

Module: Oral Expression

Level: First year, groups: 01,02,03,04,05&06

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**1st year LM
English Course
(Word Building)**

Affixes and roots

Adding affixes to existing words (the base or root) to form new words is common in English. Prefixes are added to the front of the base (*like* → *dislike*), whereas suffixes are added to the end of the base (*active* → *activate*). Prefixes usually do not change the class of the base word, but suffixes usually do change the class of the word.

The most common prefixes used to form new verbs in academic English are: *re-*, *dis-*, *over-*, *un-*, *mis-*, *out-*. The most common suffixes are: *-ise*, *-en*, *-ate*, *-(i)fy*. By far the most common affix in academic English is *-ise*.

Verbs (e.g. prefix + verb → verb)

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
<i>re-</i>	again or back	restructure, revisit, reappear, rebuild, refinance
<i>dis-</i>	reverses the meaning of the verb	disappear, disallow, disarm, disconnect, discontinue
<i>over-</i>	too much	overbook, oversleep, overwork
<i>un-</i>	reverses the meaning of the verb	unbend, uncouple, unfasten
<i>mis-</i>	badly or wrongly	mislead, misinform, misidentify
<i>out-</i>	more or better than others	outperform, outbid
<i>be-</i>	make or cause	befriend, belittle
<i>co-</i>	together	co-exist, co-operate, co-own
<i>de-</i>	do the opposite of	devalue, deselect
<i>fore-</i>	earlier, before	foreclose, foresee
<i>inter-</i>	between	interact, intermix, interface
<i>pre-</i>	before	pre-expose, prejudge, pretest
<i>sub-</i>	under/below	subcontract, subdivide
<i>trans-</i>	across, over	transform, transcribe, transplant
<i>under-</i>	not enough	underfund, undersell, undervalue, underdevelop

e.g. Suffix used to form verbs with the meaning "cause to be".

Suffix	Example
<i>-ise</i>	stabilise, characterise, symbolise, visualise, specialise
<i>-ate</i>	differentiate, liquidate, pollinate, duplicate, fabricate
<i>-fy</i>	classify, exemplify, simplify, justify
<i>-en</i>	awaken, fasten, shorten, moisten

Nouns

The most common prefixes used to form new nouns in academic English are: *co-* and *sub-*. The most common suffixes are: *-tion*, *-ity*, *-er*, *-ness*, *-ism*, *-ment*, *-ant*, *-ship*, *-age*, *-ery*. By far the most common noun affix in academic English is *-tion*.

e.g. prefix + noun → noun

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
<i>anti-</i>	against	anticlimax, antidote, antithesis
<i>auto-</i>	self	autobiography, automobile
<i>bi-</i>	two	bilingualism, biculturalism, bi-metalism
<i>co-</i>	joint	co-founder, co-owner, co-descendant
<i>counter-</i>	against	counter-argument, counter-example, counter-proposal
<i>dis-</i>	the converse of	discomfort, dislike
<i>ex-</i>	former	ex-chairman, ex-hunter
<i>hyper-</i>	extreme	hyperinflation, hypersurface
<i>in-</i>	the converse of	inattention, incoherence, incompatibility
<i>in-</i>	inside	inpatient,
<i>inter-</i>	between	interaction, inter-change, interference
<i>kilo-</i>	thousand	kilobyte
<i>mal-</i>	bad	malfunction, maltreatment, malnutrition

<i>mega-</i>	million	megabyte
<i>mis-</i>	wrong	misconduct, misdeed, mismanagement
<i>mini-</i>	small	mini-publication, mini-theory
<i>mono-</i>	one	monosyllable, monograph, monogamy
<i>neo-</i>	new	neo-colonialism, neo-impressionism
<i>out-</i>	separate	outbuilding,
<i>poly-</i>	many	polysyllable
<i>pseudo-</i>	false	pseudo-expert
<i>re-</i>	again	re-organisation, re-assessment, re-examination
<i>semi-</i>	half	semicircle, semi-darkness
<i>sub-</i>	below	subset, subdivision
<i>super-</i>	more than, above	superset, superimposition, superpowers
<i>sur-</i>	over and above	surtax
<i>tele-</i>	distant	telecommunications,
<i>tri-</i>	three	tripartism
<i>ultra-</i>	beyond	ultrasound
<i>under-</i>	below, too little	underpayment, under-development, undergraduate
<i>vice-</i>	deputy	vice-president

e.g. Suffix added to a verb (V), noun (N) or adjective(A) → noun

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
<i>-tion</i> <i>-sion</i>	action/instance of V-ing	alteration, demonstration expansion, inclusion, admission
<i>-er</i>	person who V-s something used for V-ing	advertiser, driver computer, silencer
<i>-ment</i>	action/instance of V-ing	development, punishment, unemployment
<i>-ant</i> <i>-ent</i>	person who V-s	assistant, consultant student
<i>-age</i>	action/result of V	breakage, wastage, package

<i>-al</i>	action/result of V	denial, proposal, refusal, dismissal
<i>-ence</i> <i>-ance</i>	action/result of V	preference, dependence, interference attendance, acceptance, endurance
<i>-ery/-ry</i>	action/instance of V-ing place of V-ing	bribery, robbery, misery refinery, bakery

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
<i>-er</i>	person concerned with N	astronomer, geographer
<i>-ism</i>	doctrine of N	Marxism, Maoism, Thatcherism
<i>-ship</i>	state of being N	friendship, citizenship, leadership
<i>-age</i>	collection of N	baggage, plumage

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
<i>-ity</i>	state or quality of being A	ability, similarity, responsibility, curiosity
<i>-ness</i>	state or quality of being A	darkness, preparedness, consciousness
<i>-cy</i>	state or quality of being A	urgency, efficiency, frequency

Adjectives

Many adjectives are formed from a base of a different class with a suffix (e.g. *-less*, *-ous*). Adjectives can also be formed from other adjectives, especially by the negative prefixes (*un-*, *in-* and *non-*).

The most common suffixes are *-al*, *-ent*, *-ive*, *-ous*, *-ful*, *-less*.

e.g. Suffix added to verbs or nouns → adjective

Suffix	Example
<i>-al</i>	central, political, national, optional, professional
<i>-ent</i>	different, dependent, excellent
<i>-ive</i>	attractive, effective, imaginative, repetitive
<i>-ous</i>	continuous, dangerous, famous
<i>-ful</i>	beautiful, peaceful, careful
<i>-less</i>	endless, homeless, careless, thoughtless
<i>-able</i>	drinkable, countable, avoidable,

e.g. negative + adjective → adjective

Prefix	Examples
<i>un-</i>	unfortunate, uncomfortable, unjust
<i>im-/in-/ir-/il-</i>	immature, impatient, improbable, inconvenient, irreplaceable, illegal
<i>non-</i>	non-fiction, non-political, non-neutral
<i>dis-</i>	disloyal, dissimilar, dishonest

Mixed

e.g. base with both prefix and suffix

Adjectives: uncomfortable, unavoidable, unimaginative, inactive, semi-circular

Nouns: disappointment, misinformation, reformulation

Word formation

Formal written English uses nouns more than verbs. For example, judgement rather than judge, development rather than develop, admiration rather than admire.

There appeared to be evidence of differential *treatment* of children.

This is reflected in our *admiration* for people who have made something of their lives, sometimes against great odds, and in our somewhat disappointed *judgment* of those who merely drift through life.

All airfields in the country would be nationalised, and the government would continue with the *development* of new aircraft as recommended by the Brabazon Committee.

Associated with nominalisation is the occurrence of prepositional phrases, introduced by *of*:

judgment *of* those treatment

of children development *of*

new aircraft

-tion is the most common suffix used in this way. For example: *alteration, resignation*.

However others are: *-ity* ability, similarity, complexity; *-ness* blindness, darkness, preparedness; *-ment* development, encouragement; *-ship* friendship; *-age* mileage; *-ery* robbery, bribery; *-al* arrival; *-ance* assistance, resemblance.