What is a suffix?

A suffix is a word ending - a group of letters you can add to the **end** of a **root word*
eg   walk**ing**, help**ful**

> ***A root word** stands on its own as a word, but you can make new words from it by adding beginnings (prefixes) and endings (suffixes).
>
> For example, '**comfort**' is a root word. By adding the suffix 'able' you can make new words such as '**comfort**ing' and '**comfort**able'.

Adding suffixes to words can change or add to their meaning. But they can also show how a word will be used in a sentence and what part of speech the word belongs to (**eg** noun, verb, etc).

eg   If you want to use the root word 'talk' in the sentence "I was (talk) to Samina", then you must add the suffix -**ing** so that the word 'talk' makes better sense grammatically:
"I was talk**ing** to Samina".

There are various suffixes. The most common are probably **-ed** and **-ing**.

	Suffix	Example
Verb suffixes	**-ed**	walk + ed = walk**ed**
	-ing	say + ing = say**ing**
Noun suffixes	**-ness**	happy + ness = happi**ness**
	-sion	divide + sion = divi**sion**
	-ment	excite + ment = excite**ment**
	-tion	educate + tion = educa**tion**
	-cian	music + cian = musi**cian**
Adjective suffixes	**-al**	accident + al = accident**al**
	-er	tall + er = tall**er**
	-able	accept + able = accept**able**
	-ary	imagine + ary = imagin**ary**
	-est	large + est = larg**est**
	-ful	help + ful + help**ful**
Adverb suffixes	**-ly**	love + ly = love**ly**
	-fully	hope + fully = hope**fully**

NB: Adding a suffix to some root words will change the spelling of the new word. There are some spelling rules to help you learn why and when this happens. **For more about this, see the factsheets on suffix spelling rules.**