

Language focus C

Word formation: suffixes

We have already seen how prefixes can change the meaning of a word. Let us now consider some suffixes, their usual meanings, and how they change the meanings of English words.

Suffixes			
Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
-ance	-ize	-able	-ly
-ence	-ate	-ible	
-or	-fy	-less	
-er	-en	-ic	
-ist	-ify	-ical	
-ness		-ish	
		-ive	

Exercise 1

Study these tables and try to make additional examples. Use your dictionary if necessary.

1 Noun-forming suffixes:

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-ance	state	performance
-ence	quality of	independence
-er, -or	{ a person who a thing which	programmer, operator compiler, accumulator
-ist, -yst	a person who	analyst, typist
-ian	pertaining to	electrician
-tion, -ation	the act of	compilation
-ness	condition of	readiness
-ion	action/state	conversion
-ing	activity	multiplexing
-ment	state, action	measurement
-ity	state, quality	electricity
-ism	condition/state	magnetism
-dom	domain/condition	freedom
-ship	condition/state	relationship, partnership

2 Verb-forming suffixes:

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-ize/-ise -ate -ify -en	to make	computerize automate, activate, calculate simplify harden, widen

3 Adverb-forming suffix:

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-ly	in the manner of	electronically, logically, comparably, helpfully

4 Adjective-forming suffixes:

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-al -ar -ic -ical	having the quality of	computational, logical circular magnetic, automatic electrical
-able -ible		comparable divisible
-ous	like, full of	dangerous
-ful -less -ish	characterized by without like	helpful careless yellowish
-ed -ive	having the quality of	computed interactive

Note: Words ending in *-ing* are formed from verbs. The *-ing* form may be used as a noun, part of a noun phrase, or part of a verb.

Examples:

- 1 **Programming** is an interesting job. (noun)
- 2 **Programming** in C is interesting. (part of noun phrase)
- 3 He is **working** as a programmer. (part of verb)

Exercise 2

Read the following sentences and circle the suffixes. Underline the stem if it can be used on its own. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 A programmer designs, writes, and tests programs for performing various tasks on a computer.
- 2 A systems analyst studies organizational systems and decides what action needs to be taken to maximize efficiency.

- 3 Laser printers are preferable to other types of printing devices because of their speed and quietness.
- 4 The microcomputer we have purchased does not have a FORTRAN compiler. It is programmable in BASIC only.
- 5 We have found that operators who have the freedom to take short breaks during the day greatly improve their performance.
- 6 The number of shipments will increase over the coming months.
- 7 We decided to computerize the entire plant to give each division more independence.
- 8 Spooling is a way of storing data temporarily on disk or tape until it can be processed by another part of the system.
- 9 Turning your office into a paperless environment may be expensive at the beginning but can produce big savings in the long run.
- 10 Software developers are producing increasingly sophisticated applications for a growing global market.

Now, for each word that has a suffix, indicate what part of speech the word is (e.g. noun, verb, etc.).