BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
6 Minute Vocabulary
Suffixes: -ness & -ity

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

Neil
Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. I'm Neil…

Catherine
And I'm Catherine. And it's very good to see you back at work today, Neil.

Neil
Thanks, it's nice to be back. I hate being off sick.

Catherine
We've missed you… we have missed you. And there has been a lot of sickness in the office this week, and **sickness** is one of the words that we're looking at in today's show.

Neil
Yes. Today we're talking about the suffixes **-ness** and **-ity**.

Catherine
In the world of vocabulary, suffixes are two or three letters at the end of a word. They can tell you what type of word it is. The suffix **-ness**, spelt **n-e-s-s**, at the end of the word **sickness** tells you that the word is a noun, which comes from the adjective **sick**.

Neil
In this programme we'll give you lots more examples of words with the suffix **-ness** and also we'll find about the suffix **-ity**, spelt **i-t-y**…

Catherine
That's right. And we'll have a quiz …

Catherine
…and we'll leave you with a top tip for learning vocabulary.

Neil
So let's get started by hearing from Arjuna. And he's talking about how he feels about being a nurse.

Catherine
While you listen, think about this question: How does Arjuna often feel at the end of the day?

INSERT
Arjuna
I have a lot of **responsibility**. Sometimes it's upsetting, like telling someone there's a **possibility** they have a serious **illness**. The hours are long and **tiredness** can be a problem at the end of the day. But the rewards are there too, like the **happiness** of a mother holding her newborn baby. And of course there are the cards and gifts – I'm always touched by the **kindness** and **generosity** of the patients.

Neil
So we asked you: How does Arjuna feel at the end of the day?

Catherine
And the answer is: he feels tired. In fact, he says that '**tiredness** can be a problem'.

Neil
The word **tiredness** comes from the adjective **tired**. Nouns with the suffix **–ness**, spelt **n-e-s-s**, like **tiredness**, describe the feeling or state of the original adjective.

Catherine
So **tired – ness** is the feeling of being tired.

Neil
Exactly. **Ill – ness** is the state of being ill. **Sick – ness**, which we heard at the start of the programme, is the state of being **sick**.

Catherine
Poor you, Neil. Let's hear some more examples of this suffix.

INSERT
Arjuna
But the rewards are there too, like the **happiness** of a mother holding her newborn baby. And of course there are the cards and gifts – I'm always touched by the **kindness** and **generosity** of the patients.

Catherine
So we had **happiness**…

Neil
…from the adjective **happy**…

Catherine
And **kindness**…

Neil
…from the adjective **kind**.

Catherine
In **kindness**, the suffix **-ness** makes a noun that is a quality. The suffix **–ity**, spelt **i-t-y**, which we heard in the word **generosity** there, also changes an adjective into a quality.

Neil
Generosity comes from the adjective generous. It means: the willingness to give things.

Catherine
And Arjuna thinks patients are generous because they give the nurses cards and gifts. Let's hear some more words with the suffix **-ity**.

INSERT
Arjuna
I have a lot of **responsibility**. Sometimes it's upsetting, like telling someone there's a **possibility** they have a serious **illness**.

Neil
We had **responsibility**, which comes from the adjective **responsible**. It means: being in charge of someone or something, or making sure certain things happen.

Catherine
We also heard **possibility**, which comes from the adjective **possible** and means that something might happen.

IDENT
6 Minute Vocabulary from BBC Learning English.

Neil
And we're talking about the suffixes **-ness** and **-ity**, which change adjectives into nouns.

Catherine
Great. Now it's time for a quiz. Choose the correct word. Ready? Number one. Mr Smith will not be attending the meeting, due to a) illity b) illness c) ill.

Neil
And the answer is b) **illness**.

Catherine
Number two. To succeed in high-level management, you have to accept a lot of a) responsibleness b) responsity c) responsibility.

Neil
And the answer is c) **responsibility**.

Catherine
Number three. Listening to 6 Minute Vocabulary whilst drinking a glass of wine at the end of the day brings me a lot of a) happiness b) happity c) happinessity.

Neil
And the answer is a) **happiness**, of course!

Catherine
That's right. And that's the end of the quiz. Well done if you got them all right.

Neil
And now, here's today's top tip for learning vocabulary: when you come across a word that you don't know, look to see if you can work out the root of the word – if there is a prefix or a suffix that you know, it will help you to understand the meaning.

Neil
There's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Both
Bye!

Vocabulary points to take away

generosity
being willing to give money or help that is more than necessary
I can buy my first house now, thanks to my grandparents' generosity. They gave me £40,000 for the deposit!

happiness
the feeling of being happy
Having good friends and a secure family is the key to happiness, according to a recent survey.

illness
the state of being ill; a disease
He was off work for six months because of a mental health issue.

kindness
thinking about others and being generous and helpful
Visiting elderly people who are lonely is an act of kindness.

possibility
something might happen
The possibility of losing her job made Lianne look for a position in a different company.

responsibility
something that is your job to do; being in charge of someone or something
It's your job to make sure you've done your homework. It's not my responsibility to get you to finish it.

sickness
state of being ill or feeling sick
The trip was cancelled due to sickness. More than ten people phoned in to say they had flu.

tiredness
state of being tired
It's important to stop and rest if you feel tired when you are driving. Tiredness can lead to accidents.