

Word Forms (Suffixes and Roots)

In English, many words have similar structures or roots that can be made into other words by adding suffixes and prefixes. Often, when adding suffixes, the word can be made into other parts of speech. For example, run, a verb, can be made into a noun: runner. Quick, an adjective, can be made into an adverb: quickly. Different parts of speech are used differently in sentences, so we must be careful to choose the correct form of the word to preserve meaning.

Parts of Speech

There are eight different parts of speech, but here we will only be using four: Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs.

A **Noun** is a person, animal, place, thing, or idea. A noun is usually a subject, a direct object, or an indirect object

Our **friend** in **Indiana** bought a **goat**. (thing, person, animal)

I watched a **movie** on **freedom** at **school**. (person, thing, idea, place)

A **Verb** expresses actions, events, or states of being. The verb shows the relationship between the subject and the predicate of the sentence.

Chicago **is** a city in Illinois. (state of being)

I **walk** one mile every day. (action)

An **Adjective** modifies a noun or a pronoun by describing, identifying, or quantifying words. It sometimes answers the question "what kind?". An adjective is usually right before the noun or pronoun it modifies, but can also be after a "to be" verb.

The **playful** kitten chased the string.

The ice cream was **cold** and **delicious**.

An **Adverb** can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a phrase, or a clause. An adverb indicates manner, time, place, cause, or degree and answers questions such as "how?" "when?" "where?" "how much?". Most adverbs have an "ly" suffix, but some are less obvious. Unlike an adjective, an adverb can be almost anywhere in a sentence. Adverbs are complex, but make writing far more interesting.

The seamstress **quickly** made the clothes. (modifies "made" and indicates "in what manner")

The students waited **patiently** through the lecture. (modifies "waited" and indicates in what manner or how)

The **boldly**-spoken words would return to haunt the rebel. (modifies the adjective "spoken")

Unfortunately, the bank closed at three **today**. (modifies the entire sentence; answers the question "when")

Suffixes

The **stem** or **root** of a word that can be changed is usually a verb in the first person, present tense form, like manage, succeed, wait, act, or know. From this form, we can add suffixes to make the words take different functions in the sentence. Note that not all words can be made into different forms simply by adding a suffix, and that some words can make more than one of a certain part of speech by adding suffixes with different meanings.

There are many suffixes for each part of speech. Here is a list of a few for each, with a definition of what it changes the word to mean. Notice that some of the suffixes will change form slightly when added to different words, as will the stems.

Nouns			
-age	Extent, amount, act of	drain; leak; marry	drainage ; leakage ; marriage
-an	Member of, belonging to, favoring	Republic	Republican
-ance/-ence	Activity, condition	guide; attend; independent	guidance ; attendance ; independence
-ancy/-ency	Activity, condition of being	constant	constancy
-ant/-ent	Agent, a person/thing who does, makes	inhabit; correspond; lubricate	inhabitant ; correspondent ; lubricant
-arian	Belonging to a group, favoring	vegetable; authority	vegetarian ; authoritarian
-ation/-ition	Institution, condition of being done; state of doing something	organize; educate; communicate	organization ; education ; communication
-crat	A person connected with	democracy; bureaucracy	Democrat ; bureaucrat
-ee	Variation of -er, a person	absent; employ	absentee ; employee
-eer	A person who does/makes/operates	auction; engine	auctioneer ; engineer
-er/-or	Agent(the thing that), a person who does/makes, something having	bake; dream; survive; silence	baker ; dreamer ; survivor ; silencer
-ese	National origin	Portugal; China	Portuguese ; Chinese
-ery	place of activity, collective, countable, domain, condition	refine; surgeon; machine; slave	refinery , surgery , machinery , slavery
-ette/-ess	Feminine form, small, compact	waiter; bachelor; kitchen	waitress ; bachelorette ; kitchenette
-ful	The amount contained	mouth; cup	mouthful ; cupful
-hood	Status	adult	adulthood
-ian	Connected with	Paris	Parisian
-ion	Act of doing something	confess	confession
-ing	Turns countable nouns into uncountable, indicating material	pipe; wire; panel	pip ing; wir ing; panel ing
-ism	Doctrine, belief, condition	commune; absentee	Communism , absenteeism
-ite	Member of a group	social	socialite
-ity	State, quality	complex; curious	complexity ; curiosity
-let	Small, unimportant	star; pig	starlet ; piglet
-ling	Unimportant (derogatory)	weak	weakling
-man	Person who does something	work; craft; state	workman ; craftsman ; statesman
-ment	State, action	arrange; govern	arrangement ; government

-ness	State, condition	ill; selfish	illness; selfishness
-ocracy	System of government, organization	Democrat; Autocrat	Democracy; Autocracy
-ship	Status, condition, quality	friend; hard; craftsman	friendship; hardship; craftsmanship
-ster	A person making or doing something, a member of	trick; gang	trickster; gangster

Verbs			
-ate	Cause to become	regular; active	regulate; activate
-en	Cause to become	tight; deaf	tighten; deafen
-ify	Cause to become	beauty; simple	beautify; simplify
-ize	Cause to become	popular; hospital	popularize; hospitalize

Adjectives			
-able/-ible	able to be, having the quality of	teach; reduce	Teachable; reducible
-al	having the quality of	nation; person	national; personal
-ant	having the quality to	tolerate; dominate	tolerant; dominant
-arian	having the quality of	authority	authoritarian
-ative	connected with	argument	argumentative
-ed	adjective form of nouns and verbs (participle)	wall; please	walled; pleased
-ese	Showing national origin	China; Lebanon	Chinese; Lebanese
-esque	In the style of	picture; Roman	picturesque; Romanesque
-ful	Having, full of	meaning; thank	meaningful; thankful
-ic	Having the quality of	Democracy	Democratic
-ical	Having the quality of	theory	theoretical
-ish	Somewhat; approximately	red; young	reddish; youngish
-ish	Belonging to (national origin)	Sweden; Ireland	Swedish; Irish
-ive	Having the quality of	explode, collect	explosive; collective
-less	Without; lacking in	child	childless
-like	Having the quality of	child	childlike
-ous/-eous/-ious	Having the quality of	virtue; courtesy; ambition	virtuous; courteous; ambitious
-some	Full of	burden; bother	burdensome; bothersome
-worthy	Deserving	praise	praiseworthy
-y	Full of, covered with, having the quality of	hair; sand; brain	hairy; sandy; brainy

Adverbs			
-ly/-ally (after -ic/-ment)	In the manner of	strange; happy; fundamental	strangely; happily; fundamentally
-ward	Manner, direction of movement	after; back	afterward; backward
-wise	In the manner of	clock	clockwise

Examples

Stem	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
Manage (verb)	Manager; Management	Manage	Managerial	
Product (noun)	Production	Produce	Productive	Productively
Joy (noun)	Joy	Enjoy (uses a prefix)	Joyous; joyful	Joyfully
Conceive (verb)	Concept; conception	Conceive	Conceptual	Conceptually
Benefit (verb)		Benefit	Beneficial	beneficially
Reciprocate (verb)	Reciprocity	Reciprocate	Reciprocal	Reciprocally
Apology (noun)	Apology	Apologize	Apologetic	Apologetically
Interest (noun)	Interest	Interested	Interesting	Interestingly
Theology (noun)	Theology		Theological	Theologically
Act (verb)	Action	Act	Active	Actively
Seduce (verb)	Seduction	Seduce	Seductive	Seductively
Proceed (verb)	Procedure; proceeding	Proceed	Procedural	proceedingly
Logic (noun)	Logic		Logical	Logically
Know (verb)	Knowledge	Know	Knowledgeable; knowing	Knowingly