Verb Formation

CEFR B2 · Rival suffixes, prefix nuance and conversion
WS1 Choosing Between Rival Suffixes · WS2 Prefix Nuance · WS3 Conversion & Phrasal Verbs · WS4 Analysis & Writing · Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Choosing Between Rival Suffixes

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: When Two Suffixes Compete

A base can sometimes take more than one verb suffix, and usually only one is established — or the two differ in meaning. Compare *-ise* and *-ify* (both "make"), *-ate* and *-ify*, or established forms that block rivals (**strongify* → *strengthen*). Selection depends on the base's origin and existing usage.

Base	Established verb	Blocked rival
strong	strengthen	*strongify / *strongise
pure	purify	*purise
equal	equalise	*equalify
length	lengthen	*lengthify
intense	intensify	*intensen

Part A – Choose the Established Verb

1. make more intense → _____ (intense)
2. make equal / draw level → _____ (equal)
3. make longer → _____ (length)
4. make pure → _____ (pure)
5. make stable → _____ (stable)

Part B – Which Suffix?

Add the correct suffix and note why the rival is wrong.

#	Base	Verb + note
1	general	
2	solid	
3	deep	
4	central	

Score: ____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Prefix Nuance

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: Prefixes with Precise Meanings

Verb prefixes carry fine distinctions: **de-** (remove/reverse: *deregulate*), **dis-** (reverse/negate: *disprove*), **counter-** (against: *counteract*), **fore-** (before: *foresee*), **out-** (surpass: *outperform*), **over-/under-** (excess/deficiency), **inter-** (between: *interact*), **trans-** (across/change: *transform*).

Prefix	Meaning	Example
de-	remove / reverse	decode, devalue, deregulate
counter-	against / in response	counteract, counterbalance
fore-	before / in advance	foresee, foretell, forewarn
out-	surpass / exceed	outperform, outnumber, outlast
trans- / inter-	across, change / between	transform, interconnect

Part A – Add the Best Prefix

1. ____ act (work against) → _____
2. ____ see (before) → _____
3. ____ number (exceed in number) → _____
4. ____ value (reduce value) → _____
5. ____ form (change across) → _____

Part B – Fine Distinctions

1. To prove something false is to _____ it. (dis-)
2. To remove rules from an industry is to _____ it. (de-)
3. To do better than a rival is to _____ them. (out-)
4. To warn someone in advance is to _____ them. (fore-)

Part C – Complete the Sentence

1. New evidence may _____ the old theory. (dis- / prove false)
2. The medicine helps to _____ the poison. (counter- / act against)
3. Digital tools _____ teams in different countries. (inter- / connect)
4. The reforms will _____ the whole economy. (trans- / change across)

Score: ____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Conversion & Phrasal Verbs

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: Making Verbs Without an Affix

Conversion (zero-derivation) turns a noun or adjective into a verb with no ending: *a text → to text, empty (adj) → to empty, Google → to google*. English also builds new verbs as **phrasal verbs** (verb + particle): *look up, carry out, set up*, which often have a one-word Latinate equivalent (*carry out = execute*).

Type	Example	Note
noun → verb	to email, to text, to host	very productive
adjective → verb	to empty, to dry, to clean	= 'make/become'
brand/name → verb	to google, to hoover	informal, recent
phrasal verb	carry out, set up, break down	verb + particle
phrasal ↔ Latinate	put off = postpone	register difference

Part A – Convert to a Verb

1. Send me an email. → Please _____ me the file.
2. The bottle is empty. → Please _____ the bottle.
3. We booked a host. → They will _____ the event.
4. I use Google. → Just _____ it.

Part B – Phrasal ↔ Formal

Match the phrasal verb to a one-word (more formal) equivalent.

#	Phrasal verb	Formal equivalent
1	carry out (a plan)	
2	put off (a meeting)	
3	set up (a company)	
4	find out (the truth)	

Part C – Choose the Register

1. (formal report) The team will _____ the survey. (carry out / execute)
2. (email to a friend) Let's _____ the trip till June. (put off / postpone)
3. (academic) The study aims to _____ the cause. (find out / identify)

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Analysis & Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Part A – Passage Analysis

When the ministry deregulated the sector, few could foresee the consequences. Small firms were quickly outcompeted, and several long-standing companies were forced to downsize or diversify. To counteract the damage, the government tried to incentivise investment and to simplify the tax rules, but critics argued the reforms had destabilised the market rather than strengthened it. Only later, when the data were analysed, did officials acknowledge that they had underestimated the risks and overstated the benefits.

1. Find four suffix-derived verbs and identify each suffix.
2. Identify three prefix verbs and state what each prefix contributes (de-, out-, counter-, over-, under-).
3. "downsize" and "diversify" are formed differently. Explain each.
4. Find a converted verb or one that could be replaced by a phrasal verb, and comment on register.

Part B – Extended Writing

Write 160–190 words about a reform, project, or change (real or invented). You must include and underline: (1) at least three **suffix verbs** from different families; (2) at least two **prefix verbs** with distinct prefixes; (3) at least one **converted verb** (noun/adjective → verb); (4) at least one **phrasal verb** and its more formal equivalent; (5) consistent register.

#	Line
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

Suffix: _____ / 3 Prefix: _____ / 2 Conversion: _____ / 1 Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — B2 Level, Verb Formation

Worksheet 1 – Part A

1 intensify · 2 equalise · 3 lengthen · 4 purify · 5 stabilise

Worksheet 1 – Part B (model)

1 generalise (not *generalify) · 2 solidify (not *solidise) · 3 deepen (short adj → -en, not *deepify) · 4 centralise (not *centralify). The established form blocks the rival.

Worksheet 2 – Part A

1 counteract · 2 foresee · 3 outnumber · 4 devalue · 5 transform

Worksheet 2 – Part B

1 disprove · 2 deregulate · 3 outperform · 4 forewarn

Worksheet 2 – Part C

1 disprove · 2 counteract · 3 interconnect · 4 transform

Worksheet 3 – Part A

1 email · 2 empty · 3 host · 4 google

Worksheet 3 – Part B

1 execute / conduct · 2 postpone · 3 establish · 4 discover / ascertain

Worksheet 3 – Part C

1 carry out (or execute) · 2 put off · 3 identify

Phrasal verbs are usually less formal than their Latinate one-word synonyms; matching register to context is the teaching point.

Worksheet 4 – Part A (model)

1 deregulated (-ate/de-+regulate), incentivise (-ise), simplify (-ify), destabilised (-ise), diversify (-ify), strengthened (-en) — any four with suffix named. · 2 outcompeted (out- = surpass), counteract (counter- = against), underestimated (under- = too little), overstated (over- = too much), foresee (fore- = before). · 3 downsize = down (particle/adv) + size (conversion of noun to verb); diversify = diverse + -ify (suffixation). · 4 e.g. "analysed" could be "looked at" informally; "acknowledge" ↔ "admit"/"own up to" — note the register shift.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Suffix-verb range	Three+ from different families	0–5
Prefix verbs	Two+ with distinct prefixes	0–4
Conversion	One noun/adj → verb, natural	0–3
Phrasal & register	Phrasal + formal pair; consistent; 160–190 words	0–3