



WORD FORMATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This article will walk you through what word formation is, the various types of word formation, examples of each word formation types and the rules to be adhered to when forming words.

Keywords: Formation of the word, prefixes, suffixes, compounding, derivation, borrowing.

The English language is known for its wonderful quality of the way in which words and sentences are formed and used. Formation of new words from an existing root word by adding a syllable or another word is the general process, however. There are multiple ways in which it can be done. The process of word formation is widely recognized as a phenomenon that is innate to human life all around the world. As defined by Trask, the process of word formation is a method of creating new words from previously existing components. Meanwhile, according to Hacken and Thomas, the word creation process is the method through which new words are created based on a set of rules. According to the Plag, the term “word formation process” refers to the process of creating new words from existing ones.

Most English vocabulary arises by making new lexemes out of old ones – either by adding an affix to existing forms, altering their word class or combining them to produce compounds. The formation of the words is classified into four types based on how the process of information is carried out. They are :

a) by adding prefixes: loyal – disloyal, order – disorder, direct – indirect, regular – irregular, agree – disagree, honest – dishonest, appear – disappear, satisfied – unsatisfied.



- b) by adding suffixes: create – creation, act – action, attract – attractive, inform – information, happy – happiness, quick – quickly, inspire – inspiring.
- c) converting from one word class to another: (The good should help the needy) Here, adjectives ‘good’ and ‘needy’ are used as nouns by using them with the article ‘the’. (He texted me about the meeting) The noun ‘text’ is used as a verb in the sentence by adding an ‘ed’ to the end of the word.
- d) forming compound words: break + down = breakdown, sun + rise = sunrise, over + load = overload, black + board = blackboard, flash + mob = flash mob, up + town = uptown.

Types of word formation:

- Coinage: making up entirely new words Kleenex, Xerox and Kodak are examples of product names that have been extended from a specific reference to a more general one. For example, jeans, sandwich.
- Borrowing: taking words from another language and putting them in your own. Many Latin and French word have been borrowed into English. Piano is musical instrument (Italian), Croissants are type of pastry (French), Yogurt is a delicious dairy product (Turkish).
- Compounding: two or more words joined together to form a new word. Examples, home + work = homework (noun), pick + pocket = pickpocket (noun), low + paid = low-paid (adj).
- Blending: is similar to compounds, except just parts of the words are merged. Examples, motor + hotel = motel, breakfast + lunch = brunch, smoke + fog = smog, teleprinter + exchange = telex.
- Clipping: removing one or more syllables from a word to make it shorter; facsimile – fax, hamburger – burger, gasoline – gas, advertisement – ad.
- Backformation: removing one or more syllables from a word to make it shorter like clipping, but, backformation always involve reduction, editor – edit, television – televise, babysitter – babysit.
- Conversion: adding a new syntactic category to an already existing term, examples, butter (noun) – V to butter the bread, permit (verb) – N an entry permit, must (verb) – N doing the homework is a must.



***Modern American Journal of Linguistics,
Education, and Pedagogy***

ISSN (E): 3067-7874

Volume 01, **Issue** 02, May, 2025

Website: usajournals.org

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• **Acronyms:** words formed by combining the initials of multiple words. For example, National Aeronautics and Space Agency – NASA, United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund – UNICEF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNISCO, Compact Disc – CD.

• **Derivation:** the highly common word formation process. For examples, happy – unhappy – happiness, arrange – rearrange.

In summary, word formation is in essential aspect of linguistic study that highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of language. Through mechanisms like derivation, compounding, blending and borrowing, languages can expand and adapt to new realities and cultural shifts. Understanding word formation not only sheds light on the structural and functional properties of language but also provides insights into cultural and societal influences on communication. This study of how words are systematically generated and modified is crucial for grasping the complexities of linguistic development and the adaptive nature of human expression.

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