# **Morphology Exercises**

**1.** Identify the component morpheme(s) of each word. How many morphemes does each word contain?

a) deforms b) stupidity c) unreliable

d) colonization e) disinfectant f) inversion

g) ownership h) unemployed i) unshockability

j) theirs k) salamander l) grumpily

**2.** Isolate the affixes in each of these words and state whether each is prefix or suffix.

a) depose e) action

b) readily f) repackage

c) active g) unchanged

d) bemoan h) forcefully

**3.** For the following words, identify all roots.

a) dragged f) unassuming

b) deactivated g) redness

c) impossible h) racketeers

d) thumbtack i) cloudiness

e) hopefully j) exceptionally

\* These exercises are adapted or taken from *The structure of English,* by Thomas E. Murray, 1995.

**4.** The words *report, import, deport, comport* and *export* seem to be multimorphemic. English has many words that are similar to the ‘*-port* family’. In the table below, see how many cells you can fill in.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | in- | ex- | con- | re- | trans- | de- |
| **-port** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **-mit** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **-ceive** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **-duce** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **-cede** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **-fer** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **-scribe** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **-gress** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **-sist** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Do you think that units like *–port, -mit, -ceive, etc*. should be considered morphemes? If so, what problems do they create for the definition of **morpheme**? If not, what should we do about the intuition that native speakers have that such words are complex?

Adapted from *Introducing Morphology* by Rochelle Lieber, 2010.

**5.** Draw morphology trees for the following words. Start from the **root** and build up the word stepwise. Ensure you label the part of speech (syntactic category) at each level of the tree.

a) farmer f) recyclable

b) bookworm g) cheerfulness

c) mislay h) conversationally

d) unhelpful i) deactivation

e) commercialism j) indecipherability

**6.** What is the problem with each of the following morphology trees? Why are they incorrect? Redraw them so that the morphology tree is correct.

a) N

Af N

*re*-

Af V

*form* -*er*

b) N

Af N

*hyper*-

A Af

*activ(e)* -*ity*

c) Adv

A Af

-*ly*

N Af

-*ate*

Af N

*un*- *fortun(e)*

**7.** The word *unlockable* is semantically ambiguous. Draw two morphology trees to demonstrate this. Can you think of at least one other morphologically ambiguous word?

**8.** This task is all about reconstructing the word-formation 'stories' of the words in bold print. Identify for each of the stories in (a-g) the corresponding sequence of word-formation processes from the set in (1-7). The first one (a) is done as an example.

a. rap music > rap > to rap > **rapper** 3. compounding – clipping – conversion – derivation

b. rehabilitation > rehab > to **rehab**

c. vacuum cleaner > to vacuum-clean > to **vacuum**

d. campaign > to campaign > **campaigner**

e. tailor-fit > to **tailor-fit**

f. breathalyser > to **breathalyse**

g. brunch > to **brunch**

1. conversion – derivation

2. blend –conversion

3. compounding – clipping – conversion – derivation

4. derivation – clipping – conversion

5. blend – back-formation

6. compounding – back-formation – clipping

7. compounding – conversion

From: Kortmann, B. (2005). *English Linguistics: Essentials*. Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag.

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