

Parts of Words: Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes:

Words can be broken into two pieces: the **root** of the word, the part which conveys the meaning, and any potential **affixes**. You are probably more familiar with the name of the two different types of affixes in English: **prefixes**, which are added *before* the root of the word, and **suffixes**, which are added *after* the root of the word.

For example, in the word *bicycles*, *bi-* is the prefix, *cycle* is the root, and *-s* is the suffix.

Types of Suffixes:**Inflectional**

Inflectional suffixes do not change the part of speech of the word that they are added to. Instead, they fill a specific number of roles. In fact, there are only **eight** different inflectional suffixes in English. See the chart below to see those eight inflectional endings.

Suffix	Function	Example Sentence
-s	Noun Plural	Jeremy's family owns ten bicycles <u>s</u> .
-s	Noun Possessive	Each bicycle's <u>s</u> wheels are a different color.
-s	Verb Present Tense	Jeremy ride <u>s</u> his bicycle, the one with purple wheels, every afternoon.
-ed	Verb Past Tense	Yesterday, Jeremy want <u>ed</u> to bake instead of riding, but his sister baked his cake for him.
-en	Verb Past Participle	Jeremy had beat <u>en</u> the eggs before he went for his ride.
-ing	Verb Present Participle	That afternoon, he saw a turtle while rid <u>ing</u> .
-er	Adjective Comparative	The turtle walked fast <u>er</u> than Jeremy expected.
-est	Adjective Superlative	In his family, Jeremy is the fast <u>est</u> rider.

Derivational

Unlike inflectional suffixes, *derivational* suffixes create new words when added to a word root. (They *derive* new words from the root word.) Often, derivational suffixes change a word's part of speech. Derivational suffixes follow a specific pattern—certain kinds of suffixes, when added to one part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, or adverb), form a specific new part of speech. See below for key examples of those suffix patterns.

*Example Suffix Patterns:

To Form Nouns

Verb	+ “ er ”	= Noun	person or thing who does _____	(<i>teacher</i>)
Verb	+ “ ment ”	= Noun	condition of _____	(<i>argument</i>)
Verb	+ “ ation ”	= Noun	state of being/doing	(<i>admiration</i>)
Adjective	+ “ ity/ty ”	= Noun	having the quality of _____	(<i>oddity</i>)
Adjective	+ “ ness ”	= Noun	state of being	(<i>darkness</i>)
Noun	+ “ ist ”	= Noun	person who promotes _____	(<i>communist</i>)
Noun	+ “ ism ”	= Noun	doctrine or belief	(<i>feminism</i>)

To Form Adjectives

Verb	+ “ able ”	= Adjective	adds a sense of possibility	(<i>doable</i>)
Verb	+ “ ed/en ”	= Adjective	adds a sense of completion	(<i>risen</i>)
Verb	+ “ ing ”	= Adjective	adds a sense of continuation	(<i>shining</i>)
Verb	+ “ ious ”	= Adjective	characterized by _____	(<i>rebellious</i>)
Verb	+ “ ive ”	= Adjective	characterized by _____	(<i>creative</i>)
Noun	+ “ y ”	= Adjective	characterized by _____	(<i>dirty</i>)
Noun	+ “ ic ”	= Adjective	pertaining to _____	(<i>atomic</i>)
Noun	+ “ al ”	= Adjective	pertaining to _____	(<i>instrumental</i>)
Noun	+ “ ical ”	= Adjective	pertaining to _____	(<i>biological</i>)
Noun	+ “ ful ”	= Adjective	having the quality of _____	(<i>careful</i>)
Noun	+ “ less ”	= Adjective	lacking the quality of _____	(<i>careless</i>)

To Form Verbs

Noun	+ “ize”	= Verb becoming/ making sth/so _____	<i>(standardize)</i>
Noun	+ “ify”	= Verb making sth/so _____	<i>(personify)</i>
Adjective	+ “ize”	= Verb becoming/ making sth/so _____	<i>(normalize)</i>
Adjective	+ “ify”	= Verb making sth/so _____	<i>(purify)</i>

To Form Adverbs

Adjective	+ “ly”	= Adverb	describing how	<i>(slowly)</i>
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*Note: Depending on the spelling of the root of the word, the exact spelling of the suffixes varies.