

Word Parts III: intermediate level suffixes

The suffixes in this list are extremely common suffixes but some have fairly specialized meanings. The suffixes "-ish," "-en," and "-less" derive from Old or Middle English. The rest derive from Latin or Greek.

suffix	meaning	example words
-less	Middle English adjective-forming suffix that means <i>without</i>	endless, fearless, wireless
-ance, -ence	Latin noun-forming suffix that means <i>state, quality, or act of</i> ; The suffix -ance is usually attached to whole English words, whereas -ence is usually attached to roots: compare eloquence and acceptance	acceptance, admittance, residence, science
-al	Latin adjective-forming suffix that means <i>pertaining to</i>	cultural, dental, manual, universal
-ist	Greek noun-forming suffix that means <i>person who does or believes in</i> ; Many words ending in -ist have a corresponding abstract noun form ending in -ism , and many have a corresponding adjective form ending in -ic (realistic, artistic).	artist, chemist, dentist
-itis	Greek noun-forming suffix that means <i>inflammation</i>	appendicitis, arthritis, poliomyelitis.
-logy, -ology	Greek noun-forming suffix that means <i>study of, science of; written work; structure or principle</i>	biology, ecology, geology
-en	Old English verb-forming suffix that means <i>to cause to be or become or have</i>	darken, enlighten, strengthen
-fy	Latin verb-forming suffix that means <i>make, cause to be, become</i>	clarify, justify, satisfy
-ize, -ise	Greek verb-forming suffix that means <i>to turn into or cause to be</i>	civilize, immunize, recognize
-ous, ious	Latin adjective-forming suffix that means <i>full of, characterized by</i>	gracious, joyous, spacious
-ics	Greek noun-forming suffix that means <i>science, study, or practice of; properties of; practices pertaining to</i>	economics, physics, politics
-ish	Old English adjective-forming suffix that means <i>of, resembling; somewhat</i>	childish, ticklish, foolish