Ways of forming nouns in English

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Like in the English language, a noun is a word that identifies a person, animal, place, thing, or idea. Here, we'll take a closer look at what makes a noun a noun, and we'll provide some noun examples, along with some advice for using nouns in our sentences.

Many words in English can be adapted to be used for different grammatical functions. We often use prefixes and suffixes (extra parts of the word added at the beginning or the end) to change the meaning of a word for a variety of purposes. Adjectives and verbs can be turned into nouns, for example *happy* becomes the feeling of *happiness*, *run* becomes the doer of the verb, *runner*.

In English, noun formation is implemented in the following ways:

1). Nouns having the same form as verbs

2). Nouns formed with prefixes

3). Nouns formed with suffixes

4). Abbreviations and acronyms

Now, we will discuss each noun forming way separately

1. 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]

1. **Noun forming prefixes**

In English, most of the prefixes used for forming adjectives and verbs are also used for forming nouns. The list of these prefixes is given in Table 4.

Table 4. Prefixes used for forming nouns

	Prefix	Nouns
1	**a-**	asymmetry, asynchrony
2	**anti-**	antimatter, antiparticle
3	**counter-**	counterattack, countercurrent
4	**de-**	decentralization, decomposition

5	**dis-**	disagreement, displacement
6	**en-**	enclosure, enlargement
7	**fore-**	forecast, foreground
8	**hyper-**	hypermarket, hypersensitivity
9	**il-**	illegality, illegibility
10	**im-**	imperfection, impossibility
11	**in-**	inaccuracy, independence
12	**inter-**	interaction, interrelation
13	**ir-**	irregularity, irresponsibility
14	**mis-**	miscalculation, misinformation
15	**non-**	nonsense, non-smoker
16	**over-**	overtime, overwork
17	**pre-**	precondition, preview
18	**sub-**	subdivision, subsection
19	**super-**	superconductor, supervision
20	**un-**	unbalance, unrest
21	**under-**	underestimate, understatement

3. Nouns formed with suffixes

1. Nouns describing people doing some activity (often an occupation) and people experiencing some activity (suffix –ee) (Table 5).

Table 5. Noun forming suffixes

№	Suffix	Nouns
1	-ant	assistant, participant
2	-ee	attendee, referee, grantee
3	-ent	correspondent, respondent
4	-(e)er	engineer, manager
5	-ian	librarian, historian
6	-ic	mechanic, paramedic
7	-icia	mathematician, politician
8	-(i)cist	physicist, pharmacist
9	-or	supervisor, survivor
10	**im-**	imperfection, impossibility
11	**in-**	inaccuracy, independence
12	**inter-**	interaction, interrelation

Moreover, English suffixes can be divided as
1) suffixes that form nouns describing devices as
a. -er condenser, opener
b. -or alternator, razor
2). suffixes that form nouns describing (small) size
-let booklet, leaflet

3). suffixes that form nouns describing abstracts

-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

4. Nouns formed with other suffixes

 -t weight

-th breadth, length, strength, width

IV. **Abbreviations and acronyms** A c r o n y m s and l e t t e r a b b r e v i a t i o n s are lexical abbreviations of a phrase. There are different types of such abbreviations and there is no unanimity of opinion among scholars whether all of them can be regarded as regular vocabulary units. It seems logical to make distinction between acronyms and letter abbreviations. Letter abbreviations are mere replacements of longer phrases including names of well-known organisations of undeniable currency, names of agencies and institutions, political parties, famous people, names of official offices, etc. They are not spoken or treated as words but pronounced letter by letter and as a rule possess no other linguistic forms proper to words. There are two different types of abbreviation in English. They are abbreviations that are pronounced as individual letters and abbreviations formed from the first letter of a group of words, pronounced as one word (acronyms).The followings are their examples.

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, pronouncedas 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

References

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