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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Vocabulary

### Suffixes –ee, -able/ible, -ness



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. I'm Finn...

**Alice**

And I'm Alice. Today we're looking at a very important part of word building – suffixes.

**Finn**

Suffixes. We'll look at what they are, what they mean and how to use them.

**Alice**

There'll be a quiz...

**Finn**

And we'll leave you with a top tip for learning vocabulary.

**Alice**

So: to start off, we're going to listen to Andrea and Steve who work in a bank. They have just interviewed two people who want to work there.

**Finn**

And here's a question to think about while you listen: who did Andrea and Steve like best - the first person or the second person?

**Alice**

Who did they like best? Let's find out.

**INSERT**

**Andrea**

What do you think then Steve?

**Steve**

Well, the first one was very excitable: he kept laughing and speaking fast.

**Andrea**

Perhaps it was just nervousness, but there's no room for that in this business.

**Steve**

No. Now I thought the second interviewee seemed a bit more responsible.

**Andrea**

Yes, she did – very important when dealing with money. And she was polite.

**Steve**

Politeness is essential in this job.

**Andrea**

Absolutely. Well, I think we both know which one is more employable.

**STING****Finn**

So, that's Steve and Andrea. And we asked you: who did they like best?

**Alice**

And the answer is: they definitely liked the second person best. The second one was polite and responsible. The first one was a bit too excitable.

**Finn**

That's right, and *excitable* is a key word in the show today because it ends in a suffix.

**Alice:**

Now in the world of vocabulary, a suffix is a group of letters that you can add to the end of a word to change its form, or meaning, or both.

**Finn**

For example, the word *excitable* has the suffix *-able*, spelt *a-b-l-e*. *-able* makes verbs into adjectives, and we use *-able* words to say that a subject can do something – is able to do something - or they behave in a particular way.

**Alice**

So if we take the verb *excite*, add the suffix *-able*, we can say that the first interviewee was *excitable*, meaning: he can get very excited.

**Finn**

And the second one was *responsible*, that's *responsible* with *-ible*, spelt *'i-b-l-e'*. She can be trusted to do the right thing. And that's why she was more *employable*, now that's *-able* with an *a* again. Now for another suffix. Andrea and Steve talked about two *interviewees*. The suffix *-ee*, spelt *e-e*, makes a noun which means 'the person who receives an action'.

**Alice**

For example, if you add *-ee* to *interview*, you get the person who receives an interview, an *interviewee*.

**IDENT**

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**Finn**

And we're talking about suffixes. Our final suffix for today is *-ness*, spelt *n-e-s-s*. Adding *-ness* to an adjective makes a noun.

**Alice**

That's right, and interviewee number one suffered from *nervousness* – the noun form of *nervous*.

**Finn**

But number two understood the importance of *politeness* – the noun form of *polite*. Is politeness important to you Alice?

**Alice**

Oh yes Finn, politeness is very important to me.

**Finn**

I think you're very polite. Now let's listen to today's suffixes and words again.

**Alice**

The first one was: *-able* with an *a*. *a-b-l-e*.

**Finn**

*excitable, employable*

**Alice**

*-ible* with an *i*. *i-b-l-e*.

**Finn**

*responsible*

**Alice**

*-ee: e-e*

**Finn**

*interviewee*

**Alice**

*-ness: n-e-s-s*

**Finn**

*nervousness, politeness*

**Alice**

And it's time for a quiz. Choose the correct suffix to complete the final words in these 2 sentences. Ready? Number 1. The most important thing to me is my family's... a) happy-ee b) happy-able, c) happiness.

**Finn**

This one is the noun form of happy, so it's c) *happiness*.

**Alice**

Number 2. I'm learning how to do this job. I'm a a) trainee b) trainable, c) train-ness.

**Finn**

You are receiving training, so you're a trainee.

**Alice**

Well done if you got those right.

**Finn**

And that brings us almost to the end of today's programme.

**Alice**

But before we go, here's today's top tip for learning vocabulary: if you use an online dictionary, type a hyphen or a dash into the search box, and then type in any of today's suffixes. The dictionary will give you a list of words that end with your suffix.

**Finn**

You know, that's a really good tip: I think I might try that. There's more about this at BBC learning English dot com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

**Both**

Good bye!

## Vocabulary points to take away

| Suffix  | Words  | Example Sentence   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>-ee</b><br/>Creates a noun meaning 'person who receives an action'.</p>   | <p><i>interviewee, trainee, employee, refugee, absentee</i></p>                                      | <p><i>My company has six thousand employees.</i></p>                 |
| <p><b>-able</b><br/>Creates an adjective meaning <i>the subject can do something OR that something can be done to it.</i></p> | <p><i>excitable, employable, pleasurable, enjoyable, loveable, readable, breakable, moveable</i></p> | <p><i>I didn't like his last book – it wasn't very readable.</i></p> |
| <p><b>-ible</b><br/>A different spelling of -able.</p>  | <p><i>responsible, visible, horrible, terrible</i></p>   | <p><i>Stars are only visible at night.</i></p>                       |
| <p><b>-ness</b><br/>Creates a noun which describes a <i>quality or state.</i></p>   | <p><i>happiness, nervousness, politeness, sadness, sickness, kindness, meaninglessness</i></p>       | <p><i>He missed two days of work because of sickness.</i></p>        |