

Coinage

One of the least common processes of word formation in English is **coinage**, that is, the invention of totally new terms. The most typical sources are invented trade names for commercial products that become general terms for any version of that product. Older examples are *aspirin*, *nylon*, *vaseline*, and *zipper*, more recent examples are *kleenex*, *teflon*, *tylenol*, and *Xerox*.

New words based on the name of a person or a place are called **eponyms**. The common eponyms are *sandwich* (from the eighteenth-century Earl of Sandwich who first insisted on having his bread and meat together while gambling) and *jeans* (from the Italian city of Genoa where the type of cloth was first made). Some eponyms are technical terms, based on the names of those who first discovered or invented things, such as *fahrenheit* (from the German, Gabriel Fahrenheit), *volt* (from the Italian, Alessandro Volta) and *watt* (from the Scot, James Watt)

Borrowing

It has been estimated that the English language contains more than a million words, of which fewer than half are included in unabridged dictionaries. It is natural to wonder where all these words came from. The answer is not difficult to find.

First of all, our language contains a core of words that have been a part of it as far back as we can trace its history, 5000-plus years. A few examples are these words: *sun*, *man*, *foot*, *father*, *eat*, *fire*, *I*, *he*, *with*, *of*.

Second, English has been a prodigious borrower of words from other languages throughout its history, and a vast number of borrowed words are now in our language. This has come about through invasions, immigration, exploration, trade, and other avenues of contact between

English and some foreign language. Borrowing can be defined as the taking over of words from other languages. Throughout its history, the English language has adopted a vast number of words from other languages, including *croissant* (French), *dope* (Dutch), *lilac*, *bazaar* (Persian), *piano* (Italian), *pretzel* (German), *sofa*, *sheikh* (Arabic), *tattoo* (Tahitian), *tycoon* (Japanese), *yogurt* (Turkish) and *zebra* (Bantu).

Compounding

A compound is a unit consisting of two or more bases. Compounding is simply the joining of two or more words into a single word, as in *hang glider*, *airstrip*, *cornflakes*, *devil-may-care*, *second-hand*, *son-in-law*, *windmill*, *ten-year-old*, and *loudmouth*. As the foregoing examples show, compounds may be written as one word, as a hyphenated word, or as two words.

Types of compounds

1. Noun compounds:

Examples: headache, brainwashing, walking stick, typing paper, sun-bather

2. Adjective compounds:

Examples: mouth-watering, handmade, good-looking, homesick, well known

Note: *Well known* in the first example is written as two words, while in the second it is hyphenated.

His books are not well known.

He is a well-known doctor.

3. Verb compounds:

Examples: sightsee, baby-sit, lip-read, house-hunt, brainwash

Assignment: Use the compounds above in sentences.

Blending

Blending is the fusion of two words into one, usually the first part of one word with the last part of another, as in *gasohol*, from *gasoline* and *alcohol*. The resultant blend partakes of both original meanings.

Exercise

Give the originals of these blends:

1. gasohol: gasoline + alcohol
2. smog.....
3. smurk.....
4. smaze.....
5. motel.....
6. Chunnel.....
7. brunch.....

Exercise

Give the blends that result from fusing these words

1. transfer + resister =
2. automobile + omnibus =
3. escalate + elevator =

Clipping

Clipping means cutting off the beginning or the end, or both, leaving a part to stand for the whole. The resultant form is called a clipped word.

Consider the following examples:

lab: laboratory

exam: examination

flu: influenza

plane: airplane, aeroplane

phone: telephone

Exercise

Give the original words from which these clipped words were formed:

1. psych
2. dorm
3. prof
4. gym
5. math
6. mike
7. taxi
8. vibes
9. Joe
10. Fred
11. Tom
12. Phil
13. hype
14. bus
15. memo
16. van
17. chute
18. Beth

Note: Clipped words are formed not only from individual words but from grammatical units, such as modifier plus noun. *Paratrooper* for example, is a clipped form of *parachutist trooper*. In cases like this it is often the first part that is shortened while the second part remains intact.

Exercise: Give the originals of these clipped words:

1. Amerindian: American Indian

2. agribusiness.....
3. moped.....
4. comsat.....
5. taxicab.....

Backformation

A very specialized type of reduction process is known as backformation. Typically, a word of one type (usually a noun) is reduced to form a word of another type (usually a verb). A good example of backformation is the process whereby the noun *television* first came into use and then the verb *televise* was created from it.

Exercise

These verbs are backformations. Write the words from which they are back-formed:

1. housekeep.....
2. typewrite.....
3. baby-sit
4. emote
5. reluct
6. laze
7. escalate
8. hang glide
9. burgle
10. opt

Conversion

Conversion is the derivational process whereby an item changes its word-class without the addition of an affix. For example, the verb *release*

(They released him) corresponds to a noun *release* (They ordered his release).

Verb → noun

doubt, love

Adjective → noun

daily, comic, (young) marrieds

Noun → verb

bottle, coat, peel, skin

Adjective → verb

dirty, empty

Minor categories of conversion

1. *must* as a noun
2. *under-the -weather* as an adjective
3. *ism* as a noun

Acronymy

Acronymy is the process whereby a word is formed from the initials or beginning segments of a succession of words.

Examples: MP/empi:/: military police or Member of Parliament
NATO /neitou/ : North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Exercise

Pronounce these acronyms and give their originals:

1. radar/ /.....
2. SCUBA/ /.....
3. CD / /.....
4. OK/ /.....
5. OPEC / /.....

6. VAT / /.....
7. PC / /.....
8. laser / /.....
9. UPS / /.....
10. MP/ /.....

Reduplication

Reduplication is the process of forming a new word by doubling a morpheme, usually with a change of vowel or initial consonant, as in pooh-pooh, tiptop, and hanky-panky.

Exercise

Identify the class of twin-word by one of these numbers:

1. Repetition without change
2. Repetition with change of initial consonant
3. Repetition with change of vowel
 - a. knick-knack
 - b. ding-dong
 - c. wishy-washy
 - d. quack-quack
 - e. fuddy-duddy
 - f. roly-poly
 - g. hocus-pocus
 - h. razzle-dazzle
 - i. tick-tock
 - j. nitty-gritty