

## Morphology

### English Language Morphemes

**(To understand this lesson, you need to study the section on free and bound morpheme first.)**

Derivational morpheme: either change category (part of speech) or new words (new meaning, for example opposite meaning or a new concept, sometimes a contrasting meaning, sometimes just a new concept.)

For example, take the word *break*. It consists of one morpheme, a free lexical morpheme. The word *broke*, although one word, it has two morphemes: *break* + *past tense morpheme*. However, the past tense morpheme did not change the meaning or change the category. It is still taking about the action of breaking, and it is still a verb. Thus, *past -ed* is an inflectional morpheme.

Another example: The word *girls* and *girl's*, each of them has two morphemes. The first is *girl* (a free lexical morpheme). The second morpheme is bound, and does not change the category or meaning of *girl*. Thus they are inflectional morphemes

*girls*: *girl* + *plural -s*

*girl's*: *girl* + *possessive -'s*

But what about *girls'*? This one consists of three morphemes: *girl* + *plural -s* + *possessive -'s*

The word *breakable* also consists of two morphemes: *break* (free lexical morpheme) + *-able*. The morpheme *-able* changed the category of *break* from a verb to an adjective. Thus, *-able* is a derivational morpheme.

When you look at the word *unbreakable*, you will immediately notice three morphemes: *un-*, *break*, *-able*. The second is the free lexical one and the other two are bound. Now, how can we decide which bound morpheme was added first? I mean was it like this:

*un-* + *break* → *unbreak*, and then + *-able*?

or

*break* + *-able* → *breakable* and then + *-un*?

Remember again, morphology is interested in meaning. The verb *unbreak\** does not exist in English (OK, you hear it in some songs or poetry, but it is made up.) Thus, the second option is the way this word was formed: *break* + *-able* → *breakable* and then + *-un*

This is important because you need to decide if the bound morpheme changed the category or meaning or not. In the example above, both bound morphemes changed the category, so both are derivational.

Now look at this example: the adjective *undetermined*. Obviously, there are three morphemes: *un-*, *determine*, and *past -ed*. The middle one is a free lexical morpheme, a verb. So which one came first? *un-* or *-ed*? Let's try both options:

*un-* + *determine* (v) → *undetermine\** (v) : This verb does not exist in English. So this is not right.

*determine* (v) + *-ed past participle* → *determined* (adjective) . Then *undetermined* + *un-* → *undetermined*, still an adjective but a different (actually an opposite) meaning. Thus, *un-* is a derivational bound morpheme.

**The inflectional affixes can be schematized as follows:**

Inflectional suffix	Examples	Names
1. {-s pl.}	dogs, <i>oxen</i> , mice	1. Noun plural
2. {-s sg ps}	boy's	2. Noun singular possessive
3. {-s pl ps}	boys', men's	3. Noun plural possessive
4. {-s 3d}	vacates	4. Present third-person singular
5. {-ING vb}	discussing	5. Present participle
6. {-D pt}	chewed, rode	6. Past tense
7. {-D pp}	chewed, eaten, swum	7. Past participle
8. {-ER cp}	bolder, sooner, nearer	8. Comparative
9. {-EST sp}	boldest, soonest, nearest	9. Superlative

Now read the section on derivational and functional morpheme from the book. It will make more sense! Look at the morphological analysis of the words below. Try to make more analysis using nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, etc.

Word	Morpheme			
	Free		Bound	
	Lexical	Functional	Derivational	Inflectional
of		of		
him		him		
over		Over		
clean	Clean			
sun	Sun			
happy	Happy			
happiness	Happy		-ness (adj. → n.)	
girl	Girl			
girls	Girl			Plural -s (n. both cases)
Criteria	Criterion			Plural -s
Children	Child			Plural -s
companies	Company			Plural -s
Replayed	Play		Re-, -ed	
Repairing	Repair			-ing
Gentleness	Gentle		-ness (adj. → n.)	
Understood	Understand			Past -ed
Underestimates	Under Estimate			-s
Cooperatively	Operate		Co- -tive (v. → adj.) -ly (adj. → adv.)	
Examinations	Examination			-s
Childishly	Child		-lish (n. → adj.) -ly (adj. → adv.)	
unbreakable	Break		-able (v. → adj.) Un-	
Oxen	Ox			Plural -s
Three <u>sheep</u>	Sheep			Plural -s (zero morpheme)
Departed	Depart			-ed
Demotivated	Motivate		de-	past -ed
Undetermined	Determine		-ed (v. → adj.) Un-	
Taken	Take			-en
Father's	Father			- 's
Clearer	Clear			-er
Highest	High			-est
Teachers	Teach		-er (v. → n.)	Pluar -s
Renders	Render			-s
Purifying	Pure		-ify (adj. → v.)	-ing
Accomplishments	Accomplish		-ment (v. → n.)	Plural -s
Finds	Find			Third person -s

Found	Find			Past –ed
Rehabilitation	Habilitate		Re- -tion (v. → n.)	
decomposition	Composite		-tion (v. → n.) de-	