

## Affixes

Adding affixes to existing words (the base or root) to form new words is common in academic English. Prefixes are added to the front of the base (*like* → *dislike*), whereas suffixes are added to the end of the base (*active* → *activate*). Prefixes usually do not change the class of the base word, but suffixes usually do change the class of the word.

The most common prefixes used to form new verbs in academic English are: *re-*, *dis-*, *over-*, *un-*, *mis-*, *out-*. The most common suffixes are: *-ise*, *-en*, *-ate*, *-(i)fy*. By far the most common affix in academic English is *-ise*.

## Verbs

e.g. prefix + verb → verb

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
<i>re-</i>	again or back	restructure, revisit, reappear, rebuild, refinance
<i>dis-</i>	reverses the meaning of the verb	disappear, disallow, disarm, disconnect, discontinue
<i>over-</i>	too much	overbook, oversleep, overwork
<i>un-</i>	reverses the meaning of the verb	unbend, uncouple, unfasten
<i>mis-</i>	badly or wrongly	mislead, misinform, misidentify
<i>out-</i>	more or better than others	outperform, outbid
<i>be-</i>	make or cause	befriend, belittle
<i>co-</i>	together	co-exist, co-operate, co-own
<i>de-</i>	do the opposite of	devalue, deselect
<i>fore-</i>	earlier, before	foreclose, foresee
<i>inter-</i>	between	interact, intermix, interface
<i>pre-</i>	before	pre-expose, prejudge, pretest
<i>sub-</i>	under/below	subcontract, subdivide
<i>trans-</i>	across, over	transform, transcribe, transplant
<i>under-</i>	not enough	underfund, undersell, undervalue, underdevelop



e.g. Suffix used to form verbs with the meaning "cause to be".

Suffix	Example
-ise	stabilise, characterise, symbolise, visualise, specialise
-ate	differentiate, liquidate, pollinate, duplicate, fabricate
-fy	classify, exemplify, simplify, justify
-en	awaken, fasten, shorten, moisten



## Nouns

The most common prefixes used to form new nouns in academic English are: *co-* and *sub-*. The most common suffixes are: *-tion*, *-ity*, *-er*, *-ness*, *-ism*, *-ment*, *-ant*, *-ship*, *-age*, *-ery*. By far the most common noun affix in academic English is *-tion*.

e.g. prefix + noun → noun

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
<i>anti-</i>	against	anticlimax, antidote, antithesis
<i>auto-</i>	self	autobiography, automobile
<i>bi-</i>	two	bilingualism, biculturalism, bi-metalism
<i>co-</i>	joint	co-founder, co-owner, co-descendant
<i>counter-</i>	against	counter-argument, counter-example, counter-proposal
<i>dis-</i>	the converse of	discomfort, dislike
<i>ex-</i>	former	ex-chairman, ex-hunter
<i>hyper-</i>	extreme	hyperinflation, hypersurface
<i>in-</i>	the converse of	inattention, incoherence, incompatibility
<i>in-</i>	inside	inpatient,

<i>inter-</i>	between	interaction, inter-change, interference
<i>kilo-</i>	thousand	kilobyte
<i>mal-</i>	bad	malfuction, maltreatment, malnutrition
<i>mega-</i>	million	megabyte
<i>mis-</i>	wrong	misconduct, misdeed, mismanagement
<i>mini-</i>	small	mini-publication, mini-theory
<i>mono-</i>	one	monosyllable, monograph, monogamy
<i>neo-</i>	new	neo-colonialism, neo-impressionism
<i>out-</i>	separate	outbuilding,
<i>poly-</i>	many	polysyllable
<i>pseudo-</i>	false	pseudo-expert
<i>re-</i>	again	re-organisation, re-assessment, re-examination
<i>semi-</i>	half	semicircle, semi-darkness
<i>sub-</i>	below	subset, subdivision
<i>super-</i>	more than, above	superset, superimposition, superpowers
<i>sur-</i>	over and above	surtax
<i>tele-</i>	distant	telecommunications,
<i>tri-</i>	three	tripartism
<i>ultra-</i>	beyond	ultrasound
<i>under-</i>	below, too little	underpayment, under-development, undergraduate
<i>vice-</i>	deputy	vice-president



e.g. Suffix added to a verb (V), noun (N) or adjective (A) → noun

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-tion -sion	action/instance of V-ing	alteration, demonstration expansion, inclusion, admission
-er	person who V-s something used for V-ing	advertiser, driver computer, silencer
-ment	action/instance of V-ing	development, punishment, unemployment
-ant -ent	person who V-s	assistant, consultant student
-age	action/result of V	breakage, wastage, package
-al	action/result of V	denial, proposal, refusal, dismissal
-ence -ance	action/result of V	preference, dependence, interference attendance, acceptance, endurance
-ery/-ry	action/instance of V-ing place of V-ing	bribery, robbery, misery refinery, bakery

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-er	person concerned with N	astronomer, geographer
-ism	doctrine of N	Marxism, Maoism, Thatcherism
-ship	state of being N	friendship, citizenship, leadership
-age	collection of N	baggage, plumage

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-ity	state or quality of being A	ability, similarity, responsibility, curiosity
-ness	state or quality of being A	darkness, preparedness, consciousness
-cy	state or quality of being A	urgency, efficiency, frequency



## Adjectives

Many adjectives are formed from a base of a different class with a suffix (e.g. *-less*, *-ous*). Adjectives can also be formed from other adjectives, especially by the negative prefixes (*un-*, *in-* and *non-*).

The most common suffixes are *-al*, *-ent*, *-ive*, *-ous*, *-ful*, *-less*.

e.g. Suffix added to verbs or nouns → adjective

Suffix	Example
<i>-al</i>	central, political, national, optional, professional
<i>-ent</i>	different, dependent, excellent
<i>-ive</i>	attractive, effective, imaginative, repetitive
<i>-ous</i>	continuous, dangerous, famous
<i>-ful</i>	beautiful, peaceful, careful
<i>-less</i>	endless, homeless, careless, thoughtless
<i>-able</i>	drinkable, countable, avoidable,



e.g. negative + adjective → adjective

Prefix	Examples
<i>un-</i>	unfortunate, uncomfortable, unjust
<i>im-/in-/ir-/il-</i>	immature, impatient, improbable, inconvenient, irreplaceable, illegal
<i>non-</i>	non-fiction, non-political, non-neutral
<i>dis-</i>	disloyal, dissimilar, dishonest