

Suffixes

A suffix is a letter or group of letters added at the end of a word which makes a new word.

words	suffix	new words
<i>forget, use</i>	<i>-ful</i>	<i>forgetful, useful</i>
<i>state, govern</i>	<i>-ment</i>	<i>statement, government</i>
<i>complicate, create</i>	<i>-ion</i>	<i>complication, creation</i>

The new word is most often a different word class from the original word. In the table above, the suffix *-ful* has changed verbs to adjectives, *-ment*, and *-ion* have changed verbs to nouns. If you see a word ending in *-ment*, for example, it is likely to be a noun (e.g. *commitment, contentment*).

Suffixes: spelling

Often, the suffix causes a spelling change to the original word. In the table above, the *-e* ending of *complicate* and *create* disappears when the *-ion* suffix is added. Other examples of spelling changes include:

1. *beauty, duty* + *-ful* → *beautiful, dutiful* (-y changes to i)
2. *heavy, ready* + *-ness* → *heaviness, readiness* (-y changes to i)
3. *able, possible* + *-ity* → *ability, possibility* (-le changes to il)
4. *permit, omit* + *-ion* → *permission, omission* (-t changes to ss)

A good learner's dictionary will give you information on the correct spelling of words with suffixes.

Common suffixes and examples

Noun suffixes

suffix	examples of nouns
<i>-age</i>	<i>baggage, village, postage</i>
<i>-al</i>	<i>arrival, burial, deferral</i>
<i>-ance/-ence</i>	<i>reliance, defence, insistence</i>
<i>-dom</i>	<i>boredom, freedom, kingdom</i>
<i>-ee</i>	<i>employee, payee, trainee</i>
<i>-er/-or</i>	<i>driver, writer, director</i>
<i>-hood</i>	<i>brotherhood, childhood, neighbourhood</i>
<i>-ism</i>	<i>capitalism, Marxism, socialism (philosophies)</i>
<i>-ist</i>	<i>capitalist, Marxist, socialist (followers of philosophies)</i>
<i>-ity/-ty</i>	<i>brutality, equality, cruelty</i>
<i>-ment</i>	<i>amazement, disappointment, parliament</i>
<i>-ness</i>	<i>happiness, kindness, usefulness</i>
<i>-ry</i>	<i>entry, ministry, robbery</i>
<i>-ship</i>	<i>friendship, membership, workmanship</i>
<i>-sion/-tion/-xion</i>	<i>expression, population, complexion</i>

Adjective suffixes

suffix	examples of adjectives
<i>-able/-ible</i>	<i>drinkable, portable, flexible</i>
<i>-al</i>	<i>brutal, formal, postal</i>
<i>-en</i>	<i>broken, golden, wooden</i>
<i>-ese</i>	<i>Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese</i>
<i>-ful</i>	<i>forgetful, helpful, useful</i>
<i>-i</i>	<i>Iraqi, Pakistani, Yemeni</i>
<i>-ic</i>	<i>classic, Islamic, poetic</i>
<i>-ish</i>	<i>British, childish, Spanish</i>
<i>-ive</i>	<i>active, passive, productive</i>
<i>-ian</i>	<i>Canadian, Malaysian, Peruvian</i>
<i>-less</i>	<i>homeless, hopeless, useless</i>
<i>-ly</i>	<i>daily, monthly, yearly</i>
<i>-ous</i>	<i>cautious, famous, nervous</i>
<i>-y</i>	<i>cloudy, rainy, windy</i>

Verb suffixes

suffix	examples of verbs
<i>-ate</i>	<i>complicate, dominate, irritate</i>
<i>-en</i>	<i>harden, soften, shorten</i>
<i>-ify</i>	<i>beautify, clarify, identify</i>
<i>-ise/-ize</i>	<i>economise, realise, industrialize</i> (-ise is most common in British English; -ize is most common in American English)

Adverb suffixes

suffix	examples of adverbs
<i>-ly</i>	<i>calmly, easily, quickly</i>
<i>-ward(s)</i>	<i>downwards, homeward(s), upwards</i>
<i>-wise</i>	<i>anti-clockwise, clockwise, edgewise</i>