

# Affix

An affix is one or more than one syllable or letter added at the beginning or at the end of a root word, to change its meaning. Simply, it is an attachment to the root word that creates a new word. An affix could be a [prefix](#) or a [suffix](#), and multiple affixes may be added to a word.

Sometimes, prefixes or suffixes are hyphenated, while other times they are not. For instance, in the excerpt, “Tyger Tyger, burning bright, / In the forests of the night ... / Could frame thy fearful symmetry?” (Tyger Tyger by William Blake), the poet has used two suffixes “-ing,” and “ful” without hyphenating them.

## Types of Affix

There are two types of affix:

### Prefix

Prefixes, such as anti, dis, hyper, homo, re, tri, and uni, appear at the beginnings of words. For example:

He bought a new bicycle.

The result was predetermined.

### Suffix

Suffixes appear at the end of the words, such as able, acy, er, en, ful and ly. For example:

She plays wonderfully.

His jobs are plentiful.

## Examples of Affix in Literature

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### Example #1: *Jane Eyre* (by Jane Austen)

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“Me, she had dispensed from joining the group; saying, “She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance; but that until she heard from Bessie, and could discover by her

own observation, that I was endeavouring in good earnest to acquire a more sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner—something lighter, franker, more natural...” Jane, I don’t like cavillers or questioners; besides, there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders in that manner. Be seated somewhere; and until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent.”

In this passage, Austen has employed suffixes “-ing,” “-ly,” and “-er,” and prefixes “un-” and “dis-”.

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**Example #2: *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince* (by J.K. Rowling)**

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“A Horcrux is a powerful, outlawed kind of Dark Magic that allows the soul to be divided, giving its owner the ability to become immortal. When he was at Hogwarts, Voldemort once convinced Slughorn to give him valuable information about Horcruxes ... As Dumbledore and Harry fly to the tower over which the Dark Mark lingers, they discover that the Dark Mark is a trap intended to lure Dumbledore... Dumbledore is able to use his magic to hide Harry and to make him temporarily immobile and mute.”

Here the author has used suffixes “-ful,” “-able,” and “-ly” and a prefix “dis-.” These affixes add to the meanings of the words and suit them to the text and context.

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**Example #3: *1984* (by George Orwell)**

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“The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a

emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine...”

In this example, the author has used both types of affix. The prefixes include “dis-” and “uni-,” and the suffixes include “-ed,” “-ly,” “-ish,” “-ness,” and “-lly.”

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#### Example #4: *Ode to the West Wind* (by Percy Bysshe Shelley)

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“O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing...  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow.”

There are two prefixes “unseen” and “until,” and two suffixes “-en” and “-er” used in the words “driven,” “enchanter,” and “sister.”

### Function of Affix

Affixes added at the beginnings and endings of words are very helpful for writers and speakers to create new words and add new shades to the meanings of existing words. They play two important roles. Affixes participate in the making of new words as derivational affixes, and they indicate whether a word is a [subject](#) or an [object](#) of the verb as inflectional affixes. Moreover, not only do they carry simple information, but also grammatical information, making words suitable and significant.

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