

Morphology

Languages

How words are built from smaller meaningful pieces.

Cats has two morphemes: cat and -s.

Type	Means	Example
Free morpheme	Stands alone	cat, run, blue
Bound morpheme	Must attach	-s, -ing, un-, -ness
Prefix	Attaches in front	un-happy
Suffix	Attaches after	happi-ness
Inflection	Changes grammar only	walk → walked
Derivation	Changes the word	happy → happiness

Inflection keeps the part of speech; derivation changes it. Walked is still a verb; happiness is no longer an adjective.