

## What is a suffix?

A suffix is a word ending. It is a group of letters you can add to the **end** of a root word\* **e.g.** walking, helpful

A root word stands on its own as a word, but you can make new words from it by adding beginnings (prefixes) and endings (suffixes). For example, '**comfort**' is a root word. By adding the prefix 'dis' and the suffix 'able' you can make new words such as 'dis**comfort**' and '**comfortable**'.

Adding suffixes to words can change or add to their meaning, but most importantly they show how a word will be used in a sentence and what part of speech (**e.g.** noun, verb, adjective) the word belongs to. **e.g.** If you want to use the root word 'talk' in the following sentence: *I was (talk) to Samina*. You need to add the suffix '**ing**' so that the word 'talk' makes better sense grammatically: "*I was **talking** to Samina*".

There are various suffixes we use. Probably the most common are 'ed' and 'ing'. Here are some other suffixes and examples.

## Suffix spelling rules - double letters

Usually when you add a suffix to a root word the spelling of both stays the same: **e.g.** care + ful = careful But there are several important groups of words where the spelling of the root word **changes** when you add a suffix.

Sometimes the spelling changes because of the '**Doubling**' rules. As always, there are exceptions to these 4 rules, but they are a good starting guide:

1] For most short (one syllable) words that end in a single consonant (anything but 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', 'u') you need to double the last letter when you add a suffix: **e.g.** run + ing = **running** sun + y = **sunny** If the word ends with more than one consonant, you *don't* double the last letter: **e.g.** pump + ed = **pumped** sing + ing = **singing**

2] For most longer (more than one syllable) words that end in 'l' you need to double the 'l' when you add the suffix: **e.g.** travel + ing = **traveling** cancel + ed = **cancelled**

3] For most longer (more than one syllable) words that have the stress on the last syllable when you say them AND end in a single consonant (anything but 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', 'u') you need to double the last letter: **e.g.** begin + er = **beginner** prefer + ing = **preferring** If the word has more than one syllable and ends in a single consonant, but the stress isn't on the last syllable, then you *don't* need to double the last letter before adding a suffix: **e.g.** offer + ing = **offering** benefit + ed = **benefited**

4] If you have a word ending in a consonant and a suffix starting in a consonant, you don't need to double the last letter of the word: **e.g.** enrol + ment = **enrolment** commit + ment = **commitment**

Suffix	Example		Suffix	Example
<b>ed</b>	walk + ed = <b>walked</b>		<b>ness</b>	happy + ness = <b>happiness</b>
<b>ing</b>	say + ing = <b>saying</b>		<b>al</b>	accident + al = <b>accidental</b>
<b>er</b>	tall + er = <b>taller</b>		<b>ary</b>	imagine + ary = <b>imaginary</b>
<b>tion</b>	educate + tion = <b>education</b>		<b>able</b>	accept + able = <b>acceptable</b>
<b>sion</b>	divide + sion = <b>division</b>		<b>ly</b>	love + ly = <b>lovely</b>
<b>cian</b>	music + cian = <b>musician</b>		<b>ment</b>	excite + ment = <b>excitement</b>
<b>fully</b>	hope + fully = <b>hopefully</b>		<b>ful</b>	help + ful + <b>helpful</b>
<b>est</b>	large + est = <b>largest</b>		<b>y</b>	ease + y = <b>easy</b>

## More suffix spelling rules

### 'y' to 'i' rule

**When you add a suffix to a word which ends in a consonant followed by a 'y', change the 'y' to 'i'. e.g.** The word 'happy' ends in 'py'. When you add the suffix 'ness', change the 'y' to 'i' to make the word happiness: happy + ness = happiness.

**Exceptions to the rule.** If you are adding the suffix 'ing' to a word ending in 'y', keep the 'y'. **e.g.** The word 'copy' ends in 'py'. When you add 'ing' the 'y' doesn't change to an 'i' because you would have 2 'i's together: copy + ing = copying.

### Silent 'e' rule

**When you add a 'y' or a suffix which starts with a vowel (a,e,i,o,u) to a word which ends in a silent 'e', drop the silent 'e'.**

Silent 'e' words are ones that end with a consonant and have an 'e' at the end, such as hope, like, love. If you say the word to yourself you don't really hear the 'e' at the end.

**e.g.** The word 'noise' ends in a silent 'e'. When you add the suffix 'y', the 'e' is dropped to make the word, noisy: noise + y = noisy. The word 'like' ends in a silent 'e'. When you add the suffix 'ing', the 'e' is dropped to make the word, liking: like + ing = liking.

**Exceptions to the rule.** If a word ends in 'ce', or 'ge', keep the 'e' if you add a suffix beginning with either an 'a', or an 'o'. (This is done to keep the 'c' or 'g' sounding soft.)

**e.g.** The word 'peace' ends in 'ce'. When you add on the suffix 'able' the silent 'e' is kept to make the word, peaceable: peace + able = peaceable

**NB:** All these rules also apply to words which have a prefix before the root word.

For example if you add the suffix 'ness' to the root word 'unhappy' you would still change the 'y' to 'i': un + happy + ness = unhappiness

## Verbs, nouns and professions

Adding a suffix to a word can change the job that word does. There are several forms of the '**shun**' sound which are all suffixes that can change root words from nouns to verbs, or give you important clues about what the word is doing.

## From verbs to nouns...

**1] Adding '-tion'** Adding 'tion' to a root word can change the word from a verb (action word) to a noun (name of person, place or thing): **e.g.** inject (verb) + tion = injection (noun) instruct (verb) + tion = instruction (noun)

Sometimes the spelling changes slightly between the verb and the noun. The important thing is that you can see that the verb and noun are related in meaning. **e.g.** relax (verb) + tion = relaxation (noun) describe (verb) + tion = description (noun) Use this when: - there is a consonant before the 'tion' sound (normally the root word ends in 't') N.B. if the root word ends in 't', you drop the final 't' before adding the suffix.- the root word ends with a long vowel or a short 'l'