

## Word formation

### 1. Compound nouns

We sometimes join two nouns together to express a new concept or idea. These two nouns may be:

- **joined into one word:**  
*bathroom / bedroom / football / housewife / tracksuit / weekend / workshop*
- **joined by means of a hyphen (-):**  
*data-processing / horse-riding / ice-skating / tea-room*
- **kept as two separate words:**  
*alarm clock / drinking water / shop window / swimming pool / training school / credit card / goal keeper / shopping centre / table tennis / waiting room / dining room / petrol station / shopping list / taxi driver / writing paper / disc jockey / shop assistant / sports centre / tennis court*

⚠ **Be careful!** To find out which of the three possibilities is the right one, you must use a good dictionary.


### 2. Compound adjectives

These consist of two words normally separated by a hyphen (-). The second element is usually a present participle (*-ing*) or a past participle (*-ed* or irregular).  
*absent-minded / left-handed / good-looking / hard-working / broad-shouldered / short-sighted / hand-made / well-dressed / bad-tempered*

### 3. Formation of adjectives by means of suffixes

Adjectives can be made from nouns or verbs by adding suffixes. You can see some examples in the following box.

⚠ **Be careful!** The spelling of the adjective may change.

- able *acceptable, reasonable, predictable, comfortable, believable, advisable*
- al *traditional, musical, medical, environmental, political, accidental*
- ent / -ant *dependent, different, intelligent, resident, consistent, resistant*
- ful *helpful, peaceful, awful, wonderful, colourful, successful*
- ible *horrible, divisible, accessible, comprehensible, sensible, terrible*
- ic *atomic, problematic, idiomatic, energetic, systematic, emphatic*
- ive *permissive, cohesive, supportive, offensive, decisive, constructive*
- less *hopeless, harmless, homeless, meaningless, fearless, countless*
- like *childlike, godlike, ladylike*
- ly *deadly, friendly, lovely, manly, kingly, earthly*
- ous *dangerous, courageous, mysterious, erroneous, suspicious, malicious*
- y *lucky, cloudy, sleepy, sunny, hairy, funny*
- ing / -ed  Language Reference 1.3

### 4. Formation of nouns by means of suffixes

Nouns can be made from other nouns, adjectives or verbs by adding suffixes. You can see some examples in the following box.

⚠ **Be careful!** The spelling of the noun may change.

- al *arrival, revival, approval, burial, refusal*
- ance *performance, appearance, importance*
- ation *organisation, occupation, explanation*
- cy *privacy, pregnancy, accuracy, privacy*
- ence *patience, confidence, difference, intelligence*
- er *teacher, babysitter, reader, driver, follower*
- hood *childhood, brotherhood, motherhood*
- ing *finding, driving, meaning, swimming, heating*
- ion *instruction, situation, creation, attraction*
- sion *confusion, discussion, tension, collision*
- tion *solution, combination, intention, frustration*
- ition *partition, demolition*
- ism *racism, optimism, capitalism, impressionism*
- ity *nationality, electricity, generosity, popularity*
- ment *development, movement, government*
- ness *fullness, emptiness, happiness, kindness*
- or *actor, conductor, director*
- ty *certainty, safety, loyalty, simplicity, visibility*
- y *difficulty, honesty, delivery, burglary, harmony*

Some adjectives may be turned into nouns in different ways:

#### Adjective - Noun

*angry - anger / high - height / thirsty - thirst / brave - bravery / hot - heat / true - truth / broad - breadth / hungry - hunger / warm - warmth / dead - death / long - length / wide - width / deep - depth / poor - poverty / wise - wisdom / free - freedom / strong - strength / young - youth*

Some verbs may be turned into nouns in different ways:

#### Verb - Noun

*behave - behaviour / inhabit - inhabitant / please - pleasure / succeed - success / choose - choice / know - knowledge / post - postage / weigh - weight / depart - departure / laugh - laughter / rob - robbery / believe - belief / die - death / live - life / see - sight / fly - flight / marry - marriage / sign - signature*

### 5. Verbs and nouns with the same spelling

When in doubt, use the context around the word. Examples:  
*answer / change / rush / smoke / taste / tattoo*

### 5. Formation of verbs by means of suffixes

• Verbs can be made from adjectives or nouns by adding suffixes.

⚠ **Be careful!** The spelling of the verb may change.

- en *lessen, tighten, sharpen*
- ify *simplify, notify, falsify*
- ise / -ize *privatise, apologise, fertilise*

### 27.6 Negative prefixes

These are used to give a verb, an adjective or a noun a negative meaning:

- dis- *disagree, discomfort, disobedient, disadvantage*
- il- *illegal, illiteracy, illogical, illegitimate*
- im- *impossible, immature, impractical, impatient*
- in- *incomplete, inefficiency, invisible, insecurity*
- ir- *irresponsible, irregularity, irrelevant, irrational*
- mis- *misguided, misunderstand, misbehave*
- non- *non-smoker, non-verbal, non-stop, non-resident*
- un- *unusual, untidy, unfasten, unfortunate*