



## Activity 2

This is an exercise on morphology. What is morphology? Morphology is the study of words. More specifically, it is the study of the different components of words, and the structural framework within which these components are arranged in any language. Simply put, morphology is the study of the system of categories and rules involved in word formation and interpretation. We shall understand this better once we analyse some examples.

There are two ways in which affixes can be added to a stem.

1) For example, the noun 'teacher' is made by adding the suffix '-er' to the verb teach. So, in this process, a verb has been converted into a noun. Similarly, the adjective 'beautiful' is constructed by adding the suffix '-ful' to the noun beauty. In this case, a noun has been converted into an adjective. This is called derivational morphology, where the meaning of the word changes because of the addition of the suffix.

2) However, in other cases, we add a suffix to a noun, and that noun remains a noun. For example, if we add an 's' to the noun book, that gives us another noun 'books', which is the plural form of the word 'book'. Similarly, if we add "-er" to the word 'old', we get 'older', which like 'old', is an adjective. 'Breathe', upon the addition of the past tense suffix '-ed', becomes 'breathed'. This is called inflectional morphology, where adding a suffix to a word does not change its meaning of the word, but only changes the number, intensity, or tense of the word.

Given below are some pairs of words. Identify all the processes (by mentioning the suffix being added and whether that suffix is a derivational or inflectional one) the word on the left has undergone to give us the word on the right, in the correct order of suffixation. Also mention the grammatical category (noun/verb/adjective/adverb) of both items in each pair.

1-drawer-drawers, 2-imagine-imagination, 3-big-bigger, 4-trouble-troublesome, 5-trouble-troubles, 6-see-seeker, 7-grace-graceful, 8-true-truly, 9-skill-skillfully, 10-book-bookish, 11-charm-charmingly, 12-great-greatness, 13-mark-marked, 14-write-written, 15-write-writings, 16-fool-foolishness

A) Does the grammatical category of the word change if it undergoes a process of inflectional morphology?

B) And does it change when a word undergoes a process of derivational morphology?

Further, there are two types of derivational suffixes, namely class 1 and class 2. Class 1 suffixes are those that, when added, bring about a change in the way in which the root word looks and sounds. Class 2 suffixes are those, that upon their addition, do not bring about such a change.

Examples of class 1:



Audacity-audacious (the c of audacity which sounds like s of sing changes into the sound sh of **shake** in audacious)

Sane-sanity (the vowel 'a' sounds different in the two words)

Plastic-plasticity (the c of plastic, which sounds like c of cat, is changed into s of **secret** in plasticity)

Examples of class 2:

Daft-daftness

Worth-worthless

Cheer-cheerful

Soft-softly

Now, identify the suffix(es) that has/have been added to each of the following words step-by-step, and determine if they are class 1 or class 2 suffixes. Ignore tonal and stress changes and focus on consonantal and vocalic (vocalic is the adjective form of vowel) changes alone. We say 'step-by-step' because more than one suffix may be added. For example, readability, where 'able' is first added to read to make readable, to which 'ity' is then added to make readability.

i-Pretend-pretender

ii-Occlude-occlusion

iii-Self-selfish

iv-Understand-understandable

v-Remark-remarkably

vi-Suffice-sufficient

vii-Pronounce-pronunciation

So far, we have looked at the relatively simple process of adding a suffix to a word, either inflectionally or derivationally. However, there are many other ways in which words undergo morphological transformations, such as:

**Reduplication:** the process wherein one part of the word or the whole word is repeated, with or without changes

**Elision:** deletion or omission of one or more sounds

**Compounding:** the process wherein another stem is added to the word to make a compound word

**Internal change:** the process wherein some sounds in the word are replaced by others



Suppletion: the process wherein whole word is replaced by another word

In the following exercise, we look at multiple examples and you are required to identify one word from the list above that accurately describes the change(s) undergone by the word.

- a. We are → we're
- b. Go → went
- c. Break → broke
- d. Write → copywrite
- e. Be → were
- f. Bite → bit
- g. Easy → easy-peasy
- h. Read → proof-read
- i. Going to → gonna
- j. Bye → bye-bye

Thanks for your time, and congratulations for completing this exercise.