

Exploring Affixation in English

Nneka Umera-Okeke

Abstract:

One of the keys to mastering English spellings is mastering the processes of word formation. The mode of word formation can influence the spelling. The study of the meaningful parts of a word is known as morphology. Linguists have identified many ways in which English form its words which include borrowing from Latin and Greeks, clipping, suppletion, affixation, conversion, acronym, blends, compounding and so on. The scope of this study is to look into affixation as a process of word formation; see the meanings of some of those few letters added at the beginning or end of words, look into the changes words undergo when affixes are added to them. Apart from mastering of spellings, readers of this paper will learn to identify grammatical categories of words by mere looking at the words and identifying the affixes added to them.

Introduction:

Most English words are made up of the base word known as root which contains the heart of the meaning of the word. To expand such words, appendages (affixes) are added at either the beginning or at the end of the word. It is the process of attaching these affixes that is referred to as affixation. The affix added at the beginning of the root is known as prefix while that at the end of a word is suffix. The root is central to the building of new words. For instance, advantage, help, forgive, measure are the core words (roots)

in disadvantageous, unhelpful, unforgivable and immeasurable respectively. They can be analysed as:

Prefix	Root Word	Suffix	New Word
Dis-	advantage	ous	disadvantageous
Un-	help	ful	unhelpful
Un-	forgive	able	unforgivable
Im-	measure	able	immeasurable

Despite the fact that prefixes and suffixes are just a combination of two, three or four letters, they have meaning in English. They are therefore morphemes. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of a word. They change the meaning of the root word. In the above examples, *dis-*, *un-*, and *im-* depict negative. The different approaches to identifying morphemes and the relationships between morphemes and words are reflections of the different trends in linguistics during the twentieth century, but most linguists are in agreement on the type of phenomena morphology is concerned with.

Prefixes and suffixes added to words change the meanings of such words. This study will start with the examination of the meanings of some English prefixes and suffixes.

Meanings of Some Commonly Used Prefixes:

Prefix	Meaning	Word Examples
Bi-	Two; twice; double	Biannual, bilingual
Co-	Together with	Co-author, coexist, coeducation
de-	away from, down undoing	deport
ex-	out	extend, ex-president
im-	in or into	immobile, impossible
ab-	away from	absent

ad-	to, toward	adverb
ambi-	both	ambivalent
ante-	before; in front of	antenatal
anti-	against, opposite; opposed to	antisocial
auto-	self; of or by yourself	autobiography, automatic
contra-	opposite; against	contradict, contra-flow
inter-	among; between	interface, interaction, international
intra-	inside; within	intravenous, intra-departmental
hyper-	more than normal	hypertension, hypercritical
pre-	before	prevent, precondition, preheat
semi-	half, partly	semicircle, semi-final
sub-	under; below, less than	subtopic, subway, substandard
trans-	over, across	trans-Sahara, transport
un-	not	unclean
super-	above, over, extremely	superhuman, superimpose, super structure
com	with	combine
dis-	not; the opposite of	disadvantage, disappoint, dishonest
il-	not	illogical
in-	in, on	input, inhuman
in-	not	irrefutable
ir-	wrong	misprint
mis-	not	multinational, multi-coloured
multi-	more than one; many	nonsense, non-Christian
non-	against	obtuse
ob-	for, forward	outnumber, outgrow, outlive
out-	greater, better, further, longer	proceed
pro-	back, again	postgraduate, postwar
post	after	repeat, regain
re-	under	subcommittee
sub-	across	transcribe
trans-	across	self-control, self-taught
self-	of, to or by yourself	

Note that *un-*, *il-*, *in-*, *ir-*, *non-*, *mis-*, *dis-* *de-* mean “not” or “opposite of” in English. The choice of one is governed by phonological conditions:

Im- is placed before bilabial sounds /p, b, m/ as in:

balance	imbalance	possible	impossible
patient	impatient	pure	impure
mortal	immortal	movable	immovable
modest	immodest	potent	impotent
practical	impractical	mature	immature
perfect	imperfect		

In- is used before alveolar and velar sounds /d, k, s/ and the labio-dental fricative /v/

visible	invisible	definite	indefinite
sincere	insincere	competent	incompetent
direct	indirect	convenience	inconvenience
decision	indecision	credible	incredible
dependent	independent	curable	incurable
defensible	indefensible	describable	indescribable
consistent	inconsistent	conspicuous	inconspicuous
coherent	incoherent	credulous	incredulous

Ir- is used before r

regular	irregular	relevant	irrelevant
resistible	irresistible	responsible	irresponsible
resolute	irresolute	reparable	irreparable

Il- is used before l

logical	illogical	legitimate	illegitimate
legal	illegal	literate	illiterate

Un-

necessary	unnecessary
fair	unfair
fortunate	unfortunate

de-

compose	decompose
increase	decrease
formation	deformation

just	unjust	hydration	dehydration
interesting	uninteresting	merit	demerit
happy	unhappy		
tidy	untidy		

Dis-		non-	
band	disband	commissioned	non-commissioned
courage	discourage	returnable	non-returnable
honour	dishonour	static	non-static
illusion	disillusion	stick	non-stick
please	displease	ferrous	non-ferrous

Meanings of Some Commonly Used Suffixes

Suffixes	Meaning	Words
-able	Capable of being; that can or must be	taxable, changeable, comfortable
-age	State, act, or process of, result of	postage, bondage, mileage
-al	Belonging to, process or state of	magical, verbal, betrayal
-ance	Act of, state of	dominance, ignorance
-ary	Place for; connected with	budgetary, planetary
-cy	State of being	democracy, conspiracy
-er	One who is; a person or thing that	teacher, singer, lover
-ful	Having the qualities of; full of	sorrowful, forgetful, handful
-ist	One whose profession is	dentist, chemist, specialist
-less	Lacking, without	sleeveless, selfless, tireless
-ly	In the manner of	happily, stupidly
-ment	the action or result of	development, bombardment
-ness	State of; the quality of	blindness, goodness, dryness
-ous	the nature of or having quality of	poisonous, glorious
-tion	Act of	education, cooperation
-dom	the condition or state of	freedom, kingdom, martyrdom

Suffixes are important in determining the meanings of words in English. They are either inflections added at the end of a word or they change the grammatical class of words they are attached to.

Inflectional Suffix/Morpheme:

Inflection is a major category of morphology. When suffixes are added to words to realize morphemes such as present, past, present participle, plural, they are said to be inflectional. They do not change the nature of the verb to which they are added. For instance:

Play plays playing played
 Locate locates locating located
 Sing sings singing sang

The suffixes –s, -ing, -ed did not change the word class of the verbs. Bloomfield (1933) referred to inflection as the outer layer of the morphology of word forms. This is because inflections are added when all derivational and compositional processes are already complete. This means that one can add inflection on a root and a stem. Let us take for example the word “disinfectants”, the plural inflection –s is added to the stem “disinfectant”. The root of the word is “infect”. The prefix dis- shows negation or opposite of while the newly derived word is “disinfectant”. Inflections such as tense, number, person, etc. will be added to ready-made stems. By stem we mean the forms to which inflections may be added, but which may already have derivational affixes. Other examples are:

Root	Derived Word /stem	Inflections
paint	repaint	repaints, repainted, repainting
computer	computerize	computerized, computerizing
industry	industrial, industrialize	industrialization industrializations

Inflectional categories such as tense, voice and number play important role in syntax and are called morphosyntactic categories, since they affect both the words around them and the words within which they occur. They are very productive and are semantically more regular than the derivational ones; meaning will remain constant across a wide distributional range.

Derivational Suffixes:

Derivation is the opposite of inflection. It consists of adding an affix or affixes to the root or stem of the word. When this is done, new words are derived. Within derivation, the distinction is often made between class-maintaining and class-changing processes. Class-changing produces a new word in different word class. (E.g. gentle (adj) gentleness (noun) → gently (adverb)); while class – maintaining produces a new word but does not change the class.



Class-Maintaining Derivational Suffixes:

Examples of class-maintaining suffixes are *-age, -ful, -ry, -cy, -hood, -ship, -ate, -ure, -ic, -ster, -dom, -ism, -ee, -eer*. They are used to convert noun to another noun that mean something different. Examples are:

acre	acreage	spoon	spoonful
broker	brokerage	hand	handful
front	frontage	cup	cupful
use	usage	mouth	mouthful
assembly	assemblage	house	houseful
weapon	weaponry	lunatic	lunacy
burglar	burglary	magistrate	magistracy
citizen	citizenry	president	presidency

knave	knavery	tenant	tenancy
machine	machinery	truant	truancy
chaplain	chaplaincy		
boy	boyhood	friend	friendship
child	childhood	head	headship
girl	girlhood	judge	judgeship
man	manhood	owner	ownership
priest	priesthood	scholar	scholarship
woman	womanhood	trustee	trusteeship
forfeit	forfeiture	young	youngster
portrait	portraiture	song	songster
candidate	candidature	trick	trickster
nuncio	nunciature	prank	prankster
impostor	imposture	rhyme	rhymester
nomen	nomenclature	pun	punster
electors	electorate		
triumvirs	triumvirate	duke	dukedom
emir	emirate	earl	earldom
opium	opiate	king	kingdom
		official	officialdom
grant	grantee	cannibal	cannibalism
legacy	legatee	journal	journalism
mortgage	mortgagee	pauper	pauperism
devotion	devotee	critic	criticism
chariot	charioteer		
musket	musketeer		
pamphlet	pamphleteer		

Class-Changing Derivational Suffixes:

Under the suffixes that can change word from one grammatical class to another, we have basically four groups. The presence of the suffixes signal the grammatical class of the words in which they appear. They are:

- Noun Suffixes
- Verb suffixes
- Adjective Suffixes
- Adverb Suffixes

Noun Suffixes:

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-dom	state of being	freedom
-hood	state of being	manhood
-ness	state of being	dimness
-ice	act of being	cowardice
-ation	act of being	flirtation
-ion	act of being	intercession
-sion	act of	scansion
-tion	state of being	corruption
-ment	act of	argument
-ship	state of being	friendship
-ance	act of	continuance
-ence	act of	precedence
-ancy	state of being	currency
-ism	act of	baptism
-ery	quality of	bravery
-eer	one who	auctioneer
-ist	one who believes in	fascist
-or	one who	debtor
-er	one who	worker

Verb Suffixes:

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-ate	to make	perpetuate
-en	to make	soften
-fy	to make	dignify
-ize, ise	to make	sterilize

Adjective Suffixes:

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-ful	ful of	hateful
-ish	resembling	foolish
-ate	to make	affectionate
-ic, ical	resembling	angelic
-ive	having	prospective
-ous	full of	zealous
-ulent	full of	fraudulent
-less	without	fatherless
-able, ible	capable of	peaceable
-ed	having	spirited
-ly	resembling	womanly
-like	resembling	childlike

Adverb Suffixes:

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-ly	to make more	quickly
-ward	in the direction of	afterward

Derivation of Words from One Grammatical Class to Another

Now let us look at how the addition of these suffixes mentioned above can change words from one grammatical category to another:

1. Conversion of Verb to Noun

To derive nouns from verbs, the noun forming suffixes are added to the verb and new words are formed. Some examples are:

i. -ment

amend	amendment	defile	defilement
detach	detachment	incite	incitement

embellish	embellishment	argue	argument
resent	resentment	abridge	abridgement
acknowledge	acknowledgement		

ii. -ion/-tion

collect	collection	resolve	resolution
obstruct	obstruction	adopt	adoption
repress	repression	adapt	adaptation
accumulate	accumulation	absorb	absorption
devote	devotion	contend	contention
destroy	destruction	pretend	pretension
recognize	recognition	intend	intention

Verbs that end in -ate drop e and replace with -ion

illustrate	illustration	meditate	meditation
demonstrate	demonstration	pollinate	pollination
enumerate	enumeration	stagnate	stagnation

iii. -ation

The suffix -ation is added to some verbs ending in -ise. The final e is dropped before the addition of -ation.

Examples are:

authorize	authorization	improvise	improvisation
civilize	civilization	polarize	polarization

Others are:

afforest	afforestation	derive	derivation
crown	coronation	divine	divination

deprive deprivation fix fixation
inhale inhalation

Still on –ation, if the verb ends in ke, the ke is replaced by c before the suffix

convoke convocation evoke evocation
invoke invocation provoke provocation
revoke revocation

Verbs that end in –ain or –aim will drop the i to take –ation

declaim declamation exclaim exclamation
explain explanation proclaim proclamation
abstain abstention
entertain entertainment
maintain maintenance
sustain sustenance

} with different suffixes

iv -ication

Some verbs ending in -ify drop the y and replace it with -ication

beatify beatification gasify gasification
sanctify sanctification solidify solidification

Exceptions:

liquefy liquefaction (not *liquidification)
putrefy (not *putrify) putrefaction
crucify crucifixion

v. -ition

-ition is attached to verbs ending in –ish. The sh is dropped and replaced by –ition

abolish abolition admonish admonition
demolish demolition

Other –ish ending words take different suffixes. Examples are:

banish banishment embellish embellishment
furnish furniture/furnishing

-ition can also be attached to verbs ending in –it

exhibit	exhibition	fruit	fruition
inhibit	inhibition	prohibit	prohibition

Some -it ending words take -ssion (to be discussed later)

vi -ution

Verbs ending in -olve have the ve replaced by -ution

absolve	absolution	devolve	devolution
evolve	evolution	resolve	resolution
revolve	revolution		

vii. -sion

-sion is applied to some words ending in -ise with the e dropped

excise	excision	revise	revision
supervise	supervision		

Some words ending in -de drop this ending to take -sion to form noun. Examples are:

collide	collision	conclude	conclusion
decide	decision	divide	division
evade	evasion	extrude	extrusion
invade	invasion	persuade	persuasion
provide	provision		

-sion is also added to verbs ending in it. The t is dropped and replaced by -sion to form noun.

avert	aversion	convert	conversion
divert	diversion	invert	inversion
revert	reversion		

viii. Double s suffix -ssion

This occurs with verbs ending in -ee or -ede

accede	accession	concede	concession
proceed	procession	intercede	intercession
secede	secession	supersede	supersession

-sion is also attracted by some verbs ending in –it
 emit emission omit omission
 transmit transmission remit remission/remittance

ix -ant, -ent

-ant

celebrate celebrant
 coagulate coagulant
 confide confidant
 depend dependant
 lubricate lubricant
 migrate migrant
 occupy occupant
 serve servant

-ent

adhere adherent
 antecede antecedent
 correspond correspondent
 deter deterrent
 precede precedent
 preside president
 receive recipient
 study student

x. –ance -ence

These two suffixes are confusing at times. Spellers sometimes find difficulty in remembering which to use of the two.

Verbs with final e drop the e to add –ance. Other verbs without final e also take –ance.

-ance nouns

Verbs with final e

tolerate tolerance
 ignore ignorance
 dominate dominance
 grieve grievance
 reassure reassurance
 remonstrate remonstrance

-ance nouns

Verbs without final e

react reactance
 attend attendance
 abbey abeyance
 clear clearance
 maintain maintenance
 perform performance

-ence nouns

Verbs with final e

adhere	adherence
coincide	coincidence
condole	condolence
confide	confidence
precede	precedence
subserve	subservience

-ence nouns

Verbs without final e

abhor	abhorrence
absent	absence
offend	offence
infer	inference
prominent	prominence
obey	obedience

The suffixes –ance and –ence can also be used to convert adjectives to nouns.

xi. –ism, -ysis

These suffixes are usually applied to adjectives and nouns. Sometimes, they are applied to some verbs in their conversion to nouns:

criticise	criticism
dogmatise	dogmatism
plagiarise	plagiarism

The suffix –ysis is usually found in scientific vocabulary:

analyse	analysis
electrolyse	electrolysis

xii. -al

Examples of –al nouns formed from verbs are:

acquit	acquittal
arouse	arousal
avow	avowal
betray	betrayal
rebut	rebuttal
rehearse	rehearsal
withdraw	withdrawal

Note that where the verb ends with e, the e is dropped. Where it ends with t, the t is doubled.

xiii. -age

-age is generally attached to nouns but in some cases, it is attached to verbs to form nouns:

cleave	cleavage	} Note that the e ending in the verb is dropped.
use	usage	
waste	wastage	
post	postage	

xiv. -ry, -ery

A few verbs are converted to nouns by the suffix -ry. The two suffixes are usually attached to nouns. Examples of their attachment to verbs to form nouns are:

bake	bakery	husband	husbandry
mimic	mimicry	revel	revelry
brew	brewery	hatch	hatchery
water	watery	laundry	laundry

xv. -ure

The suffix -ure converts a few verbs to nouns. Verbs that end in consonants will just take -ure, but those that end in e drop the e before -ure:

fail	failure	erase	erasure
forfeit	forfeiture	legislate	legislature
proceed	procedure	pose	posture
invest	investiture	seize	seizure

-ure is also applied to few adjectives but usually to nouns. This shall be discussed later.

xvi. -acy

Some verbs are converted to nouns by the use of -acy:

conspire	conspiracy
advocate	advocacy

The suffix is also attached to nouns and adjectives. (to be discussed later)

xvii. Action Suffixes:

These are suffixes which describe the actions or occupations of people or the uses of things. They include –er, –or, –ant and –ist (or –yst). We also have –ar which is a rare usage. Some examples are:

-er		-or	
betray	betrayer	act	actor
teach	teacher	vend	vendor
write	writer	convey	conveyor
carry	carrier	sail	sailor
send	sender	decorate	decorator
inform	informer	mediate	mediator
magnify	magnifier		
cool	cooler		
spell	speller		
defend	defender		

-ant		-ist, -yst		-ar	
Depend	dependant	apologise	apologist	beg	beggar
Aspire	aspirant	catalyse	catalyst	lie	liar
Celebrate	celebrant	dramatise	dramatist		
Inform	informant	dogmatise	dogmatist		
Enter	entrant	anaesthetise	anesthetist		
Inhabit	inhabitant	pacify	pacifist		
Pollute	pollutant	plagiarise	plagiarist		

xviii. -ing, -ee, -and

The last batch of verb to noun suffixes are –ing, –ee, –and.

-ing

The present participle of a verb is sometimes used as a noun ending in -ing.

His *singing* and *dancing* was well appreciated.

As a leader, he has a tremendous *following*.

The *launching* of the project was successful.

I do not understand his *comings* and *goings*.

-ee

Employ	employee	Pay	payee
Vend	vendee	Address	addressee

-and

This is of limited application. An undergraduate about to receive his degree is a *graduand*. Somebody about to be ordained a priest is an *ordinand*.

2. Conversion of Verbs to Adjectives:

The following suffixes are added to verbs to form adjectives: -able, -ible, -ous, -ive, -ory, -al, -ant, -ent, -some, -f

i. -able

Some verbs ending in consonants take *able* without any alteration but if the basic verb end in *-ate*, this end is dropped and replaced with *able*:

accept	acceptable	abominate	abominable
book	bookable	appreciate	appreciable
comfort	comfortable	calculate	calculable
favour	favourable	demonstrate	demonstrable
honour	honourable	educate	educable

If the basic verb ends in *ce* the *e* is retained but if it ends in *y* after a consonant, the *y* is replaced by *i*. Examples are:

enforce	enforceable	descry	describable
pronounce	pronounceable	pity	pitiable
trace	traceable	rely	reliable

The rule however is not robber-stamped as *apply* is *applicable* not **'applicable'*.

If the basic verb ends in e after a consonant or after s, the e is usually dropped:

admire	admirable	debate	debatable
prove	provable	use	usable
move	movable/moveable		

The adjective for *despise* is however *despicable*.

Finally, if the basic verb ends in y after a vowel, the y is retained:

essay	essay-able
convey	conveyable
pay	payable
play	playable

ii. -ible

The number of verbs taking -ible as suffix is limited. It is often more attracted to nouns. When added to verbs that end in e, the e is dropped, but when the verb ends in t or d, the last letter is dropped replaced with -sible or -ssible.

Examples are:

collapse	collapsible	comprehend	comprehensible
force	forcible	defend	defensible
reverse	reversible	reprehend	reprehensible
admit	admissible		
omit	omissible	} double s	
permit	permissible		

Some exceptions include:

controvert	controvertible	} No alteration
resist	resistible	

iii. -ous

The suffix –ous can be added to a few verbs to form adjective:

Pretend	pretentious	Ponder	ponderous
Disaster	disastrous	Pity	piteous
Cumber	cumbrous/cumbersome		

iv. -ory

This suffix can be added to only few verbs to form adjectives:

Decaim	declamatory	}	note that the i in ai in these words is dropped
Exclaim	exclamatory		
Explain	explanatory		
Retaliate	retaliatory		
Inhibit	inhibitory		

v. -ive

The suffix –ive can be attached to many verbs to derive adjective. Words that end in e drop the e before the suffix but those that end in consonants will simply take the suffix:

cumulate	cumulative	construct	constructive
cure	curative	express	expressive
decorate	decorative	instruct	instructive
indicate	indicative	possess	possessive
restore	restorative	prevent	preventive
speculate	speculative		

In some words d is replaced by s and some others take the suffix –ative:

conclude	conclusive	represent	representative
decide	decisive	affirm	affirmative
divide	divisive	confirm	confirmative
exclude	exclusive	preserve	preservative
include	inclusive	conserve	conservative

Other examples are:

apprehend	apprehensive	} d is dropped and -sive added
comprehend	comprehensive	
defend	defensive	
offend	offensive	} t is dropped and -ssive is added
permit	permissive	
submit	submissive	
admit	admissive	

vi. -al

The adjectives formed with -al derived from verbs are:

criticize	critical
equivocate	equivocal
pontificate	pontifical

This suffix is commonly used in the conversion of nouns to adjectives.

vii. -ant, -ent

As in the formation of nouns from verbs, these suffixes can also be used to form adjectives:

defy	defiant	decay	decadent
please	pleasant	deliquesce	deliquescent
repent	repentant	effervesce	effervescent

viii -some, -ful

Some adjectives ending in some derived from verbs are:

cumber	cumbersome	fear	fearsome
grue	gruesome	quarrel	quarrelsome
tire	tiresome		

The suffix -ful is attached to few verbs. It is more attached to many nouns to form adjectives. Examples of places where it is added to verbs are:

mourn	mournful
revenge	vengeful

3. Conversion of Adjectives to Nouns:

Adjectives are converted to nouns by use of the following suffixes: -ness, -ity, -ion, -acy, -ery, -ry, -ment, -ism, -ance, -ancy, -ence, -ency, -escence.

i. -ness

beastly	beastliness	} y in these words is replaced by i
happy	happiness	
saintly	saintliness	
busy	business	
sprightly	sprightliness	

ii. -ity

The suffix -ity is added to some words without any alteration. In some cases, the e that ends the base adjective is dropped:

fluid	fluidity	agile	agility
humid	humidity	diverse	diversity
infirm	infirmity	ductile	ductility
morbid	morbidity	infinite	infinity
senior	seniority	profane	profanity
normal	normality	pure	purity
plural	plurality	nude	nudity

iii. -ion

A few adjectives attract the suffix -ion to form nouns:

abject	abjection	contrite	contrition
discreet	discretion	resolve	resolution
dissolve	dissolution		

iv. -acy, -ery, -ry, -ment

Only few adjectives attract these suffixes to form nouns.

They are:

	-acy		-ery, -ry		-ment
Accurate	accuracy	brave	bravery	merry	merriment
Delicate	delicacy	green	greenery	better	betterment

Obstinate	obstinacy
Profligate	profligacy
Supreme	supremacy

v. -ism

-ism is mostly used for converting nouns to nouns. It, however, can be added to few adjectives to form nouns:

Altruistic	altruism	American	Americanism
Archaic	archaism	Colloquial	colloquialism
Monetary	monetarism	Mystic	mysticism
True	truism	Witty	witticism

vi. -ance, -ancy, -ence, -ency

These four suffixes are common in converting adjectives to nouns. Some examples are:

-ant to -ance

abundant	abundance
attendant	attendance
dominant	dominance
elegant	elegance
relevant	relevance

-ant to -ancy

constant	constancy
expectant	expectancy
hesitant	hesitancy
infant	infancy
vacant	vacancy

-ent to -ence

corpulent	corpulence
prominent	prominence
reticent	reticence
subsistent	subsistence

-ent to -ency

absorbent	absorbency
clement	clemency
consistent	consistency
fluent	fluency

vii. -escence

Adjectives ending in escent form nouns ending in escence. Examples are:

Acquiescent	acquiescence	Coalescent	coalescence
Convalescent	convalescence	Fluorescent	fluorescence
Effervescent	effervescence	Deliquescent	deliquescence

viii. -iety

anxious	anxiety	dubious	dubiety
pious	piety	proper	propriety
sober	sobriety	various	variety

4. Conversion of Nouns to Adjectives:

The suffixes for converting nouns to adjectives are: -y, -ly, -ish, -ous, -ic, -ics, -ical, -ary, -ar, -ful, -less, -al, -ial, -eal, -ate, -ine, -ian, -ean, -ese, -en, -esque, -able, -ible, -ose, -iac.

i. -y, -ly

haze	hazy	beast	beastly
lace	lacy	friend	friendly
sauce	saucy	king	kingly
day	daily	mother	motherly
hour	hourly	week	weekly

ii. -ish

book	bookish	boy	boyish
fever	feverish	fiend	fiendish

iii. -ous

Apart from using -ous to convert verbs to adjectives and adjectives to nouns, it can also be used to convert nouns to adjectives. Examples are:

peril	perilous	clamour	clamorous
poison	poisonous	dolour	dolorous
portent	portentous	glamour	glamorous
anomaly	anomalous	humour	humorous
calamity	calamitous	number	numerous
glory	glorious	mischief	mischievous
pity	piteous	disaster	disastrous
Avarice	avaricious	adventure	adventurous
Caprice	capricious	fibre	fibrous
Malice	malicious	pore	porous
Space	spacious	luster	lustrous

iv. -ic, -ics, -ical

aesthete	aesthetic	drama	dramatic
athlete	athletic	hero	heroic
tone	tonic	giant	gigantic
economy	economic	geography	geographic
harmony	harmonic	melody	melodic

When applied to special studies the suffix -ic is pluralized. Adjectives formed from such nouns drop the s and extend the suffix to -ical. Examples are:

Acoustic	acoustical	Economics	economical
Ethics	ethical	Mathematics	mathematical
Physics	physical	Politics	political

v. -ary, -ar

-ary		-ar	
Budget	budgetary	molecule	molecular
Diet	dietary	vehicle	vehicular
Element	elementary	nucleus	nuclear
Inflation	inflationary	line	linear
Unit	unitary	spatula	spatular

vi. -ful,

care	careful	art	artless
doubt	doubtful	care	careless
event	eventful	doubt	doubtless
fear	fearful	fear	fearless
joy	joyful	sin	sinless
wonder	wonderful	taste	tasteless
beauty	beautiful	fancy	fanciful

-less

Other adjectives formed from nouns are:

Incident	incidental	adamant	adamantine
Verb	verbal	alkali	alkaline
Exception	exceptional	crystal	crystalline
Race	racial	Christ	Christian
Substance	substantial	earth	earthen
Remedy	remedial	gold	golden
Fashion	fashionable	honour	honourable

5. Conversion of Nouns to Verbs:

Some nouns can be converted to verbs by the addition of the following suffixes:

-en (or -n), -ify (or fy), -ise (or ize) and -ate

i. -en (or -n)

length	lengthen
strength	strengthen
height	heighten

-ify (or -fy)

beauty	beautify
example	exemplify
stupor	stupefy

ii. -ise,

carbon	carbonize
idol	idolize
liquid	liquidize
vapour	vapourise
motion	motivate

-ate

carbon	carbonate
hyphen	hyphenate
liquid	liquidate
action	activate

6. Conversion of Adjectives to Verbs:

A common suffix for this purpose is -en or the prefix en- as in:

black	blacken	dear	endear
bright	brighten	large	enlarge
deep	deepen	rich	enrich
loose	loosen	noble	ennoble
tight	tighten	white	whiten

Conclusion:

This study has shown the important role of affixation in word formation process in the English language. The list is inexhaustible. Some prefixes and suffixes are only inflections added to words to pluralise, change tense or mark comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. Some others, as we have seen, are class- changing suffixes. The mastery of these affixes will lead to a good mastery of English spellings.

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