

# Word formation

## Usage

Word formation refers to the action of adding a suffix or a prefix to a word to either change its meaning or its part of speech (also known as a word class).

## Form

A prefix comes at the start of a word  
and a suffix comes at the end

... defrosted ...

I think you've been **misinformed** about the rules.

... ..



*Most words have more than one form and new ones are constantly created. For example, the word "YouTuber" is a fairly new word form created from the word "YouTube".*

**include (v.), inclusion (n.),  
inclusive (adj.), inclusively (adv.)**

**strengthen (v.), strength (n.),  
strong (adj.), strongly (adv.)**

**delight (v.), delight (n.),  
delightful (adj.), delightfully (adv.)**

## *Theory review*

First, let's review a few useful linguistic terms.

### **Word class**

The category of a word, such as **noun, verb, adjective, adverb**, etc.

### **Verbs**

Verbs show an 'action', such as **work, dance, write, sing** or **drive** or a 'state', such as **live, love, remember, hate** or **regret**.

### **Nouns**

Nouns are words used to describe people, places, or things - **teacher, house, cat**, etc. Proper nouns have capital letters at the beginning: **London, German, the United States**.

### **Adjectives**

Adjectives modify (describe) nouns. Some common adjectives include **purple, large, luxurious, happy, wide, expensive**.

### **Adverbs**

Adverbs modify (describe) verbs, adjectives and other adverbs. They often end in 'ly', but not always. For example, **loudly, nicely, luckily, fast, thoroughly**.

### **Word forms**

Word forms refer to words that share a root of a word and a meaning but they use prefixes and suffixes to change the word class. For example, the words **imagination, imaginative, reimagination** and **imaginatively** are all word forms that come from the same root **imagine**.

# Prefixes and suffixes

A **prefix** is a part of a word that can be added to the beginning of a stem word to add information. For instance, the prefix 're-' means 'again' and can be added to the word 'play' to make '**replay**', to play again.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
anti-	against	antibiotics, antithesis
de-, dis-	opposite	defrost, disagree, demoralise
en-, em-	cause	engulf, embed
in-, im-	not	insecure, impolite
il-, ir-	not	illegal, irregular
re-	again	replay, redo, renew
un-	not	unobstructed, unavoidable

A **suffix** is a part of a word that can be added to the end of a stem word to add information. One common suffix is '-tion', which can turn a word into a noun. If you add '-tion' to the verb 'demonstrate', you will get '**demonstration**'.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
-age	collection	storage, luggage
-er, -or	role	trainer, advisor
-ise	cause	stabilise, organise
-ism	doctrine	sexism, terrorism
-less	without	homeless, timeless
-ship	state	friendship, leadership

# Forming words

Now that we have the basic building blocks of English words, we can start to explore some examples.

Let's say your car has been out in the freezing weather all night. The frost has turned your windscreen into a block of ice.

We don't want a **frosty** windscreen, we want the opposite of that! So, which prefix do we need to add to the noun 'frost' if we want the opposite of 'frost'?

That's right, '**de-**' + '**frost**' = '**defrost**'

Not only does that little prefix '**de-**' tell us that we want to remove the frost, but it also turns our noun, 'frost' into the verb 'defrost'.

Isn't that clever?

## Practice activity

Fill in the gaps in these sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets

1. The taxi driver ignored me all the way home. That's so \_\_\_\_\_ (polite).
2. I used to be so shy when I was 15. Most teenagers are \_\_\_\_\_ (secure).
3. He lived on the streets for several years before he found a place in a \_\_\_\_\_ (home) shelter.
4. You can't avoid paying taxes. It's completely \_\_\_\_\_ (honest).
5. Make sure the hairdryer is \_\_\_\_\_ (connected) before you fix the switch or you could be electrocuted.
6. Charities like the Malala Fund are working hard to reduce female \_\_\_\_\_ (literacy) in the poorest countries.

## Answers

1. impolite, 2. insecure, 3. homeless, 4. dishonest, 5. disconnected, 6. illiteracy