

Word Formation: Reference Sheet (B2)

Use this sheet to help identify common patterns in word formation tasks, especially Part 3 (Word Formation) of the B2 First exam. This guide covers typical suffixes, prefixes, and strategy tips for guessing or forming the correct word based on context.

1. Common Suffixes by Word Class

- Noun Suffixes
 - -ion (inform → information)
 - -ment (develop → development)
 - -ness (happy → happiness)
 - -ity (able → ability)
 - -er/-or/-ist (teach → teacher, act → actor, science → scientist)
- Verb Suffixes
 - -en (strength → strengthen, wide → widen)
 - -ify/-ise/-ate (beauty → beautify, modern → modernise, active → activate)
- Adjective Suffixes
 - -ive (create → creative)
 - -ful/-less (hope → hopeful, power → powerless)
 - -ous (danger → dangerous)
 - -al (accident → accidental)
 - -ic (poet → poetic)
- Adverb Suffixes
 - -ly (quick → quickly, sad → sadly)
 - Note: Not all -ly words are adverbs (e.g. friendly = adjective)

2. Common Prefixes and Their Meanings

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
un-	not	unhappy, unclear
in- / im-	not	invisible, impossible
dis-	opposite of	disagree, disappear
re-	again	rewrite, reconsider
over-	too much	overcook, overreact
under-	not enough	underestimate
mis-	wrongly, badly	misunderstand, misplace
pre-	before	preview, prehistoric
inter-	between	international
sub-	under	submarine, subheading

3. Strategy Tips for Word Formation Tasks

- Look at the word before and after the gap — it often tells you the required part of speech.
- Check for negatives — e.g., 'not very ___' might need a negative prefix (un-, in-, etc.).
- Think logically — what form of the word best fits the sentence meaning?
- Spell carefully — spelling must be correct (e.g., succesful ✗ → successful ✓).
- Learn full word families — not just the root word but its adjective, noun, verb, and adverb forms.

B2 Word Formation Practice

This worksheet will help you practise common word formation tasks using prefixes and suffixes. Pay close attention to the context of each sentence to decide which form of the word is needed.

Task 1: Word Formation – Complete the sentences

Complete each sentence by forming a word from the word in CAPITALS at the end of the line.

1. She showed great _____ when solving the difficult puzzle. (CREATE)
2. His _____ during the speech impressed the entire audience. (CONFIDENT)
3. It's _____ to assume that everyone agrees with your opinion. (REASON)
4. The manager was very _____ about the changes to the schedule. (HELP)
5. They acted _____ after hearing the unexpected news. (IMPULSIVE)

Task 2: Word Family Chart

Fill in the missing parts of the word family.

Base Word	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
decide	decision	decide		
strong	strength	strengthen	strong	
happy		—	happy	
compete		compete	competitive	

Task 3: Prefix Practice

Rewrite the sentence using a word with a prefix.

1. He appeared suddenly at the party.
→ He _____ at the party.
2. She placed the keys in the wrong place.
→ She _____ the keys.
3. This result is not acceptable.
→ This result is _____.
4. We need to do the test again.
→ We need to _____ the test.