

WORD FORMS

To improve written and spoken English, it is important to understand that the same “root” word can have different meanings by simply adding a prefix to the beginning of the word or a suffix to the end of the word. These small additions make similar looking words have different forms with changed meanings.

In English, these are called “Word Forms” – words which have a different form, including the meaning and use, by changing the spelling.

ESL learners can master word forms by expanding their knowledge of English vocabulary through memorization. This can be done in the following ways:

1. Using a dictionary- to check the meaning and spelling of words
2. Reading in English – see how word forms are used

Examples of Word Form “families” (coming from the same “root” or “origin” word)

“Root” + Suffix = Form

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|----------------|----------------|--|
| 1. SAD | = adjective | - My friend feels sad. |
| SAD + den | = verb | - That movie saddens me. |
| SAD + ness | = noun | - They were filled with sadness. |
| SAD + ly | =
adverb | - She spoke sadly about the accident. |
| 2. CREATE | = verb | - He creates websites. |
| CREATE + tion* | = noun | - The computer is the greatest creation. |
| CREATE + ive* | =
adjective | - That is a creative idea. |



CREATIVE + ly** = adverb - They worked creatively.

NOTES

* Spelling – when adding suffixes, a letter may be added or removed from the “root” word.

** Adverbs – as a rule, adverbs are formed from adjectives by adding the adverb suffixes “ly” or “lly”.

Here are other common word suffixes for NOUNS, VERBS, and ADJECTIVES. The suffixes are underlined.

NOUNS	VERBS	ADJECTIVES
Justice	Justify	Just
Permission	Permit	Permitted
Management	Managing	Manageable
Capitalism	Capitalize	Capitalist
Excellence	Excel	Excellent
Theory	Theorize	Theoretically
Availability	Avail	Available
Politics	Politicize	Political
Challenge	Challenge	Challenging

Participial Adjectives are formed from the two common verb endings:

1. “ing” is used in the Present Continuous verb tense and in Gerunds, so the adjective form is called the Present Participle Adjective
2. “ed” is used in the Simple Past verb tense and Past Participle, and the adjective form is called the Past Participle Adjective.



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These adjectives are not verbs, so they can be used with any verb tense.

- “That was an exciting movie.” – The present participial adjective “exciting” is describing the “movie.” An “ing” adjective indicates that the noun (movie) affects someone or something.
- “The students are interested in the internship program”. The past participial adjective “interested” is describing “students”. An “ed” adjective indicates that the noun is affected by someone or something.



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