

Word Parts II: basic suffixes

The suffixes listed below are very basic suffixes that, when added to a root word, change its part of speech. In this list are included a number of suffixes---"-y," "-th," "-ly," and "-ful"---that come from Old English. As the suffixes become more specialized in their meaning, or if they tend to combine with more sophisticated words, they are more likely to derive from Latin or Greek.

suffix	meaning	example words
-ation	Latin noun-forming suffix that means <i>the act, process, or result of</i>	education, translation, vacation
-ion (tion, sion)	Latin noun-forming suffix that means <i>the act, process, or result of</i>	action, permission, confusion
-er, -or, -ar	Latin noun-forming suffix that means <i>a person or thing that does</i>	driver, actor, computer, liar
-able	Latin adjective-forming suffix that means <i>capable of being, doing, or undergoing</i>	adorable, movable, drinkable
-ability	Latin noun-forming suffix that means <i>ability to do, be, or undergo</i>	capability, reliability
-ment	Latin noun-forming suffix that means <i>act, process, or instance of</i>	movement, agreement, measurement
-ful	Old English adjective-forming suffix that means <i>full of</i>	beautiful, successful, useful
-ness	Old English noun-forming suffix that means <i>state or quality of</i>	fitness, kindness, business
-th	Old English adjective- and noun-forming suffix that means <i>in the position in a series indicated by the base number</i>	fourth, fifth, sixth
-y	Old English adjective-forming suffix that means <i>characterized by; full of; tending to</i>	chewy, itchy, lucky, messy
-an	Latin adjective- and noun-forming suffix that means <i>in adjectives: from (a place) or pertaining to or following (a figure or school of thought); in nouns: person or thing from (a place) or associated with (an activity or school of thought).</i>	American, European, historian