

# Morphology Terminology

Morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning.

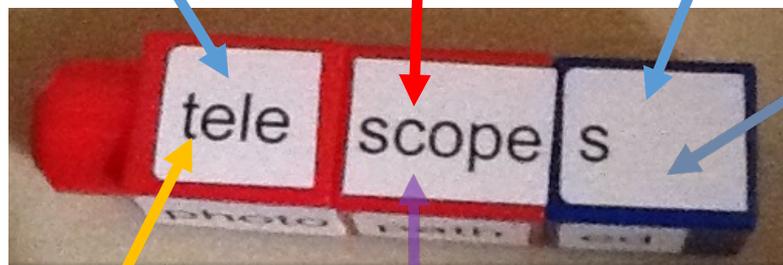
**Bound Affix:**  
must be combined with  
other morphemes to  
make a word

**Free  
Morpheme:**  
can stand alone

**Bound Affix:**  
must be combined with  
other morphemes to  
make a word

More than 60% of the words that readers encounter have relatively transparent morphological structure- that is, they can be broken down into meaningful parts.

-Nagy, 1989



**Inflectional Suffix-**  
changes tense, not  
meaning

**Derivational affix-**  
changes the meaning  
of the word

**root-**  
a single word part  
from which many  
other words are  
formed

**Base** words are typically Anglo-Saxon and free morphemes.

**Roots** are either Greek, Latin, or French and are bound morphemes.

# Affixes

## Prefixes

The following 20 prefixes make up 97% of the words in printed school English with prefixes. (Latin & Greek)

(White, Sowell, and Yanagihara, 1989)

anti-	de-	<b>dis-</b>	en- (em-)
fore-	<b>in-</b> (im-, il-, ir-)	<b>in-</b> (im-)	
inter-	mid-	mis-	non-
over-	pre-	<b>re-</b>	semi-
sub-	super-	trans-	<b>un-</b>
under-			

*Those in red account for more than half of prefixed words.*

## Suffixes

Two types of suffixes:

- **Inflectional suffixes** change the form of the word, such as tense, plurality, and the quality of the word. (Anglo-Saxon)
- **Derivational suffixes** change the meaning and part of speech of the word. *These make up less than 25% of the words.* (Greek and Latin)

# Inflectional and Derivational Suffixes

## Inflectional

Inflectional suffixes are suffixes that change word's form, such as plurality, tense, or quality. Part of speech does not change.

- -s or -es (plurality, tense)
- -ed (tense)
- -ing (tense)
- -er (quality, more)
- -est (quality, most)

## Derivational

Derivational suffixes are suffixes that change a root or base word's meaning. Part of speech is changed when attached.

- hope (v.) > hopeful (adj.);
- drink (v.) > drinkable (adj.);
- teach (v.) > teacher (n).