

Unit 1: Vocabulary Building

Form

The English and German vocabulary are related in that word families are built from one word class. The main word classes in English are nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. English words are built from a verb ("word stem"), and thus all related words can be created from a verb by adding the correct suffix (letters at end of word).

Usage

A suffix can be added to a word stem and will change the word class, e.g., from a verb to a noun. Nouns or adjectives can be of different forms dependent upon the suffix used (eg, a noun of person, thing, gerund, etc).

Examples of word building

The diagram below illustrates how one may build related word families from the relevant word stem (verb). These four elements of vocabulary, verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs represent over 99% of all English vocabulary and understanding their construction will help the learner to expand their vocabulary and recognize classes and meanings.

<i>Verb (an action)</i>	<i>Noun (a person, place or thing)</i>
power	power (thing) powering (gerund)
administer	administration (thing) administrator (person, thing doing) administrating (gerund)
transmit	transmission (thing) transmitter (person, thing doing)
<i>Adverb (modifies a verb (add -ly))</i>	<i>Adjective (modifies a noun)</i>
powerfully	powered powerful
administratively	administrative administrated
n/a	transmitted transmittable