resilient
-er	comparative ending	bigger, faster
-est	superlative ending	biggest, fastest
-ful	full of, characterized by	beautiful, bountiful
-ic	pertaining to, connected with, resembling	volcanic, angelic
-ing	participial form as an adjective	interesting, boring
-istic	having the qualities of, formed from	realistic, socialistic
-ite	derived from some Latin verbs	infinite, polite
-ive	having a tendency to or the nature of	attentive, massive
-ory	a place or instrument for doing the main element	laboratory, dormitory
-ose	full of; like	verbose, grandiose
-ous/-ious	full of; having the qualities of	poisonous, anxious

## Prefixes

Prefixes aid in determining the meaning of words. While some prefixes have only one meaning, others may have more than one, or there may be several prefixes with the same meaning. It is a situation that helps lead to the richness of the English vocabulary.

Prefix	Usage	Example
a-/an-	without	amoral, anarchy
ad-	to, toward, near	adhere, advert
ante-	before in time or order	antechamber, antecedent
anti-	against, opposed to	antiaircraft, antibiotic
bene-	good	beneficial, benefactor
bi-	two	bicycle, bipolar
by-	aside or apart from	bystander, byproduct
circum-	around	circumpolar, circumnavigate
co-/col-/com/ con-/cor-	together, with, jointly	co-author, collaborate, combine, conspire, correspond
contra-	against, opposite	contraception, contraband
de-	down from, away, off	descent, declassify
dia-	across, through	diagonal, diagram
dis-	away from, apart	disconnect, disown
epi-	upon, above, outside, in addition to	epidermis, epilogue
ex-	out of, thoroughly	exhale, exasperate
hyper-	beyond, excessive, extreme	hyperbole, hyperactive
hypo-	under, beneath, down, less than	hypodermic, hypothesis
il-/im-/in-/ir-	in, into, on not	illegible, impolite, inoperable, irrefutable
inter-	between, with each other	interchange, intercede
intra-/intro-	within, inside of	intramural, introvert
mal-	bad, evil, wrong	malformed, malignant
micro-	small	microscope, microorganism
mis-	wrong	mistake, misinformation
mono-	one, alone	monotone, monopoly
multi-	many, much	multilingual, multiply
non-	not	nonentity, nonconformist
ob-	against, in opposition	objection, oblivious
over-	above, on top of, superior	overactive, overdraft
peri-	around, near	perimeter, perihelion

poly-	many	polygamy, polygon
post-	after in time or order	postdated, postmortem
pre-	before in time or order	predict, precaution
pro-	forward, toward the front, occurring earlier	project, prognosis
re-	back again	redo, renew
retro-	back again, backward	retrospective, retroactive
semi-	half, partly	semiconductor, semiconscious
sub-/suc-/suf-/sup- /sus-	under, beneath	submarine, succumb, suffocate, support, suspect
super	above, greater, better	superfluous
syl-/sym-/syn-	with, together, associated with	syllable, sympathy, synapse
tri-	three	tricycle
trans-	across, through	transform, transfuse
ultra-	beyond, excessive, extreme	ultramarine, ultraviolet
un-	not, opposed to; back	unavoidable; undo
uni-	one, alone	unicorn, uniform

There are many words that have noun, verb, adjective, and adverb forms. A few of these word form ‘families’ are given in the chart below as examples. Any good dictionary will give you the various forms of a word.

noun	verb	adjective	adverb
beauty	beautify	beautiful	beautifully
competition/competitor	compete	competitive	competitively
creation	create	creative	creatively
management/manager	manage	manageable	manageably
nationalist/nationalism	nationalize	national	nationally
nature	naturalize	natural	naturally
notice	notice	noticeable	noticeably
sadness	sadden	sad	sadly
significance	signify	significant	significantly

[http://www.athabascau.ca/courses/engl/155/support/word\\_forms.htm](http://www.athabascau.ca/courses/engl/155/support/word_forms.htm)