



# The Suffix ~EN Word List



## Increase your vocabulary by learning how to use the English suffix ~EN

Change words that you already know into new words by adding the suffix EN to the end of the word.

What is a suffix?

A suffix is an addition to the end of a word, that gives the word a new meaning. Here is an example: **lengthen**

**~en** is an example of an English suffix. If we know the root word and the function of the suffix, we can easily increase our vocabulary. Let's use the noun length for our first example:

**length** (noun) - the size or measurement of something from one end to the other (how long something is)

- The waist of my jeans is okay, but I'm not happy with the length. They are too short.

One function of the English suffix en is to change adjectives or nouns into verbs. Length + en =

**lengthen** (verb) - to make longer

- My mom had to **lengthen** my suit pants as I grew taller.

★ Be careful! The opposite of **lengthen** is **shorten**! Short is an adjective and length is a noun.

**shorten** (verb) - to make shorter

The suffix ~EN gives the root word a new meaning.

root word	suffix	new word	~EN new word meaning
length (noun)	~en	<b>lengthen</b>	to make longer (verb)
bright (adj)	~en	<b>brighten</b>	to make brighter (verb)
wood (noun)	~en	<b>wooden</b>	made of wood (adjective)

## Suffix EN – nouns to verbs (more examples)

To make something taller (give it more height [**noun**]) or rise to a higher level we can use the **verb heighten**

- After the attack the embassy has decided to **heighten** security.
- Increase the level of security.

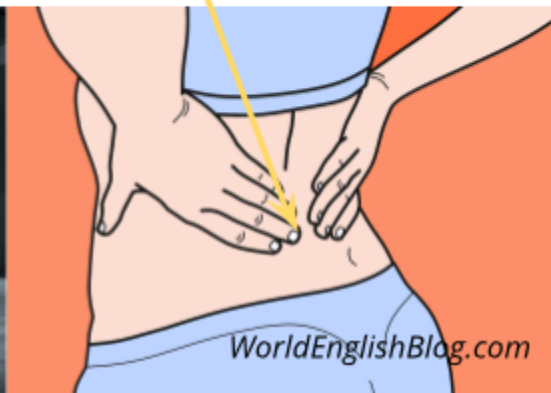
To make something stronger (give it more strength [**noun**]) we can use the **verb strengthen**.

- If you suffer from lower back pain you should do exercises that **strengthen** your core muscles.
- You should do exercises that make your stomach and lower back muscles stronger.

Your core muscles are your **stomach** muscles...



...and the muscles in your **lower back**.



## Verbs with the Suffix EN (Word list)

**awaken** – to rouse from sleep or to become aware of something

- The magician cast a spell to **awaken** the sleeping dragon.

**blacken** – to make something dark or to tarnish someone's reputation

- The beautiful white patio stones in my backyard were **blackened** after the fire.

**dampen** – to make something wet or to suppress something's strength or spirit

- The rain will **dampen** the fire if we don't cover it.

**darken** – to make something dark or to become gloomy

- Let's close the curtains and **darken** the room before we start the movie.

**deafen** – to make someone unable to hear or to be extremely loud

- The explosion was **deafening**.

**deepen** – to make something deeper or to intensify an emotion or a relationship

- The water is shallow now but it will **deepen** as we get closer to the center of the lake.

**enlighten** – to provide knowledge or understanding to someone or to make something brighter

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• A teacher's job is to inform and **enlighten** their students.

**fatten** – to make something or someone fat or to become fat

• Farmers always try to **fatten** up their turkeys before Thanksgiving. Fat Turkeys sell for more money.

**flatten** – to make something flat or to destroy someone's hopes or expectations

• The hills will **flatten** out as we get closer to the coast.

**frighten** – to cause fear or to scare someone

• The horror movie may **frighten** you if you watch it alone. I recommend watching it with a friend.

**harden** – to make something hard or to become tough

• We need to wait 30 minutes for the glue to **harden** before we can hang the frame.

**lessen** – to reduce or to become smaller

• Taking a break every once in a while will **lessen** your stress.

**lighten** – to make something lighter or to alleviate someone's worries or mood

• The sun will **lighten** your hair if you stay outside for a long time.

**loosen** – to make something loose or to become relaxed

• To **loosen** the screws you need to turn them counterclockwise.

**moisten** – to make something slightly wet or damp

• Kelly **moistened** her lips with the tip of her tongue.

**reddden** – to make something red or to blush

• A day in the sun will **reddden** my pale skin if I don't wear sunblock.

**ripen** – to become mature or fully developed, as in fruits or ideas

• The bananas are hard and green now but they will **ripen** if you leave them out for a few days.

**sadden** – to cause sadness or to become sad

• George was **saddened** by the passing of his father.

**sharpen** – to make something sharp or to improve someone's skills or intellect

• A good butcher will **sharpen** his knives often.

**soften** – to make something soft or to become less severe

• The butter will **soften** if you leave it out of the fridge for a while.

**stiffen** – to make something stiff or to become rigid

• Your muscles will **stiffen** if you don't stretch after exercise.

**straighten** – to make something straight or to correct a situation

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• Your hair will **straighten** if you use a flat iron.

**strengthen** – to make something strong or to reinforce someone's ability

• Doing push-ups will **strengthen** your chest and shoulders.

**thicken** – to make something thick or to become more dense

• Adding flour will **thicken** the sauce.

**threaten** – to pose a danger or to intimidate someone

• The approaching hurricane will **threaten** the safety of the beach.

**tighten** – to make something tight or to become more secure

• To **tighten** the bolt need to turn it clockwise.

**weaken** – to make something weak or to lose strength

• Not getting enough sleep will **weaken** your immune system.

**widen** – to make something wide or to increase the distance between two things

• The road will **widen** as we get closer to the city.

**whiten** – to make something white or to become pale

• Bleaching your clothes will **whiten** them but it also shortens their life.

**worsen** – to make something worse or to deteriorate

- This heavy rain will **worsen** the traffic on the highway.

## Suffix EN – past participles

Some verbs use the suffix EN to make their past participle form.

take – took – **taken**

choose – chose – **chosen**

break – broke – **broken**

We can also use the past participle verb form as an adjective. Remember that adjectives will follow a present tense form of the verb to be.

- is
- am
- are

→ My iPhone is **broken**.

## Suffix EN – plural nouns

We can use the suffix EN to make the plural of some nouns:

- child – children
- ox -oxen
- brother – brethren

\*These are the only 3 examples I can find. Children is the most common of these 3 words. Brethren is not very common (I never use it) and I also don't have many opportunities to talk about ox. These plural nouns are leftover words used in an early version of English. Many English words came from German.

## suffix EN – Adjectives to verbs

**sweeten** – to make sweet

- I **sweeten** my cakes with maple syrup instead of sugar. It's healthier.

**brighten** – to make bright

- The new skylight really **brightens** the room.

**shorten** – to make shorter

- The new jeans I bought are almost perfect! I just have to take them to a tailor to **shorten** them.

## suffix EN- nouns to adjectives

Another use for the English suffix EN is to change nouns to adjectives.

**wooden** – made of wood

- I just bought a new **wooden** coffee table for my living room. It was on sale! (*A wooden table is a table made of wood.*)



**Golden** is an adjective that can mean something is very good or valuable. How we use this adjective is a little different so let me explain with some examples.

Gold is a precious metal so things made of gold have value, they are expensive.

In Japan we have 3 national holidays in the same week at the end of April. We call this holiday **Golden** week because you can have a long holiday. It is rare to have 3 days off in the same week, so it's great!

Another good example is when we have a good chance to do something. We call it a **golden** opportunity.

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“I will visit my wife’s parents this weekend. They can’t speak English so this is a **golden opportunity** for me to practice my Japanese.”

**Golden** can mean gold-colored.

- “My sister is tall with **golden** hair.”

or made of gold

- “Indiana Jones found a **golden** statue in the ancient ruins.”

Please note that we use golden for things that are special, not usually made of gold. Statues are often made of clay or stone so a statue made of gold is special or unique.

Another example is an American boxing competition called the Golden Gloves.

- **Golden** Glove boxing competitions happen across the country. Many cities and states around the U.S. have a **Golden** Glove tournament.

Usually, boxing gloves are not made of gold, so gloves that are golden are very special. The boxers are very skilled.

Gold or Golden?

If something is commonly made from gold, like a ring or a necklace, we can just use gold as an adjective to mean made of gold.

“My boss always wears a **gold** watch to work, I should ask for a raise.”

“I bought **gold** earrings for my wife for Christmas.”



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