

Morphology: Word Basics

Read the introductory comments below, and write out answers to the questions that follow:

There are two common ways to categorize the way that derivational morphemes combine to form new words.

Bound vs. Free Morphemes

A *bound morpheme* cannot stand alone as a word. It includes many prefixes and suffixes like -ity in cordiality, .

A *free morpheme* can stand alone: cordial, and both halves of over-take and code-book. When two free morphemes combine, like codebook, it gives a compound word.

Base and Affix

This distinction is similar to the one above except that a base does not need to have independent status as a word. An affix is either a prefix, infix, or suffix. Examples include the consistent element in a sequence like refer, defer, infer, prefer

Question 1: Would you add “offer” to that list? Why or why not? Does etymology decide?

Question 2:

Consider the following list:

inflect, deflect, reflect, genuflect

How would you divide them into bound and free morphemes? Into base and affix?

Question 3: Break down each of the following words into as many of the four categories as apply (bound, free, base, affix) and write them in the appropriate cell in the table below. Refer to this table for questions 4-7 below.

	bound	free	base	affix
jumped				
insight				
intuits				
discrete				
cineplex				
王老師／王老师				
後現代化／后现代化				
桌子上				
玩兒／玩儿				
報紙／报纸				
音樂／音乐				
中文				
來了／来了				
鉛筆／铅笔				
一個人／一个人				

Question 4: Can a bound morpheme be a base? Explain.

Question 5: Can a bound morpheme be an affix? Must it be?

Question 6: Can a free morpheme be a base? Must it be?

Question 7: Can a free morpheme be an affix? Explain.

To test your conclusions, try to think of counterexamples.

Adapted from <http://icg.harvard.edu/~eng101/workbook/phon-morph/free-morphemes/index.html>