

Suffixes -ic and -al

CK-12 English

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Overview of the Suffixes -ic and -al

Turning nouns into adjectives using -ic and -al as in "athletic" or "accidental"

Suffixes -ic and -al



The suffixes *-ic* and *-al* can be used to turn nouns into adjectives. Nouns are words that name persons, places, or things and make sense in this blank:

The _____ seemed okay.

Adjectives are words that modify or describe nouns and make sense in this blank:

It's a very _____ thing.

For instance, *prophet* is a noun that names a kind of person; it fits in the noun sentence: "The prophet seemed okay". But if we add the suffix *-ic* to *it*, we get *prophetic*, an adjective that describes nouns and that fits into the adjective sentence: "It's a very prophetic thing."

Person is also a noun: "The person seemed okay." But if we add the suffix *-al*, we get the adjective *personal*: "It's a very personal thing."

Examples

The following nouns and suffixes are combined to make adjectives:

Noun	Suffix	Adjective
athlete	ic	<i>athletic</i>
occasion	al	<i>occasional</i>

The following adjectives are analyzed into nouns and suffixes:

Adjective	Noun	Suffix
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Adjective	Noun	Suffix
enthusiastic	<i>enthusiast</i>	<i>ic</i>
democratic	<i>democrat</i>	<i>ic</i>

The suffix *-ic* is added to a stem to make a noun or an adjective. The suffix *-al* is added to make the noun an adjective:

Adjective	Stem	Suffix #1	Suffix #2
critical	<i>crit</i>	<i>ic</i>	<i>al</i>
mechanical	<i>mechan</i>	<i>ic</i>	<i>al</i>

Review

Combine the nouns and suffixes below to make adjectives:

Noun	Suffix	Adjective
1. profession	al	
2. patriot	ic	
3. nation	al	
4. rhythm	ic	
5. echo	ic	
6. accident	al	
7. education	al	
8. artist	ic	

Now try it the other way around: Each of the following adjectives consists of a noun and either the suffix *-ic* or the suffix *-al*. Analyze each adjective into its noun and suffix.

Watch for final <e>s that have been deleted:

Adjective	Noun	Suffix
9. universal		
10. normal		
11. natural		
12. personal		
13. rhythmic		
14. agricultural		

Adjective	Noun	Suffix
15. heroic		
16. original		

Sometimes the suffix *-ic* is added to a stem, often a bound stem, to make a noun or an adjective: *crit + ic = critic*. Then the noun will add on the suffix *-al* to make an adjective *critic + al = critical*.

Here are some more that follow this pattern:

Adjective	Stem	Suffix #1	Suffix #2
17. medical			
18. electrical			
19. chemical			
20. historical			
21. technical			
22. identical			
23. musical			
24. practical			

Show Answers
