
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Vocabulary

Suffixes **-tian**, **-sion**, **-tion**



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Catherine

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

Finn

And I'm Finn. Now make sure you pay **attention** because we have a lot of **information** ...

Catherine

That's right... and **attention** and **information** are a good introduction to the programme.

Finn

That's right - they both end in 'shun' /ʃn/, which is the suffix we're talking about.

Catherine

Suffixes are groups of letters at the end of words which can change the form or meaning of a word, or both.

Finn

And we'll tell you about the three different ways to spell the suffix 'shun'.

Catherine

And we'll give you examples of words with all three spellings, plus some tips for knowing which spelling to use...

Finn

We'll have a quiz ...

Catherine

...and we'll finish with a top tip for learning vocabulary.

Finn

But first, let's hear a news report about the theft of a valuable statue.

Catherine

While you listen, think about this question: Where was the statue from? Here's the report.

INSERT

A man was charged today following an **investigation** into the theft of valuable objects from the museum. The man confessed after witnesses came forward with **information** and his **description** appeared in the newspapers. In his **confession**, he said that he had gained **admission** to the museum by pretending to be a security guard. Police recovered items including a priceless **Venetian** vase and an **Egyptian** statue.

STING

Catherine

So, we asked you: Where was the statue from?

Finn

And the answer is: Egypt. It was **Egyptian**.

Catherine

The word **Egyptian** has the suffix 'shun' spelt **t-i-a-n**. And we usually find this spelling in adjectives that describe where something or someone comes from.

Finn

So, the stolen **Egyptian** statue came from Egypt...

Catherine

Exactly, and the **Venetian** vase came from **Venice**.

Finn

The suffix **shun**, spelt **t-i-a-n** turns the noun into an adjective and these adjectives are often written with a capital letter because they come from proper nouns. Now, another example is **Martian**, and Martians come from **Mars**!

Catherine

I suppose they do. Let's listen to another clip with more words that end in 'shun'. See if you can spot them.

INSERT CLIP I

A man was charged today following an **investigation** into the theft of valuable objects from the museum. The man confessed after witnesses came forward with **information** and his **description** appeared in the newspapers.

Finn

So we had three words ending in 'shun' - **investigation, description...**

Catherine
...and **information**.

Finn
Here, the 'shun' at the end is spelt **t-i-o-n**. This is the most usual spelling for 'shun'.

Catherine
Words with 'shun' spelt **t-i-o-n** are nouns. They usually come from verbs.

Finn
So the word **investigation** comes from the verb **investigate**... the word **description** comes from **describe**...

Catherine
...and the word **information** comes from the verb **inform**.

Finn
There are many words with this spelling of 'shun'. We told you to pay **attention** at the start of the programme...

Catherine
Yep and there are other words like **addition, subtraction, accommodation, population**...

Finn
Many, many more. So that's words with the suffix 'shun' spelt **t-i-o-n** and **t-i-a-n**. Now let's look at the third spelling of the suffix 'shun': **s-i-o-n**.

Catherine
And here they are in another clip.

INSERT CLIP 2

In his **confession**, he said that he had gained **admission** to the museum by pretending to be a security guard.

Finn
So we had **confession** and **admission**.

Catherine
Yes, nouns with the ending 'shun' spelt **s-i-o-n** are often based on words ending in **s-s** or **m-i-t** like **confession** from **confess**,

Finn

Expression from **express**...

Catherine

... **discussion** from **discuss**...

Finn

...**admission** from **admit**...

Catherine

...and **permission** from **permit**.

IDENT

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

Catherine

And we're talking about the suffix 'shun'. We can spell it in three different ways...

Finn

There's **t-i-a-n**, as in **Egyptian** or **Venetian** - adjectives which indicate someone or something's origin.

Catherine

Or it can be spelt **s-i-o-n**. And these words are nouns and are often based on verbs ending in **-s-s**, like **discussion** from **discuss**.

Finn

...or verbs ending in **-t** like **permission** from **permit**.

Catherine

And finally, the most common spelling **t-i-o-n**, as in nouns like **information** and **ambition**.

Finn

Oh, ambition, yeah. Catherine, do you have a secret **ambition**?

Catherine

I have an ambition. It's not so secret but I would love to go to Africa on a safari. What about you, Finn?

Finn

Oh, yes, travel as well. I'd love to travel through South America one day.

Catherine

I hope you get to do it.

Finn

Thank you.

Catherine

Quite soon. Now, time for a quiz. What is the correct spelling for the ending of these words. Is it t-i-o-n, s-i-o-n, or t-i-a-n? Ready?

Finn

OK...

Catherine

Number one: Egyptian...

Finn

Egyptian is **t-i-a-n**.

Catherine

Good. Number two: permission.

Finn

Permission: **s-i-o-n**.

Catherine

And number three: attention.

Finn

Attention ends with the suffix 'shun' spelt **t-i-o-n**.

Catherine

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

Finn

And now, here's a top tip for learning vocabulary: to help you learn new words, try linking them into a story. Now this can really help you remember their meaning.

Catherine

Top tip. And there's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Both

Bye!

Vocabulary points to take away

Words ending in -tion

ambition
accommodation
addition
attention
description
information
investigation
population
subtraction

Words ending in -sion

admission
confession
discussion
expression
permission

Words ending in -tian

Egyptian
Martian
Venetian