

Suffixes -able and -ible

CK-12 English

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Overview of the Suffixes -able and -ible

Making adjectives from verbs and bound stems using -able and -ible as in "admirable" and "corruptible"

Suffixes -able and -ible



[Figure1]

The main function of the suffixes *-able* and *-ible*, as in *considerable* and *corruptible*, is to change verbs and bound stems into adjectives.

The suffixes *-able* and *-ible* are two of the most troublesome homophones. When is it <a> and when is it <i>? Unfortunately, the answer to that simple question is extremely complicated. If we did answer it, we would be left with a rule too long and complex to remember and use. Pronunciation is no help because in normal speech they are pronounced the same, [əbəl]. But there are three things that can help:

First, since we are dealing with suffixes, they come late enough in the word that if you can spell the rest of the word, you can find the correct form in the dictionary. So they are easy to look up.

Second, if you are stranded without a dictionary, *-able* is about six times more common than *-ible*, so if you have to guess, guess *-able*.

Third, there are some patterns that can be quite helpful, such as in the Examples in this lesson.

Examples

Stems that form nouns with <ation> take *-able*.

Verb	Noun: Stem + <i>ion</i>	Noun: Stem + <i>ation</i>	Adjective: Stem + [e]bel
<i>present</i>		<i>presentation</i>	presentable
<i>exhaust</i>	<i>exhaustion</i>		exhaustible

Review

In the following table fill in the unshaded blanks. Then answer the question at the end of the table.

Verb	Noun: Stem + <i>ion</i>	Noun: Stem + <i>ation</i>	Adjective: Stem + [e]b[le]
			admirable
			adoptable
			adorable
			attractable
			attributable
			commendable
			compressible
			computable
			considerable
			corruptible
			dispensable
			exhaustible
			expressible
			predictable
			presentable
			quotable
			reformable
			reversible
			substitutable
			valuable

[Figure2]

Do verbs that form nouns with *-ation* form adjectives with *-ible* or with *-able*?

_____.

.....

Review (Answers)

Verb	Noun: Stem + <i>ion</i>	Noun: Stem + <i>ation</i>	Adjective: Stem + [e]ble
<i>admire</i>		<i>admiration</i>	admirable
<i>adopt</i>	<i>adoption</i>		adoptable
<i>adore</i>		<i>adoration</i>	adorable
<i>attract</i>	<i>attraction</i>		attractable
<i>attribute</i>	<i>attribution</i>		attributable
<i>commend</i>		<i>commendation</i>	commendable
<i>compress</i>	<i>compression</i>		compressible
<i>compute</i>		<i>computation</i>	computable
<i>consider</i>		<i>consideration</i>	considerable
<i>corrupt</i>	<i>corruption</i>		corruptible
<i>dispense</i>		<i>dispensation</i>	dispensable
<i>exhaust</i>	<i>exhaustion</i>		exhaustible
<i>express</i>	<i>expression</i>		expressible
<i>predict</i>	<i>prediction</i>		predictable
<i>present</i>		<i>presentation</i>	presentable
<i>quote</i>		<i>quotation</i>	quotable
<i>reform</i>		<i>reformation</i>	reformable
<i>reverse</i>	<i>reversion</i>		reversible
<i>substitute</i>	<i>substitution</i>		substitutable
<i>value</i>			valuable

Do verbs that form nouns with *-ation* form adjectives with *-ible* or with *-able*? *-able*.

1.0 REFERENCES

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