

Noun formation

I. Nouns having the same form as verbs

II. Nouns formed with prefixes

III. Nouns formed with suffixes

IV. Abbreviations and acronyms

I. Nouns having the same form as verbs

In English, there are a number of nouns with the same form as verbs.

Examples:

charge, comment, contract, copy, debate, design, hope, look, plan, reply, study

In some cases, the nouns **differ from the verbs** in

a) **stress** : with **nouns**, the **stress** is on **the first syllable**,
with **verbs**, on **the second**.

Examples: *contrast, decrease, export, import, increase, present, progress, record, research, transfer*

b) **pronunciation**:

noun **use** [ju:s] verb **use** [ju:z]

c) **spelling**:

noun **practice** verb **practise** (BE)

but: **practice** **practice** (AE)

d) both **spelling and pronunciation**

noun **advice** [s] verb **advise** [z]

device [s] **devise** [z]

II. Nouns formed with prefixes

Most of the prefixes used for forming adjectives and verbs are also used for forming nouns (see A Remedial Course in English Grammar: Adjectives (Adjectives formed with prefixes, Adjectives formed with suffixes), Verb formation).

Prefix	Examples
a-	asymmetry, asynchrony
anti-	antimatter, antiparticle
counter-	counterattack, countercurrent
de-	decentralization, decomposition
dis-	disagreement, displacement
en-	enclosure, enlargement
fore-	forecast, foreground
hyper-	hypermarket, hypersensitivity
il-	illegality, illegibility
im-	imperfection, impossibility
in-	inaccuracy, independence
inter-	interaction, interrelation
ir-	irregularity, irresponsibility
mis-	miscalculation, misinformation

non-	nonsense, non-smoker
over-	overtime, overwork
pre-	precondition, preview
sub-	subdivision, subsection
super-	superconductor, supervision
un-	unbalance, unrest
under-	underestimate, understatement

Remember: Noun	Adjective
<i>imbalance/unbalance</i>	<i>unbalanced</i>
<i>inability</i>	<i>unable</i>
<i>indecision</i>	<i>undecided</i>
<i>inequality</i>	<i>unequal</i>
<i>injustice</i>	<i>unjust</i>
<i>instability</i>	<i>unstable</i>

III. Nouns formed with suffixes

1. Nouns describing people doing some activity (often an occupation) and people experiencing some activity (suffix –ee)

Suffix	Examples
-ant	assistant, participant
-ee	attendee, referee, grantee
-ent	correspondent, respondent
-(e)er	engineer, manager
-ian	librarian, historian
-ic	mechanic, paramedic
-ician	mathematician, politician
-(i)cist	physicist, pharmacist
-or	supervisor, survivor

Remember: **physicist** = scientist with special knowledge of physics
physician = medical doctor

2. Nouns describing devices

Suffix	Examples
-er	condenser, opener
-or	alternator, razor

3. Nouns describing (small) size

Suffix	Examples
-let	booklet, leaflet

4. Nouns describing abstracts

Suffix	Examples
-age	mileage, percentage
-al	disposal, proposal
-ance	appearance, attendance
-ation	information, resignation, transformation
-ence	dependence, preference
-ication	simplification, verification
-iety	society, variety
-ism	capitalism, idealism
-ity	density, diversity, equality, regularity, validity
-ment	agreement, statement
-ness	usefulness, weakness
-ship	membership, relationship
-sion	conclusion, explosion
-ssion	emission, transmission
-(p)tion	assumption, consumption, recognition, solution
-ure	exposure, failure

5. Nouns formed with other suffixes

Suffix	Examples
-t	weight
-th	breadth, length, strength, width

Remember:	Adjective	Noun	Verb
	<i>broad</i>	<i>breadth</i>	<i>broaden</i>
	<i>long</i>	<i>length</i>	<i>lengthen</i>
	<i>strong</i>	<i>strength</i>	<i>strengthen</i>
	<i>wide</i>	<i>width</i>	<i>widen</i>
		Noun	Verb
		<i>choice</i>	<i>choose</i>
		<i>proof</i>	<i>prove</i>
		<i>speech</i>	<i>speak</i>
		<i>thought</i>	<i>think</i>

IV. Abbreviations and acronyms

1. Abbreviations pronounced as individual letters

- a) **Formal** *e.g.* (exempli gratia) = for example
i.e. (id est) = that is
NB (nota bene) = note well
ID = identity card/document
CV (curriculum vitae)
PC = personal computer

CEO = chief executive officer
Ltd. = (private) limited company
EU = European Union
UN = United Nations
UK = United Kingdom
US = United States
UWB = *University of West Bohemia*
CTU = *Czech Technical University*

b) Informal *DIY* = do it yourself
asap = as soon as possible

2. Abbreviations formed from the first letter of a group of words, pronounced as one word (acronyms)

NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NASA = *National Air and Space Administration*
laser = *light amplification and stimulated emission of radiation*
radar = radio detecting and ranging

3. Abbreviations common in e-mail messages

AFK = *away from keyboard*
BTW = *by the way*
FYI = *for your information*
C = see *R* = are *U* = you *EZ* = easy
2 = to; too; two *4* = for

For abbreviations used in letters see Guidelines for Academic Writing: How to write a formal letter.

For compound nouns see Guidelines for Academic Writing: Terminology.

EXERCISES

I. Complete the table with abstract nouns

Verb	Noun	Verb	Noun	Verb	Noun
1. achieve		2. add		3. adjust	
4. agree		5. align		6. analyse	
7. apologize		8. appear		9. apply	
10. assess		11. assign		12. assume	
13. attend		14. behave		15. compare	
16. classify		17. complete		18. comply	
19. conclude		20. confuse		21. convert	
22. decide		23. defend		24. depart	
25. depend		26. describe		27. develop	
28. differ		29. discover		30. distinguish	
31. disturb		32. divide		33. employ	
34. emit		35. enclose		36. explain	

37. explore		38. exclude		39. expose	
40. fail		41. improve		42. include	
43. intend		44. interfere		45. introduce	
46. involve		47. judge		48. lose	
49. maintain		50. move		51. multiply	
52. observe		53. occur		54. omit	
55. pay		56. perform		57. permit	
58. practise		59. prefer		60. presume	
61. proceed		62. produce		63. propose	
64. provide		65. receive		66. recognize	
67. recover		68. reduce		69. refer	
70. refuse		71. remain		72. remove	
73. repeat		74. replace		75. require	
76. resemble		77. respond		78. revise	
79. revolve		80. satisfy		81. sign	
82. signify		83. solve		84. specify	
85. succeed		86. suggest		87. transfer	
88. transmit		89. vary		90. verify	

II. Complete the table with abstract nouns

1. able		2. accurate		3. ambiguous	
4. available		5. aware		6. continuous	
7. correct		8. dense		9. distant	
10. diverse		11. efficient		12. frequent	
13. infinite		14. likely		15. precise	
16. public		17. pure		18. ready	
19. real		20. regular		21. relevant	
22. responsible		23. safe		24. scarce	
25. secure		26. similar		27. simple	
28. stable		29. valid		30. weak	

III.

a) Give examples of nouns (at least two in each group) describing people doing some activity and people experiencing some activity (do not use the examples given above).

1. -er :
2. -or:
3. -ist:
4. -ant, -ent:
5. -ee:

b) Give six nouns describing devices.

1. -er:
2. -or:

IV. Complete the sentences with nouns derived from the words in capitals.

1. Nobody knows why this regulation had to be introduced. There is no JUSTIFY
..... for it.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 2. Dr Novák, by his own, lacks experience of chairing a session at an international conference. | ADMIT |
| 3. The of this plan will have serious | FAIL, IMPLY |
| 4. The of his misuse of public funds resulted in his | REVEAL
RESIGN |
| 5. The found a lot of in John 's paper. | REVIEW, INACCURATE |
| 6. We apologize for the of the meeting. | CANCEL |
| 7. I have not received confirmation of the of my paper. | ACCEPT |
| 8. If you want to teach a technical subject, you need not only a good technical education but also a teaching | QUALIFY |
| 9. He believes that our about the cost of the equipment are wrong. | ASSUME |
| 10. The project is nearing | COMPLETE |
| 11. In this area, extreme temperatures are a rare | OCCUR |
| 12. Any signal originating from a source other than the wanted transmitter, e.g. atmospherics or unwanted stations is referred to as | DISTURB |

V. Complete the sentences with suitable words.

1. Do you think I can meet the entry at this university?
2. The reason why I didn't buy that car was its high petrol
3. All for grants must reach the funding agency by March 1st.
4. On their return from a study stay abroad students seek of examinations taken at a foreign university.
5. You can't see the Dean any time you like; you must call his secretary and make an
6. We need greater of tertiary education to satisfy the needs of young people with different abilities and interests.
7. With nuclear energy, there is the problem of the safe of radioactive waste.
8. For a seminar to be useful, between the teacher and the students is a necessity.
9. The sensor monitors any in a person's heartbeat.
10. The of your passport expires next year.