NPTEL PHASE II -
TECHNICAL ENGLISH

english
lessons
Unit1: Lesson I: Technical Vocabulary:
Using words in contexts – use of suffixes to form nouns from verbs and adjectives,

What is Technical Vocabulary?
Technical Vocabulary is the specialized vocabulary of any field which evolves due to the need for experts in a field to communicate with clarity, precision, relevance and brevity. Prior to developing your technical vocabulary, to improve your general vocabulary in English is very essential. The thirst to learn new words, should be a continuous process; whenever you learn new words, try your best to use them while you communicate so that the words register in your mind.
There are different strategies you can adopt to learn the words. Learn by knowing their origin. A dictionary is an invaluable tool to build your vocabulary. Sometimes you infer the meaning of a word from the context; but the meaning may not be exact. Only the dictionary would provide with the exact meaning.
Once you have learnt to use the dictionary, you can improve your vocabulary in various ways. The most important one is word formation. Some of the methods of word formation are blending, compounding, coinage, borrowing clipping, etc.

It is only in the process of derivation, the form of the word changes. This derivation takes place with the help of affixes. Small bits of the English language are affixed to root words. Some of the affixes are un, mis, pre, ful, less, etc. Affixes can be divided into two categories:
- Prefixes
- Suffixes.

**Word Formation:**
How words are formed?
Words are formed from existing ones by adding smaller units either at the beginning (prefix) or at the end (suffix) of an existing word.

**Principles of word formation:**

- Affixation – Adding a unit/smaller word at the beginning (prefix) or end (suffix) of an existing word.

- Conversion

- Compounding
In this lesson we shall learn about Suffixes.

**SUFFIX**

- Suffixation is adding a new unit/word at the end of an existing word.

- Suffix often alters the word class of the base word.
We shall now learn some important aspects of suffixation. Suffixes can alter the word-class of the base;
For e.g. “KIND” (root word – adjective) becomes “KINDNESS”(abstract noun) on adding “-ness” as a suffix.
Let us now see some examples of suffixes that change the word-class
Common suffixes that alter word class –

**NOUN to NOUN**
- ster – gang/gangster
- er- teenage/teenager
- eer – profiteer (profit)
- ette – kitchenette/ kitchen

**VERBS TO NOUNS**
- er – work – worker
- ing – drive – driving
- age – cover – coverage

**NOUN TO VERBS**
- en – length – lengthen
- fy – beauty – beautify
- ze – apology – apologize

**NOUN TO ADJECTIVE**
- ful – cheer – cheerful
- less – care – careless
- ish – child – childish
- **ADJECTIVES TO NOUNS**
  - ness – bitter- bitterness
  - th – deep – depth
  - ce – distant – distance

- **VERBS TO ADJECTIVES**
  - ent – obey – obedient
  - ant – please – pleasant
  - tive – attend – attentive

- **LESS COMMON SUFFIXES**
  Less common suffixes associated with abstract nouns include
  - ship – own – ownership
  - dom – free – freedom
  - th – deep – depth
  - hood – adult – adulthood

- **COMPOUND ADJECTIVES:**
  - Adjectives made up of two parts, usually written with a hyphen.
  - *Examples*: „well-dressed“, „never-ending“
  - Its meaning is clear from the word it combines.
The second part of the word is usually a present or past participle.

A large number of compound adjectives are used to describe personal appearances and characters. (blue-eyed, curly-haired, easy-going, good-natured)

In some compound adjectives, the second word is often a preposition. For e.g.

- an all-out strike
- a broken-down bus
- a well-off gentleman
ASSIGNMENT

☐ Write two sentences using the words given below to bring out their difference in meaning when they are used as noun and as verb.

☐ Conduct

☐ Record

☐ Produce

☐ Project

☐ Delight

UNIT 1 LESSON 2

Articles

Articles function as adjectives and modify nouns. They are used before nouns or adjectives and also used to clarify if a noun is specific or not specific. ‘A’, ‘An’ and ‘the’ are called articles. ‘A’ and ‘An’ are indefinite articles and ‘the’ is classified as ‘Definite’ article.

‘A’ and ‘An’ are used before a person, place or thing without being definite. e.g. He is a boy (can denote any boy) The’ is used to refer to a specific person, place or thing.

The man in the blue suit is our Principal.

The train that stops in every station is a passenger train.

Indefinite article ‘a’ and ‘an’ are used before countable singular nouns. They are used before common nouns and abstract nouns.

Rahul is an engineer by profession.

A man with a turban sat next to me.
The difference between ‘a’ and ‘an’ is that ‘a’ is used before words with consonant sounds and ‘an’ is used before words with vowel sounds/starting with vowels.

A friend of mine visited me yesterday.

Studying in a university like Harvard is prestigious.

Mr. Ram is working as an honorary Professor.

Though the word university starts with a vowel ‘u’ the sound is like ‘y’ yuniversity. Y sound. So we use ‘a’ instead of ‘an’. The word hour ‘h’ is silent and sounds like our. So ‘an’ is used before the word hour.

Indefinite articles are used before words like ‘few’, little and for countable nouns.

Use of definite article ‘the’

*It is used before singular and plural nouns when the noun is specific.

The girl who is dressed in violet.

The boy who broke our window glass.

*Used before uncountable nouns

He spilled the ink on my dress.

The information is not true.

*Used before rivers, oceans, seas, mountain, the ranges, the Indian Ocean, the Everest

*Used before Superlatives/cardinal numbers

Harry Potter is the best seller these days.

He is the first to arrive.

*Used before designations – the Governor, the Principal.

The article is omitted

1. Before a common noun used in its widest sense; as Man is mortal.

2. Before names of materials.

Platinum is very much in vogue today.
UNIT 1 LESSON 3

Conjunctions and Prepositions

The word conjunction means “to join with” and that is exactly what this part of speech does. It joins two clauses together and sometimes two words.

Common conjunctions—‘and’, ‘or’ and ‘but’—join or coordinate our thoughts.

For e.g. Ranjith and Ranjan left for US a few years ago.

The two parts of the subject, that is Ranjith and Ranjan are connected by ‘and’.

Note the words that connect the following sentences

I couldn’t decide whether I should read a book or clean the house.

The words read the book and clean the house are connected by ‘or’

David had always been short, but he finally grew as a teenager.

The clauses before and after the comma are connected by but, for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so coordinate words, phrases and clauses.

You can now use the acronym FANBOYS to remember these conjunctions. Because of their function they are called coordinating conjunctions.

There is another way of connecting equal parts of a sentence—using correlative conjunctions.
The difference between correlative and coordinating conjunction is that correlative conjunctions come in pairs that relate to one another.

Examples are: 1. either/or  2. neither/nor  3. both/and  4. not only/but also.

*Either I will pass the test, or I won’t be driving.*

*The rain ruined not only the flowers but also the grass.*

*He is both handsome and intelligent.*

He is neither intelligent nor arduous.

Finally subordinating conjunctions function to connect or link dependent and independent clauses. You can identify the independent clauses. You can identify the independent clause by finding the part of each sentence that can stand alone.

*Until I leave I’ll be in charge (Independent clause).*

*As he was sick, he did not go to college.*

*When you call me, I’ll put the dinner in the oven.*

In the preceding sentences, the subordinating conjunctions are until, when and as. Below is given a more complete list of subordinating conjunctions. after, before, as if, as long as, because, before, even if, except that, ever since if, if only, in case, just as, since, whenever, while etc.,

*I returned home, after my brother went abroad.*

*As the bell rang, I rushed to my class.*

*We eat that we may live.*

*Truth will not come out unless we open our mouth.*

*She is stronger than her brother.*
PREPOSITIONS

Preposition link or relate nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. It brings out the correct relationship between a noun/pronoun or an adjective and noun/pronoun or between a verb and noun/pronoun. There are two kinds of preposition simple and complex.

Simple prepositions comprise a single word – e.g. in, at, as, of and from.

Complex prepositions are combination of two or more words.

E.g. due to, ahead of

Use of prepositions

1. At, in

He studies at Pilani, in Rajasthan.

At is used for small towns and in is used for big cities or state.

2. By ; With

By is used before the doer of the action.

The deer was killed by the tiger.

With is used before the name of the tool.

I could not agree with her proposal.

The thief threatened the woman with a knife.

3. Between, among

Between is used with two persons or things.

The father divided the property between the two sons.

Among is used with more than two persons/things.

The father divided the property among all the children.

4. Beside, Besides

Beside means 'by the side of'.

I sat beside my teacher.
Beside means ‘in addition to’.

*Besides working in a bank, she also teaches dancing.*

5. *In, within*

In means at the end of a certain period.

*I will complete my assignment in three days.*

Within means before the end of a certain period.

*I shall stitch the dress within two hours.*

6. Prepositions like ‘from’, ‘since’, ‘for’ and *during* can be used with time. *From* is used for an action that takes place between two specific time zones. E.g. *We watched the movie from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.*

7. *For* is used for a period of time. *I was with my close friend for a week.* ‘*Since*’ is used to refer to an action that started in the past and is continued into the present. It is usually used with perfect tenses.

He has been living in America since his birth.

‘*During*’ is used for a particular time.

*I generally go to hill stations during the summer vacation.*

8. Prepositions like ‘*at*’, ‘*on*’, ‘in’ into are used with place.

‘*In*’ is also used to indicate position.

*He is sleeping in the room.*

‘*Into*’ is used for an action in motion.

*The ball fell into the well.*

‘*On*’ can be used to express static/ dynamic action.

*The book is on the table.* (static)

*The coconut fell on my head.* (dynamic)
9. Prepositions like above and over refer to things above.

**Over** can also mean **across**.

*I talked to my friend over the phone.*

*The dove flew above/over our heads.*

Sometimes errors occur due to wrong use of prepositions after verbs, nouns and adjectives.

The table below gives you tips for correct prepositional usage.

The prepositions used after verbs are against, at, from, for, in, of, on, to, with.

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