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Suffixes

What are suffixes?

A suffix is a group of letters that can be added to the end of the root (basic) form of a word.

mend + ed = mended

Adding the suffix –ed to verbs

The suffix –ed is often added to the present tense of regular verbs to turn them into the past tense.

confess + ed = confessed

If a regular verb ends in an e in the present tense, it loses it before the suffix –ed is added to make the past tense.

rule + ed = ruled

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Adding the suffix –ing to verbs

The suffix –ing is added to verbs to turn them into a form of the present tense. This form is also called the present continuous or present progressive tense, because it means that it is happening now and continuing to happen.

study + ing = studying

I love studying grammar

distract + ing = distracting

Stop distracting those who want to work

If the verb ends in an e, cross off the e before adding the suffix –ing:

rule + ing = ruling

decide + ing = deciding

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Adding the suffix –ly to form adverbs

If you know how words are formed, it helps you to spell them correctly. An adverb is usually created by adding –ly to an adjective.

feverish + ly = feverishly

joyful + ly = joyfully

However, if the adjective already ends in a y, we need to replace the y with an i and then add -ly to make the adverb.

crazy + i + ly = crazily

speedy + i + ly = speedily

Adjectives that end in –le drop the final e and add –y to make the adverb.

simple + ly = simply

terrible + ly = terribly

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Adjectives that end in –ic usually add –ally to make them into an adverb.

realistic + ally = realistically

tragic + ally = tragically

Some adverbs are spelled the same way as the adjective.

The daily paper was read daily by the old man.

Adding the suffix –ness to make nouns

Some adjectives can be turned into nouns by adding the suffix –ness.

sad + ness = sadness

fair + ness = fairness

However, if the adjective ends in y, we need to change the y into an i before adding –ness.

happy happy + i + ness = happiness

azy lazy + i + ness = laziness

Adding the suffix –er to verbs to make nouns

Some verbs can be turned into nouns by adding the suffix –er

eat + er = eater

paint + er = painter

If the verb ends in a single vowel and single consonant, you need to double the consonant before adding the suffix.

run + n + er = runner

sit + t + er = sitter

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