

# Suffixes

A **suffix** is a group of letters placed at the **end** of a word to make a **new** word. A suffix can make a new word in one of two ways:

1. **inflectional** (grammatical): for example, changing singular to plural (dog > dogs), or changing present tense to past tense (walk > walked). In this case, the basic meaning of the word does not change.
2. **derivational** (the new word has a new meaning, "derived" from the original word): for example, teach > teacher or care > careful

## Inflectional suffixes

Inflectional suffixes do not change the **meaning of the original word**. So in "Every day I walk to school" and "Yesterday I walked to school", the words **walk** and **walked** have the same basic meaning. In "I have one car" and "I have two cars", the basic meaning of the words **car** and **cars** is exactly the same. In these cases, the suffix is added simply for grammatical "correctness".

Look at these examples:

suffix	grammatical change	example original word	example suffixed word
-s	plural	dog	dogs
-en	plural (irregular)	ox	oxen
-s	3rd person singular present	like	he likes
-ed	past tense past participle	work	he worked he has worked
-en	past participle (irregular)	eat	he has eaten
-ing	continuous/progressive	sleep	he is sleeping
-er	comparative	big	bigger
-est	superlative	big	the biggest

## Derivational suffixes

With derivational suffixes, the new word has a new **meaning**, and is usually a different **part of speech**. But the new meaning is related to the old meaning - it is "derived" from the old meaning.

We can add more than one suffix, as in this example:

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<<http://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/suffixes.htm>>.

derive (verb) + **tion** = derivation (noun) + **al** = derivational (adjective)

There are several hundred derivational suffixes. Here are some of the more common ones:

suffix	making	example original word	example suffixed word
-ation	nouns	explore hesitate	exploration hesitation
-sion		persuade divide	persuasion division
-er		teach	teacher
-cian		music	musician
-ess		god	goddess
-ness		sad	sadness
-al		arrive	arrival
-ary		diction	dictionary
-ment		treat	treatment
-y		jealous victor	jealousy victory
-al	adjectives	accident	accidental
-ary		imagine	imaginary
-able		tax	taxable
-ly		brother	brotherly
-y		ease	easy
-ful		sorrow forget	sorrowful forgetful
-ly	adverbs	helpful	helpfully
-ize	verbs	terror private	terrorize privatize

-ate		hyphen	hyphenate
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Note that the suffix **-er** can convert almost any verb into the person or thing performing the action of the verb. For example: a teacher is a person who teaches, a lover loves, a killer kills, an observer observes, a walker walks, a runner runs; a sprinkler is a thing that sprinkles, a copier copies, a shredder shreds.