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Adjectives are words that describe [nouns](#). We can make adjectives by adding prefixes and suffixes.



via <https://howtospell.co.uk/suffixes-part1>

## Suffixes to form adjectives

Suffixes go on the end of words. They change a word from one part of speech, such as a noun or a verb, to another, such as an adjective.

For example, if you add ‘-able’ to ‘solve’, you create the adjective ‘solvable’.

- *They told me the problem was not **solvable**, but I thought it was easy.*
- *The professional secretary was very **helpful**. She immediately understood what I needed.*

The word ‘professional’ comes from ‘profession’, and ‘helpful’ comes from ‘help’.

The most common adjective suffixes and their meaning:

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-able/-ible	Worth, ability	Solvable, accessible, believable, reliable
-al, -ial, -ical	Quality, relation	Professional, structural, national, legal
-ent/-ant	Having a certain quality	Important, dependent, relevant
-ed	Having the quality of	Bored, interested, fascinated
-ic	Quality, relation	Generic, archaic, idealistic, historic
-ing	Referring to an activity	Boring, interesting, fascinating
-ish	Having the character of, about, almost	Newish, reddish
-ful	Having a characteristic	Helpful, colorful, useful

-less	Without, missing	Worthless, careless, useless, hopeless
-ous	Having the quality of, relating to	Adventurous, courageous, advantageous
-ive	Having the quality of	Festive, cooperative, sensitive

Thus, suffixes can determine the word's part of speech. Certain suffixes make the base or root word a noun, a verb, an adjective, or an adverb. For example, if you know suffixes that are typical for adjectives you will easily differentiate the adjectives from other parts of speech or determine the meaning of a word:

- *history* (noun) – *historic* (adjective)
- *hopeful* (giving hope) – *hopeless* (without hope)

Note: Some words can be two parts of speech. This is true for words that end in ‘-ed’ and ‘-ing’, such as ‘*bored*’ and ‘*boring*’. In the first and third sentences below, the words are verbs, while in the others they are adjectives. In the second sentence, ‘*bored*’ describes the person ‘*I*’, and in the last sentence ‘*boring*’ describes the word ‘*subject*’.

- His lecture *bored* the class so everyone fell asleep.
- I was so *bored* in his class that I fell asleep.
- You are *boring* me with all this information about insects.
- This is a very *boring* subject.

Here’s an interesting video about how to use adjectives with suffixes ‘-ing’ and ‘-ed’ correctly:

## Prefixes to form adjectives

*Prefixes* go at the beginning of words.

The most common adjective prefixes and their meaning:

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
<i>il-, im-, ir-, in-</i>	Not/opposite of	<i>Illegal, Illegible, imperfect, impolite, irrelevant, irrational, inconvenient, inactive</i>
<i>un-</i>	Not/opposite of	<i>Unusual, unhappy, uninterested, unpleasant</i>
<i>dis-</i>	Not/opposite of	<i>Dishonest, disloyal, dissimilar, disabled</i>

<i>ultra-, super-, - hyper-</i>	<i>Extreme</i>	<i>Ultra-compact, ultrasound, hyperactive</i>
<i>inter-</i>	<i>Between</i>	<i>International, interdisciplinary</i>
<i>trans-</i>	<i>Across</i>	<i>Transatlantic, transmarine</i>

- *I cannot read anything she writes; her writing is **illegible**.*
- *Companies don't like to work with **dishonest** employees.*

## Spelling rules for *il-*, *im-*, *ir-*, *in-*

1. Use '*il-*' for words starting with 'l', such as *legal (illegal)* and *legible (illegible)*.
2. Use '*ir-*' for words starting with 'r', such as *relevant (irrelevant)* and *rational (irrational)*.
3. Use '*im-*' for words starting with 'm' or 'p', such as *mature (immature)* and *polite (impolite)*.
4. For other adjectives, use '*in-*', such as *convenient (inconvenient)* and *active (inactive)*.

Note: Not all prefixes can go on all words, so it is important to use your dictionary to help you learn which prefixes are used with which words.

In this video from Shaw English Online, you'll see how different adjectives are formed using prefixes and suffixes:

Read more on this topic:

[How to Form Adverbs](#)

[Verb Formation: Common Prefixes and Suffixes](#)

[Noun Formation: Common Prefixes](#)

[Noun Formation: Common Suffixes](#)