

## How to Write Suffixes (-able and -ible)

**General:** Two of the most common and useful suffixes are *-able* and *-ible*; both have the same meaning as *able to*, *liable to*, and so on. According to Webster's New World Dictionary (Third College Edition), the meanings of *-able* and *-ible* are given below:

**-able:** suffix forming adjective; 1 that can or will [perishable]; 2 capable of being \_\_\_ ed [manageable]; 3 worthy of being \_\_\_ ed [lovable]; 4 having qualities of [comfortable]; 5 tending or inclined to [peaceable].

**-ible:** suffix used to form adjectives derived directly from Latin verbs ending in *-ire* or *-ere* [divisible, legible].

The problems most authors face is when to use *-able*, and when to use *-ible*, since they have the same meaning and almost the same sound. Here are some guidelines:

**When to use -able:** The suffix *-able* is by far the more common form and that it should be used also in coining occasional words like: *handicapable*, *computerizable*, *jumpable*, etc. which are not found in any dictionaries. There is no hard and fast rule on how to add *-able* to the word to be suffixed. However, based on the accepted words in which the suffix *-able* has been added, one could invent one's own system of coining a new word. Below are the many ways to form a new word with suffix *-able*:

1. Just add *-able* to the end of the word, e.g. comfort – comfortable, unbear – unbearable.
2. For words ending with letter *e*, delete it, then add *-able*, e.g. advise - advisable, desire – desirable, love – lovable. However, there are some words ending with *e* but is not to be deleted, e.g. change – changeable, service – serviceable, manage – manageable.
3. For words ending with letter *y*, change it to *i* first, then add *-able*, e.g. identify – identifiable.
4. For words ending with *er*, delete both letters, then add *-able*, e.g. improper – improbable.
5. For words ending with *ue*, delete both letters, then add *-able*. e.g. indefatigue – indefatigable.
6. For words ending with *ate*, delete all three letters, then add *-able*, e.g. inseparate – inseparable.

The list of a few of the many words with suffix *-able* is presented below:

abominable	indefatigable	profitable
admirable	indispensable	receivable
advisable	inevitable	serviceable
applicable	inseparable	sizable
changeable	intolerable	suitable
comfortable	justifiable	teachable
comparable	knowable	tolerable
desirable	laughable	unbearable
detestable	lovable	unbelievable
eatable	movable	undefendable
excusable	noticeable	unmistakable
hospitable	peaceable	unpronounceable
imaginable	perishable	unspeakable
improbable	preferable	usable
incurable	presentable	

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**When to use *-ible*:** As stated earlier, suffix *-ible* is not as common as *-able*. Yet there are some words in which suffix *-ible* is used. These are:

accessible	feasible	perfectible
admissible	flexible	permissible
audible	forcible	plausible
combustible	gullible	possible
compatible	horrible	reducible
comprehensible	impassible	repressible
contemptible	impossible	reversible
convertible	incredible	seducible
credible	indefensible	sensible
destructible	indelible	submersible
digestible	inexhaustible	suggestible
dirigible	intelligible	suppressible
discernible	invisible	susceptible
divisible	irresistible	tangible
edible	legible	terrible
eligible	negligible	visible
fallible	perceptible	

**When to use either *-able* or *-ible*:** There are several words in which either *-able* or *-ible* is used. Preference is for the former, i.e. the one which is put first:

collectable – collectible  
preventable – preventable

#### **Adding suffix *-ity*:**

Suffix *-ity* is a shortened form of *ability* which means: 1 a being able; power to do (something physical or mental); 2 skills, expertness, or talent. It can be added to the words having *-able* or *-ible* suffixes to make a noun form of the word having the meaning of a specified ability, capability, or tendency. Examples of words with suffix *-ity* are given below for words with suffixes *-able* and *-ible*.

#### ***-able***

applicable – applicability  
advisable – advisability  
changeable – changeability  
comparable – comparability  
desirable – desirability  
detestable – detestability  
hospitable – hospitability  
improbable – improbability  
incurable – incurability  
indispensable – indispensability  
inseparable – inseparability  
intolerable – intolerability  
justifiable – justifiability  
profitable – profitability  
suitable – suitability

#### ***-ible***

accessible – accessibility  
audible – audibility  
combustible – combustibility  
compatible – compatibility  
convertible – convertibility  
credible – creditability  
digestible – digestibility  
divisible – divisibility  
eligible – eligibility  
impossible – impossibility  
invisible – invisibility  
irresistible – irresistibility  
perceptible – perceptibility  
possible – possibility  
sensible – sensibility