



Word Formation

Overview

There are many **word beginnings (prefixes)** and **word endings (suffixes)** that can be added to a word to change its meaning or its word class. The most common ones are shown here, followed by examples of how they are used in the process of word formation. More can be found in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.

Verb Formation

The endings **ize** and **ify** can be added to nouns and adjectives to form verbs.

Noun	+ ize	= Verb
American	+ ize	= Americanize
Legal	+ ize	= legalize

This will make the factory more **modern**. This will **modernize** the factory.

Adjective	+ ize	= Verb
False	+ ify	= Falsify
Humid	+ ify	= humidify

These tablets make the water **pure**. They **purify** the water.

Adverb Formation

The ending **ly** can be added to most adjectives to form adverbs.

Adjective	+ ly	= Adverb
Easy	+ ly	= easily

His behaviour was **stupid**. He behaved **stupidly**

Noun Formation

The endings **er**, **ment**, and **ation** can be added to many verbs to form nouns.

Verb	+ er	= Noun
Fasten	+ er	= faster
Open	+ er	= opener

John **drives** a bus. He is a bus **driver**.

Amaze + **ment** = amazement

Retire + **ment** = retirement

Children **develop** very quickly. Their **development** is very quick.

Admire + **ation** = admiration

Organize + **ation** = organization

The doctor **examined** me. The doctor gave me an **examination**.

The endings **ity/ty** and **ness** can be added to many adjectives to form nouns.

Stupid + **ity** = stupidity

Don't be so **cruel**. I hate **cruelty**

Adjective Formation

The endings **y**, **ic**, **ical**, **ful**, and **less** can be added to many nouns to form adjectives. The ending **able** can be added to many verbs to form adjectives.

Noun + **y** = Adjective

Dirt + **y** = dirty

That was an awful **smell**. It was very **smelly**.

Atom + **ic** = atomic

That was a book of **poetry**. It was a **poetic** book.

Hope + **ful** = hopeful

His broken leg caused **pain**. It was very **painful**.

Care + **less** = careless

The operation didn't cause **pain**. It was **painless**.

Verb + **able** = Adjective

Love + **able** = lovable

You can **wash** this coat. It's **washable**

Opposites

Prefixes added to the front of many words can produce an opposite meaning.

un + fortunate = unfortunate

I'm not very **happy**. In fact I'm very **unhappy**.

In + efficient = inefficient & **ill** + literate = illiterate & **Im** + possible = impossible

De + centralize = decentralize

Instead of **inflating** the tire, he **deflated** it.

dis + honest = dishonest

I don't **agree** with everything you said. I **disagree** with the last part.

non + payment = non-payment

You are not making any **sense**. What you are saying is **nonsense**.