

Processes of word formation

The processes of word formation are *derivation, compounding, acronyms, borrowing, reduplication, conversion, blending, clipping, backformation, and coinage.*

Derivation

Derivation is the process of forming new words by combining derivational affixes or bound bases with existing words, e.g. *deplane, ecosystem, and telesales.* Derivation is by far the most common word-formation process to be found in the production of new English words. It is accomplished by means of a large number of small 'bits' of the English language which are generally described as *affixes.* Some familiar examples are the elements *un-, mis-, pre-, -ful, -less, -ish, -ism, and -ness* which appear in words like *unhappy, misrepresent, prejudge, joyful, careless, boyish, terrorism and sadness.* All English words formed by this derivational process have either prefixes or suffixes, or both. Thus *mislead* has a prefix, *disrespectful* has both a prefix and a suffix, and *foolishness* has two suffixes.

Affixation

An affix is a bound morpheme which only occurs when attached to some other morpheme or morphemes such as a root, base or stem. There are four types of affixes: prefixes, suffixes, infixes and interfixes.

Prefixation

Prefixes have to be added to the beginning of the word (e.g. *un-*). Prefixes do not generally alter the word-class of the base. For example, *fair* and *unfair* are both adjectives. In some cases, a prefix changes the word's part of speech, e.g. *en-* turns the adjective, *able* into the verb, *enable.*

Suffixation

Suffixes have to be added to the end of the word (e.g. *-ful*). Unlike prefixes, suffixes frequently alter the word-class of the base; for example, the adjective *kind*, by the addition of the suffix *-ness*, is changed into an abstract noun *kindness*. The words with which derivational suffixes combine is an arbitrary matter. To make a noun from the verb *adorn* we must add *-ment*, no other suffix will do, whereas the verb *fail* combines only with *-ure* to make a noun, *failure*.

Note: Inflectional suffixes, if any, always follow derivational suffixes: *workers*.

Infixation

A definition of an infix might be one or more morphemes which are added inside a word to form another word. Such infixes are said to occur in English since, in colloquial speech, swear words can be inserted into other words, e.g. *I hate this bloody university* can become *I hate this uni-bloody-versity*. In English, such 'infixes' can apparently only be inserted before a stressed syllable.

Interfixation

An interfix is an empty morph inserted between two morphemes in the process of word formation, such as English *-o-*, *-i-*, e.g. *-o-* between *psych* and *-logy* in *psychology* and *-i-* between *human* and *form* in *humaniform*.