

Common suffixes that form adjectives include: **-able** (comfortable), **-al** (musical), **-y** (cloudy), **-ous** (famous) and **-ive** (attractive).

A

-al

Adjectives ending **-al** are usually formed from nouns, and often mean 'relating to the noun', e.g. a **musical** instrument (from music), a **political** issue (from politics), an **electrical** fault (related to electricity), a **personal** opinion (the opinion of one person).

SHICHI-GO-SAN

Shichi-Go-San (meaning 7, 5, 3) is an **annual** ceremony in Japan for three-and seven-year-old girls, and three-and five-year-old boys. It is on November 15, but it is not a **national**¹ holiday, so people often have it on the nearest weekend. Seven, five and three are seen as important years in the growth of a child, and the numbers also have **cultural significance**² because odd numbers (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, etc.) are lucky in Japan. This is one of the special days when the older boys and girls are allowed to wear **traditional**³ clothes: a kimono for girls and hakama trousers for boys. Now it is quite **normal**⁴ for children to wear western-style clothes at this ceremony. The children visit a shrine and are then given special sweets called *Chitose-Ame* by their parents.



¹ a holiday for the whole country

² they are important in Japanese culture

³ in a style that has continued for many years

⁴ usual

B

-able /əbl/

This suffix forms adjectives from nouns *and* verbs, and the prefix **un-** often forms the opposite: an **enjoyable** party [something that you enjoyed]

a **comfortable** chair (*opp* **uncomfortable**)

a **suitable** word or phrase [right/correct for a particular situation; *opp* **unsuitable**]

a **reliable** service; reliable information [able to be trusted or believed; *opp* **unreliable**]

fashionable clothes [popular now with many people; *opp* **unfashionable**]

a **reasonable** decision or price [fair; not a bad decision or price; *opp* **unreasonable**]

a **sociable** person [enjoys being with people; *opp* **unsociable**]

Sometimes the opposite form is the more common adjective:

an **unforgettable** experience [something that cannot be forgotten]

an **unbelievable** story [something that is very surprising and very difficult to believe]

C

-ful and **-less**

The suffix **-ful** often means 'full of' or 'having the quality of the noun', e.g. a **colourful** room has a lot of colour in it; a **helpful** person gives a lot of help; a **peaceful** place is calm and quiet. The opposite meaning is sometimes formed by adding the suffix **-less** to the noun.

a **useful** machine [having a lot of uses; *opp* a **useless** machine]

a **painful** injection [giving pain and being unpleasant; *opp* a **painless** injection]

a **careful** driver [drives with care and attention; *opp* a **careless** driver]

Common mistakes

The suffix is **-ful** (NOT ~~full~~), so **useful** and **careful** (NOT ~~usefull~~ or ~~carefull~~).

Exercises

72.1 Correct the spelling mistakes. Be careful: one word is correct.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 enjoyable <i>enjoyable</i> | 4 peacefull | 7 unforgettable |
| 2 carful | 5 confortable | 8 reasonable |
| 3 relyable | 6 anual | 9 unbeleivable |

72.2 Match the words on the left with the words on the right.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 a national | ☒ | a injection |
| 2 a useful | ☐ | b mistake |
| 3 a painful | ☐ | c price |
| 4 fashionable | ☐ | d holiday |
| 5 a careless | ☐ | e man |
| 6 an electrical | ☐ | f bit of advice |
| 7 an unsociable | ☐ | g clothes |
| 8 a reasonable | ☐ | h fault |

72.3 Write an adjective formed from these nouns or verbs. 11–15 are not on the opposite page, but you can find them in the index if you don't know them.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1 tradition <i>traditional</i> | 6 fame | 11 wind |
| 2 attract | 7 electricity | 12 danger |
| 3 person | 8 politics | 13 create |
| 4 cloud | 9 enjoy | 14 emotion |
| 5 colour | 10 nation | 15 fog |

72.4 Tick (✓) the words which form opposites with the suffix -less.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| wonderful No (<i>wonderless</i>) | useful | beautiful |
| careful | painful | peaceful |

72.5 Complete the sentences.

- You must be very *careful* when you drive in wet weather.
- She told us an story about a dog that could speak.
- The tourist information office was very, and told us everything we needed to know.
- The festival is an event, held on the first Monday in September.
- It was very when I hit my leg against the corner of that table.
- This bag is; it's too small for me to put anything in it.
- We've never had any problems with our TV in ten years; it's been very
- Most people agreed with it, so I think it was a decision.
- This is just my opinion; others may not agree.
- Travelling round China and the Far East was an experience.
- Children perform dances at the ceremony, as they have done for hundreds of years.
- Do you think this dress is for a wedding?

72.6 Choose three adjectives from the opposite page which could describe these people or things.

- a village: *attractive*, *famous*, *peaceful*
- a jacket:,,
- an event:,,
- a person you know:,,
- an opinion:,,
- a room:,,