



The Suffix -WISE



The Suffix -wise

1) in adjectives and adverbs = in the manner or direction of

• Turn the handle **clockwise**. (Turn the handle in the same direction that a clock turns.)

2) (informal) relating to

• We're okay **money-wise** for now. (Relating to issues of money, we are okay. We have enough.)

The Adjective WISE meaning

All definitions listed in this blog post come from [Oxford Learner's Dictionary](#).

wise adjective

able to make sensible decisions and give good advice because of the experience and knowledge that you have (comparative wiser, superlative wisest)

- Dan is very clever for a teenager. He is **wise** beyond his years.
- It's not **wise** to disturb a hornet's nest.

[wise verb - OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com](#)

Wise is also used as a verb in the phrasal verb **wise up**.

wise up (*to something*)

(informal) to become aware of the unpleasant truth about a situation

- The mayor made a lot of empty promises and citizens are finally starting to **wise up to the fact that he can't be trusted**.
- Leon thinks that his shoulder has healed from the injury and he's ready to play rugby again. He better **wise up** and stay in rehab for a few more weeks or risk doing permanent damage.

[wise-up phrasal verb - OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com](#)

Adverbs and Adjectives - in the manner or direction of

in **adjectives** and **adverbs**

in the manner or direction of

- likewise
- clockwise

(informal) relating to

Things aren't too good business-wise.

Below is a list of common adverbs and adjectives that use the suffix -WISE. You will find the word's definition and lots of helpful example sentences.

counterclockwise adverb, adjective (North American English)

in the opposite direction to the movement of the hands of a clock
(British English anticlockwise)

- Turn the lid **counterclockwise** to open the jar.
- Air currents traveling **counterclockwise** over the warm water from the lake will bring rain to local communities this weekend.

streetwise adjective (North American English also street-smart)

having the knowledge and experience that is needed to deal with the difficulties and dangers of life in a big city

- I always went downtown with Derek. He was tough and very **streetwise** so I always felt safe.
- The rookie cop was partnered with a **streetwise** veteran.

lengthwise adverb (*especially in North American English*)

in the same direction as the longest side of something

- Cut the banana in half **lengthwise** to make a banana split.
- The recipe says to cut leeks **lengthwise** before adding them to the pot.

otherwise adverb

used to state what the result would be if something did not happen or if the situation were different

- I went to the party because I knew Stephanie would be there. The only reason I went was to see her, I wouldn't have gone **otherwise**. None of my friends were at the party.

Idiom **know different/otherwise**

(informal) to have information or evidence that the opposite is true

- She says she is not angry about what her coworker said, but I know **otherwise**.
- She says she is not angry about what her coworker said, but I know **different**.

clockwise adverb, adjective

moving around in the same direction as the hands of a clock

- Push the handle in and turn the knob **clockwise** to lock the door.
- Sheep in China have been walking in a **clockwise** circle for 12 days. A video of the sheep has gone viral.

crosswise adverb

across, especially from one corner to the opposite one

- You need to fold the flag **crosswise** before you pack it in its case.
- I made an origami rooster this morning. It took me an hour, there were many **crosswise** folds that had to be perfect.



widthwise (*especially in North American English*) adverb along the width and not the length

- It's a nice-looking chair but I don't think it will fit in my office **width-wise**. My office is quite narrow and my desk is wide so I think I need a smaller chair.

penny-wise adjective wise or prudent only in dealing with small sums or matters [LINK](#)

IDIOM penny-wise and pound-foolish - Prudent and thrifty with small amounts of money, but wasteful with large amounts. [LINK](#)

- Doug has a hard time managing his finances. He is careful when buying groceries and clothes, always looking for deals, but he overpaid for his home. He is **penny-wise and pound-foolish**.

Pennywise the Dancing Clown is the main villain from the horror story "It" by Steven King. The story has been made into a TV Mini Series in 1990 and a feature film in 2017 and the sequel It Chapter Two in 2019.

[It \(character\) - Wikipedia](#)

likewise adverb (formal)

the same; in a similar way

- My teacher looked at the classroom with his arms crossed, this meant that we were being too noisy. The first row of students sat in silence and soon everyone did **likewise**.
- I started my opponent quite intensely, and he did **likewise**.

worldly-wise adjective

having a lot of experience of life and therefore not easily shocked

- The new president was confident and **worldly-wise**. People believed in him.
- The country hoped that with a new experienced and **worldly-wise** head coach, the team could qualify for the next World Cup.

Adverbs and Adjectives - (informal) relating to

This use of the suffix -WISE is quite free, this means you can add it to almost any noun and be understood. **Money-wise** means relating to money, **weather-wise** means relating to the weather, **attendance-wise** means relating to an event's attendance for example.

Words like this are quite informal but not uncommon.

Where people come to learn real English - www.WorldEnglishBlog.com - [Helpful Resources](#)

[The suffix -wise can be added to a large number of words in the sense of 'referring to' or 'speaking of'. [SOURCE](#)]

- We're okay **money-wise** for now. (*Relating to issues of money, we are okay for now. We have enough.*)
- The company picnic is scheduled for next Sunday and we have reserves a small park. Things look good **weather-wise**, I'm just worried that people can find the park easily. (*Relating to the weather, things look good. We will have good weather for our picnic.*)
- The team has been filling the stadium recently, we are hitting all our targets **attendance-wise**. (*Relating to game attendance, the team is meeting its goals.*)

The Suffix -ISH and the Suffix -Y can also be used with a large number of words to make adjectives out of nouns. You can learn more about those common Suffixes here:

[Your complete guide to the Suffix -ISH \(Quiz/worksheet\) with Video](#)

[Learn The English Suffix -y \(60 examples + Free PDF download\) with Video](#)

My spelling and grammar checking software Grammarly prefers to write money-wise with a hyphen (-) money-wise. When WISE is added to words in this way it is common to write them with a hyphen. Grammarly saves me a lot of time when writing English blog posts, and it's FREE. You can try Grammarly for yourself [HERE](#).

Suffix -Wise Honorable Mentions

These four words have definitions in Oxford Learners Dictionaries dot com but they are very rare. I almost never hear them and I never use them myself.

However, these are real words so I wanted to include them in this list.

crabwise adverb (of a movement)

to the side, like a crab

- The alien creature burst through the door and started running **crabwise** across the room. The alien was creepy.

edgewise (*especially in North American English*) adverb

with the edge upwards or forwards; on one side

- The big chair will only fit through the door if we turn it **edgeways**.

endwise (*especially in North American English*) adverb (of an object)

with one end facing up, forwards, or towards the person who is looking at it

- We had to turn the table **endwise** to fit it in the trunk of my car.

stepwise adjective

in a series of steps, rather than continuously

- There are many factors causing this skin condition. Treatment requires a **stepwise** process.

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Can WISE be a Prefix?

No. Wise can be used as a suffix but not a prefix. This can be confusing because there are few compound words that use **wise** as the root word but not as a prefix.

Look at the three examples below.

wisecrack to make a clever remark or joke

- The TV show is about a streetwise cop and his **wisecracking** partner.

[wisecrack verb OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com](#)

wisecrack a clever remark or joke

- Nelson made several **wisecracks** during dinner, which had everyone laughing.

[wisecrack noun OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com](#)

wiseacre a person who is annoying because they are very confident and think they know a lot (*NOTE - This is an older expression that was mostly used in North America.)

- Just be quiet for a minute and listen you little **wiseacre**.

[wiseacre noun OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com](#)

The Suffix -WISE Conclusion

The Suffix -WISE is a useful suffix to learn that means **in the manner or direction of** and we can also use it quite freely to change **nouns** into **adjectives** that mean “**relating to**” the noun it is attached to. This is a suffix you will probably hear more than you will use, that's okay. This is the first step to mastering English communication.

Can you think of any other -WISE words that I left off the list? Please tell me in the **comments**.

