Derivational Morphemes

# Morphemes can be divided into inflectional or derivational morphemes.



**Derivational morphemes** are different to **inflectional morphemes**, as they create/derive a new word, which gets its own entry in the dictionary. Derivational morphemes help us to create new words out of base words.

 For example, we can create new words from <act> by adding derivational prefixes (e.g. re- en-) and suffixes (e.g. -or)

 So from <act> we can get:     re+act = react     en+act = enact     act+or = actor

Whenever a **derivational morpheme** is added, a new word (and dictionary entry) is derived/created.

 English has a rich history, including influences from Anglo-Saxon, as well as Latin (French) and Greek. Each of these influences have had an effect on the vocabulary and spelling of English, and these are reflected in the **derivational morphemes** (prefixes and suffixes), which can be grouped into different phases of English's evolution.

 It is helpful to highlight more high frequency and foundational morphemes initially, then progressively add more  complex morphemes and those with a lower frequency.

# Anglo-Saxon Morphemes

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| High frequency prefixes  | un- re- dis- in- mis- a- fore- de- pre- en- sub- inter- trans- super- semi- anti- mid-  |
| Common derivational suffixes  | -er -y -ly -ful -ness -less -ment -hood  -able/-ible -en  |
| Inflections and derivational suffixes  that need a spelling change in base   | * final consonant doubling (tipping, stopper)
* drop final e rule (raking, excitable, trading)
* change y to i rule (tried, beautiful, angriest)
* double final consonant of stressed syllable (incurred, winner)
 |
|   | **High Frequency Prefixes**  |   |
| *Prefix*  | *Meaning/* *function*  | *Examples*  |
| un-   | not  | unfair, unseen, unknown   |
| re-  | again  | retrace, reusable, reappear  |
| dis-  | not  | disbelief, disown, dislike  |
| in-   | not  | inexpensive, inoffensive, inaction  |
| mis-  | wrong  | misprint, misunderstand, misbehave  |
| a-  | not  | amoral, apolitical, atypical  |
| fore-   | before  | forecast, forehead, foreman  |
| de-   | opposite  | decide, deduce, detect  |
| pre-   | before  | prevent, preclude, prepare  |
| en-  | within or in  | enrapture, enthuse, engage  |
| sub-   | under, below  | subject, subtract, subordinate    |
| inter-   | between, among   | interstate, internet, interject   |
| trans-   | across, through, change   | transmit, transplant, transcontinental  |
| super-   | above  | supersede, superimpose, supernumerary  |
| semi-   | half, partly  | semiconscious, semicircle, semiprecious   |
| anti-   | against  | antibody, antibiotic, antisocial  |
| mid-  | middle  | midlife, midsummer, midterm   |

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|   | **Common Derivational Suffixes**  |   |
| *Suffix*  | *Meaning/* *function*  | *Examples*  |
| -er   | person who does verb  | teacher, taster, driver  |
| -y   | characterised by  | greasy, nerdy, smelly  |
| -ful   | full of  | tasteful, joyful, fearful  |
| -ness  | state or quality of: condition  | kindness, seriousness, happiness  |
| -less   | without  | tasteless, ageless, careless  |
| -ment   | action or process  | temperament, development, experiment   |
| -hood   | state condition of being  | neighbourhood, likelihood, adulthood  |
| -able/-ible  | capable of  | lovable, durable, gullible  |
| -en  | to become or cause to be  | sharpen, golden, lengthen   |

# Latin morphemes

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| --- | --- |
| Latin prefixes  | e.g. non- ex- con- per- mal- bi- co- di- o- pro- tri- twi- super- circum- intra- contra- counter- extra- intro- multi- ultra-  |
| Latin roots  | e.g. port form rupt tract cept spect ject struc dict mit flex ped aud grad/gress voc/voke lit/litera cede/cess tain/ten/tin cad/cas/cid mob/mot/mod  |
| Derivational suffixes   | e.g. -ion (i.e. -sion/-tion) -ous -cious -tious -or -ess -ure/-ture -ent/-ence -ify -ity  |

**Some example Latin Morphemes**

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|   | **Latin Prefixes**  |   |
| *Prefix*  | *Meaning/* *function*  | *Examples*  |
| non-   | not  | nonprofessional, nonemergency, non-existent  |
| ex-   | of out, from  | ex-member, ex-wife  |
| con-   | with  | connect, conclude, consensus   |
| per-   | through, throughout  | pervade, perfect, perennial   |
| mal-   | bad, wrongful  | malfunction, malpractice, malcontent  |
| bi-   | twice  | bifocal, binary  |
| co-  | together  | coproduce, cohabitate   |
| di-  | twice  | dichromatic, diphthong   |
| super-   | above  | supersede, superimpose, supernumerary  |

# Greek morphemes

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| Graphemes from Greek influence  |

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| k  c  ch  |    | f  ph  |
| chemical  |    | fan  physics  |
|    |    |    |
| i  y  |    | z   x  |
| sit  dysfunction  |    | zoo  xylophone  |
|    |    |    |
| ie  igh  y  |    |    |
| pie  high   cycle  |    |    |

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| Silent letter Greek spellings  | rh (rhythm) ps (pseudo) pt (pterodactyl)   |
| Greek Combining forms   | micro scope photo graph tele phon geo therm bio meter ology   |

# Derivational suffixes that indicate word types

The derivational suffixes below are all derivational morphemes, and most indicate the word type (noun, adjective, verb, adverb). Many change the root/base word into another word type (see examples below).

Some suffixes of nouns, adjectives, and verbs do not create a new word (e.g. -ing, -ed, -s, -es). These are called inflectional morphemes, and they are a much smaller set of morphemes.

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| **NOUNS (N)**  |   |   | **ADJECTIVES (Adj)**  |   |
| *Suffix*  | *Examples*  |   | *Suffix*  | *Examples*  |
| -ion, -sion, -tion  | population  |    | -al  | natur**al**  |
| -acy  | accuracy  |    | -ful  | beauti**ful**  |
| -age  | image  |    | -ly  | friend**ly**  |
| -ance, -ence  | permanence  |    | -ic  | chron**ic**  |
| -hood  | childhood  |    | -ish  | child**ish**  |
| -ar, -or  | scholar, doctor  |    | -like  | child**like**  |
| -ism  | socialism  |    | -ous  | popul**ous**, numer**ous**  |
| -ist  | artist  |    | -y  | happ**y**  |
| -ment  | government  |    | -ate  | accur**ate**  |
| -ness  | happiness  |    | -able, -ible  | cap**able**, terr**ible**  |
| -y  | beauty  |    |   |   |
| -ity  | reality, capacity  |    |    |    |

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| **VERBS (V)**  |   |   | **ADVERBS (Adv)**  |   |
| *Suffix*  | *Examples*  |   | *Suffix*  | *Examples*  |
| -ify  | signify  clarify  mystify  simplify  classify  amplify  exemplify  falsify  notify  specify  pacify  glorify  purify  qualify  unify  fortify  testify  identify  terrify  diversify  verify  horrify  ratify  |    |   -ly  | happi**ly**, readi**ly**, beautiful**ly**  |
| -ate  | populate  |    |     |    |
| -ize  | realize  |    |    |    |
| -en  | widen, lengthen  |    |    |    |