I'm not a bot

early 14c., "pertaining to acts or an action;" late 14c. in the broader sense of "real, existing" (as opposed to potential, ideal, etc.); from Old French actuel "now existing, up to date" (13c.), from Late Latin actualis "active, pertaining to action," adjectival form of Latin actus "a doing" (from PIE root *ag- "to drive, draw out or forth, move").common adverbial suffix, forming, from adjectives, adverbs signifying "in a manner denoted by" the adjective; Middle English -li, from Old English -lice, from Proto-Germanic *-liko- (source also of Old Frisian -like, Old Saxon -liko, Dutch -lijk, Old High German -licho, German -lich, Old Norse -liga, Gothic -leiko). See -ly (1). It is cognate with lich, and identical with like (adj.). Weekley notes as "curious" that Germanic uses a word essentially meaning "body" for the adverbial formation, while Romanic uses one meaning "mind" (as in French constamment from Latin constanti mente). The modern English form emerged in late Middle English, probably from influence of Old Norse -liga.Advertisementadapted from books.google.com/ngrams/ with a 7-year moving average; ngrams are probably unreliable. You are here: -ly Type suffix Denotation adverb suffix Etymology Middle English -li; Old English -lice Evidence -fully, absolutely, accidentally, consequently, dangerously, happily, publicly, shortly, suddenly, surely, wonderfully Homographs Ly, -ly Share on FacebookTweetSave Back to Top Well, what a nice game you've invented.You know, why can't you just play nicely? Honestly.Suffixes are letters you can add to the end of words to change their meanings.The suffix 'ly' is used to describe a verb.What? Oh, I am not happy.Sometimes, adding 'ly' changes the original word's spelling, like when a word ends in a y.The y turns into an i first.I mean, can you not just all play happily?Oh, you guys look terrible!When a word ends in 'le', the 'le' becomes 'ly'.That'll teach you for behaving terribly. Learning suffixes is an easy way to quickly increase your English vocabulary. This post will explain how to use the suffix LY with lots of examples. Learn how to make new adverbs and adjectives to help you communicate naturally in English.accidentallyadamantlyangrilyanxiouslybadlybeautifullyboldlybravelycarefullycertainlyclearlycorrectlydangerouslyeagerlyeasilyeffortlesslyevenlyeventuallyfinallyfoolishlyfrequentlygenerallygentlygladlygracefullygreatlyhappilyhighlyhonestlyhungrilyimportantly ironically loudlylovelylowlymassivelynaturally necessarilynormallypartiallyperfectlypractically pragmatically promptlyproudlypurposefully quicklyquietlyroughly sadly separately shortly slowly smoothly stupidly suddenly thankfully wrongly You will find lots of real example sentences that use words with the Suffix -ly, a video for listening practice, and a PDF word list that you can print and study offline anytime you like. For other teachers, this can be helpful to use in your own English classes. Keep reading.In adverbs, the Suffix -ly means: in the way mentioned*Remember that adverbs are used to modify verbs, adjectives, and even other adverbs. Below is a list of adverbs ending in the suffix -lyaccidentally – by chance; in a way that was not plannedHe accidentally knocked over the vase while trying to catch the ball.Be careful not to accidentally spill coffee on your white shirt before the meeting.adamantly – in a way that shows you are determined not to change your mind or to be persuaded about something She adamantly refused to change her mind despite all the evidence we presented.angrily – in a way that shows you have strong feelings about something that you dislike very much or about an unfair situationAfter the referee called the foul, Thomas shouted angrily at the TV. anxiously – in a worried or nervous waySheanxiously stood at the podium and started to give her presentation. She was obviously very nervous.badly – without skill or care/not successfully/not in an acceptable wayI thought the workers were being treated badly after I toured the plant. We need to make some management changes.beautifully – in a beautiful way/very well; in a way that pleases youThe sunrise was beautifully captured in the photograph.boldly – in a brave, confident way; without being afraid to say what you feel or to take risksHe boldly proposed a new strategy for the company.bravely – in a way that shows courageShe bravely fought for what she believed in, even in the face of opposition.carefully – with a lot of attention or thought, so that you avoid hurting yourself, damaging something or doing something wrongShe carefully placed the fragile glass on the shelf.certainly – without doubtHe certainly had the qualifications to get the job but he was lacking experience. clearly – in a clear wayThe instructions were clearly written in the manual.She spoke clearly to the audience and made sure that she was understood.correctly – in a way that is accurate or true, without any mistakesHe answered the question correctly on the test.dangerously – in a way that is likely to harm or injure somebody, or to damage or destroy somethingThe hike was dangerously steep and rocky.eagerly – in a way that shows great interest and excitement about something that is going to happen or about something that you want to doThey eagerly awaited their turn to speak.easily – without problems or difficultyThe recipe can be easily followed by even beginner cooks.effortlessly – in a way that needs little or no effort, and that seems easyShe effortlessly finished the marathon, crossing the finish line with a new personal best time.This adverb is made from the adjective effortless. Effortless is the noun EFFORT plus the Suffix -LESS. You can do a deeper study into this suffix and my blood post here >> Adjectives with the Suffix -less (79 Examples, Free PDF Download, Video)evenly – in a smooth, regular or equal wayThe cake was cut evenly among the children at the birthday party.eventually – at the end of a period of time or a series of eventsThey will eventually get to the root of the problem.finally – after a long time, especially when there has been some difficulty or delayFinally, my new computer has arrived. I've been waiting almost 20 days for it to come.foolishly – in a way that shows a lack of good sense or judgment He acted foolishly and regretted it later.This adverb is made from the adjective foolish. Foolish is the noun FOOL plus the Suffix -ISH. You can do a deeper study into this suffix and my blood post here >> Your complete guide to the Suffix -ISH (Video + FREE Quiz/worksheet Download) frequently – oftenThey met frequently to work on the project.generally – by or to most people/in most casesGenerally speaking, the weather was quite pleasant.gently – in a way that is soft and light, not strong, extreme or violent (in a gentle way)She gently laid the baby in the crib. *LAID is the past tense of the verb LAY. The verbs LAY and LIE are often confused. (LAY is the past tense of LIE!) Master these verbs by reading my blog post >> LIE or LAY? All Tenses (Easy to remember tips, PDF, Video)gladly – willingly/happily; with thanksShe gladly accepted her friend's offer to help organize the party.gracefully – in an attractive way that shows control; showing a smooth, attractive formHe danced gracefully across the stage.greatly – (usually before a verb or participle) very muchThe new technology greatly improved efficiency.happily – in a cheerful way; with feelings of pleasureThe couple has been happily married for over 25 years.Did you know the adjective HAPPY is the old English word HAP + the suffix Y? Learn more at my Suffix -Y blog post >> Learn The English Suffix -y (60 examples + Free PDF download + Video) highly – very/at or to a high standard, level or amount/with great respect or praiseHe was highly respected in his field.honestly – in an honest wayJasmin answered the question honestly.hungrily – in a way that shows you want to eat something/in a way that shows you have a strong desire for somethingWarren opened the fridge and looked hungrily at the leftovers, wondering what to have for lunch.importantly – used for saying that something is importantKevin worked hard and, more importantly, he had a clear purpose. ironically – in a way that shows that you really mean the opposite of what you are saying; in a way that expresses ironyIronically, the forecast said it was going to be sunny, but it rained all day.loudly – in a way that makes a lot of noiseKevin shouted loudly to get everyone's attention.lovely – beautiful; attractive (comparative lovelier, superlative loveliest)The view from the hilltop was lovely.The garden was full of lovely flowers. The yellow roses are the loveliest in my opinion.lowly – low in status or importanceDon't ask me, I'm just a lowly employee. You should ask my boss.massively – to a very large degree or extent; extremelyLuciano was massively overweight and knew he needed to go on a serious diet.naturally – in a way that you would expect/without special help, treatment or action by somebody/in a way that shows or uses abilities or qualities that a person or an animal is born withMy wife looks sad, so naturally, I wanted to help her feel better. Trent is a naturally gifted piano player.originally – used to describe the situation that existed at the beginning of a particular period or activity, especially before something was changedI had originally only planned to stay in Japan for 6 months but it's 3 years later and I'm still here.necessarily – used to say that something cannot be avoidedDue to the current situation, the number of available seats is necessarily limited. We should apply for a spot as soon as we can. normally – usually; in normal circumstancesThe class started normally, but it was soon disrupted by the construction outside.partially – partly; not completelyHis vision was partially impaired.It's a large problem and I accept that I am partially responsible. perfectly – completely/in a perfect wayThe meal was cooked perfectly.practically – almost; very nearly/in a realistic or sensible way; in real situationsWe were only given 4 days. It was practically impossible to finish the project in time.pragmatically – in a practical and sensible way rather than relying on fixed ideas or theoriesIf we act pragmatically we can find a solution.promptly – without delayThey worked together as a group and promptly finished the task.proudly – in a way that shows that somebody is proud of somethingHe stood proudly as he received the award.purposefully – in a way that has a useful purpose; with a clear aim and determinationHe worked hard and purposefully to achieve his goal. Having a clear purpose is a great motivator when things get challenging. quickly – fast/soon; after a short timeShe quickly finished her work before lunch.quietly – in a way that makes very little noiseJane whispered quietly to not wake the baby.roughly – approximately but not exactly/using force or not being careful and gentleThey said the package will be delivered in roughly two weeks. sadly – in a sad way/unfortunately/very much and in a way that makes you sadWhen we got to the bakery, sadly all the cakes were gone. separately – as a separate person or thing; not togetherThey decided to live separately after the fight.shortly – a short time; not longI hope the meeting will be over shortly.simply – used to emphasize how easy something is/in a way that is easy to understandThe solution was simply a matter of adjusting the settings.slowly – in a slow waySteven and Ella walked along the path slowly to enjoy the scenery.smoothly – in an even way, without suddenly stopping and starting againMy new Tesla drove smoothly on the highway.stupidly – in a way that shows a lack of thought or good judgmentI stupidly lent Ted my car even though he's my most irresponsible friend. suddenly – quickly and unexpectedly (in a sudden way)We heard a loud clap of thunder and suddenly, the lights went out.thankfully – used to show that you are pleased that something good has happened or that something bad has been avoided/in a pleased or grateful wayThankfully, no one was hurt in the accident.wrongly – in a way that is not right or correctHe was wrongly accused of the crime. He didn't do it. hourly – every hourIf you spend a day at the beach you should reapply sunscreen hourly for complete protection. daily – every dayIn Japan, the mail comes twice daily. weekly – every weekThe store newsletter is printed twice weekly. monthly – every monthyearly – every yearPerformance reports come out yearly in November. annually – once a yearThe Summer Festival is held annually. quarterly – every quarter (A quarter is 3 months [¼ of a year.])Most big office buildings pay their rent quarterly instead of every month.(in adjectives) having the qualities of*Remember that adjectives are used to modify nouns.Below is a list of adjectives ending in the suffix -lycostly – causing problems or the loss of somethingThat proved to be a costly mistake. cowardly – not brave; not having the courage to do things that other people do not think are especially difficult/(of an action) carried out against a person who is unable to fight backIt was a cowardly attack on a helpless old lady. deadly – causing or likely to cause death (comparative deadlier, superlative deadliest)Did you know that hippos are the deadliest animal in Africa? friendly – behaving in a kind and pleasant way because you like somebody or want to help them (comparative friendlier, superlative friendliest)I love your dog, he's the friendliest dog I have ever met. The staff at the hotel were friendly and helpful.kindly – in a kind wayMy neighbor kindly agreed to help me shovel my driveway after the big snow. likely – having a good chance of happening or being something; probable or expected (comparative likelier, superlative likeliest)Let's postpone our camping trip until next weekend, I'm afraid it's likely to rain for the next few days. lively – full of life and energy; active and enthusiastic/of a place, an event, etc.) full of interest or excitement (comparative livelier, superlative liveliest)This bar is the liveliest spot in town on a Saturday night. manly – having the qualities or physical features that are admired or expected in a man (comparative manlier, superlative manliest)Jason grew a thick beard which made him look more manly.scholarly – (of a person) spending a lot of time studying and having a lot of knowledge about an academic subject/connected with academic studyThe scholarly Journal was interesting to read but there were many words that I didn't understand. timely – happening at exactly the right timeIt's important to file your taxes in a timely manner. You may have to pay penalties if you file late. All of these adjectives are modifying a noun.hourly – done or happening every hourI couldn't sleep well last night. The hospital kept waking me up for hourly blood tests. daily – done or happening every dayIf I had more money I would get a daily massage. weekly – done or happening every weekIt's time to write my weekly report for my manager.monthly – done or happening every monthI try to make a monthly trip to my cabin in the mountains. yearly – done or happening every yearI have to renew my license on a yearly basis.quarterly – done or happening every quarter (A quarter is 3 months [¼ of a year.])The board of directors quarterly meeting is in 2 weeks so we have to get ready.Download your printable PDF Word List below. (It's FREE!) PDFs contain the live links from the post. I Check out these other great Prefix/Suffix English blog posts.The Prefix Trans- (Definitions, 52 Examples, Video, PDF)March 30, 2025The Prefix SUB- (32 Examples · Free 9-page PDF · Video)March 19, 2025List of Common Negative Prefixes (200+ examples, Free PDF)March 12, 2025Your complete guide to the Suffix -ISH (Quiz/worksheet)February 27, 2025Adjectives with the Suffix -less (79 Examples, PDF, Video)February 4, 2025The Suffix -DOM (21 Real Example sentences, PDF, Video)January 30, 2025The Suffix -ANCE (52 Real Examples, Video, Free PDF)January 21, 2025Images used in this blog post are provided by freepik.com. You can find the image links below.Nature illustrations by StorysetPeople illustrations by StorysetPeople illustrations by StorysetDelivery illustrations by StorysetPeople illustrations by StorysetPeople illustrations by StorysetApp illustrations by StorysetEvent illustrations by StorysetPeople illustrations by StorysetBusiness illustrations by Storyset Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. 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Nearby words LW abbreviation LWV -ly suffix lychee noun lychgate noun yellow noun From the Word list Oxford 3000 A1 Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Word of the Day in a particular way or manner If you say someone's behavior is unseemly, you disapprove of it because it is not in good taste or not suitable for a particular situation. A slovenly person is untidy or messy. An unsightly person presents an ugly, unattractive, or disagreeable face to the world. If something is completely done, it is fully or all finished. Something that happens immediately happens right away or at once. If it is extremely hot or cold, it is very or greatly hot or cold. Something that is currently happening is occurring right now. In an amenable manner. in a clever manner seemingly without interruption at every point in an attractive manner in an immature manner in an intelligent manner all the time in an intermittent manner in a naive manner in a plucky manner with rapid movements without speed (`slow' is sometimes used informally for `slowly') showing tact or tactfulness before a time limit expires in a vexatious manner Differentiated vocabulary for your students is just a click away. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Do you ever have problems spelling words ending in -ly? If you do, you're not alone. Adverbs such as definitely, probably, absolutely, likely, reasonably and hopefully often cause problems when it comes to spelling. We often ask ourselves the same questions: Is it -ly or -ily? Do we write -ely, or just -ly? Normally we just add -ly to an adjective to get the adverb: quick becomes quickly, dangerous becomes dangerously. The problem is when an adjective ends in -e or -le. What do we do in such cases? Do we keep or remove the 'e' before adding 'ly'? These short and simple rules should help you. When an adjective ends in -e, we simply add ly to form the adverb: polite » politely, definite » definitely, absolute » absolutely, complete » completely. Be careful when an adjective ends in -le. We remove the e and add y to form the adverb: probable » probably, possible » possibly, terrible » terribly, reasonable » reasonably. Don't be confused by adjectives that end in -l. Simply add ly and the adverb will then end in -lly: hopeful » hopefully, beautiful » beautifully, helpful » helpfully, careful » carefully. Which words do you find difficult to spell? Let me know in the comments below. Suffix forming adverbs or adjectives to express manner or degree.The suffix "-ly" is primarily used in English to transform adjectives into adverbs or to form adjectives themselves. When added to an adjective, it typically creates an adverb that describes how an action is performed. For example, adding "-ly" to the adjective "quick" forms the adverb "quickly," which describes the manner of an action. Similarly, "happy" becomes "happily," indicating the manner in which something is done. In some cases, "-ly" is used to create adjectives that describe characteristics related to the original adjective, such as "friendly" from "friend." It's important to note that while many adverbs are formed by adding "-ly" to adjectives, not all adverbs follow this pattern, and some words ending in "-ly" are adjectives (e.g., "friendly," "lonely"). When using "-ly" in writing, ensure that the resulting adverb correctly conveys the intended manner or degree of the action. Additionally, be mindful of overusing "-ly" adverbs, as excessive reliance on them can make writing seem repetitive or less dynamic. Instead, strive for a balance by varying sentence structure and using strong verbs where appropriate. Alternatives to using "-ly" suffix adverbs include using prepositional phrases or different adjective forms. For example, instead of saying "quickly," you could use "in a quick manner" or simply "fast." Instead of "happily," phrases like "with happiness" or "in a happy way" can be used. Additionally, choosing more descriptive verbs can often eliminate the need for an adverb altogether; for instance, instead of saying "walked slowly," you might say "ambled" or "strolled." This approach can make sentences more concise and vivid. When forming adjectives, instead of relying on "-ly" endings, consider using alternative suffixes such as "-ful" (e.g., "hopeful") or "-ous" (e.g., "joyous") to convey similar meanings with different nuances.When writing, the "-ly" suffix is a powerful tool for adding detail and nuance to your descriptions by forming adverbs that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. However, it's important to use them judiciously to maintain a strong and clear writing style. Overuse of "-ly" adverbs can lead to weak or passive sentences, so aim to incorporate them where they enhance the meaning without overwhelming the text. For instance, instead of saying "she ran quickly," you might choose a more dynamic verb like "she sprinted." Additionally, using "-ly" adjectives can enrich your descriptions, allowing for more precise characterizations, such as "a friendly smile" instead of just "a smile." Strive for variety in your sentence structures and word choices to keep your writing engaging and vibrant. Balance the use of "-ly" forms with other descriptive techniques to create a more compelling and polished narrative.In everyday conversation, using words with the "-ly" suffix can help you describe actions and qualities more vividly. For example, saying "She sings beautifully" gives a clearer picture than just "She sings well." Similarly, phrases like "He quickly agreed" or "They happily accepted" add color to your speech. However, in casual settings, it's often more natural to use simpler terms or rely on context, such as saying "She's a friendly person" instead of "She is friend-ly." Additionally, overusing "-ly" words in casual talk can make your speech sound overly formal or rehearsed, so it's best to use them when they genuinely enhance your description. Aim for a natural flow by mixing in "-ly" adverbs and adjectives with more straightforward language to keep conversations relaxed and engaging.The suffix "-ly" has its origins in Old English, where it was used to form adverbs and adjectives. Derived from the Old English suffix "-lic," meaning "like" or "similar to," it evolved over time to become "-ly" in Modern English. This transformation allowed for the creation of adverbs from adjectives, enabling speakers and writers to modify actions with more precision. For example, "quick" became "quickly," expanding the expressive capacity of the language. The versatility of "-ly" has made it one of the most productive suffixes in English, facilitating the formation of a vast array of adverbs and adjectives that enrich both spoken and written communication. Its continued use underscores the importance of nuanced expression in conveying manner, degree, and quality in various contexts. Page 2Often used as an adjective, this term helps specify the essential or middle position of something, underscoring its pivotal role. For instance, you might describe a liter··· Read the full article The word 'center' serves multiple functions in the English language, functioning both as a noun and a verb, depending on the context. As a noun, 'center' typically refers··· Read the full article The noun 'cell' has multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Primarily, in biology, a cell is the smallest unit of life, the basic building block o··· Read the full article The word 'cause' functions primarily as a verb, meaning to bring about a particular result or effect. It can be used in various contexts to indicate the initiation or ins··· Read the full article This verb primarily means to seize or intercept something in motion, whether physically or figuratively. 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In professional or academic writing, the term is used··· Read the full article See also: Appendix:Variations of "ly" From Middle English -ly, -li, -lik, -lich, -like, from Old English -līċ, from Proto-West Germanic *-līk, from Proto-Germanic *-likaz ("having the body or form of"), from *līką ("body") (whence lich). In form, probably influenced by Old Norse -ligr ("-ly") (Norwegian Bokmål -lig, Faroese -ligur, Icelandic -legur). Cognate with Dutch -lijk, German -lich, Danish -lig and Swedish -lig. Doublet of -like, more at like. -ly beastlyfriendlymanlyniggardly bimonthlybiweeklydailyfortnightlyhourlymonthlyweeklyyearly From Middle English -ly, -li, -liche, from Old English -līċe. -ly In prescriptive usage, derived adverbs in -ly are often preferred to those which are identical in form to the base adjective (e.g., badly instead of bad), despite the fact that the latter have been in continuous use since the earliest stages of the language and represent the norm in languages closely related to English, such as Dutch and German. This is the cause of hypercorrections such as I feel badly (where feel actually represents a copular verb, which traditionally requires an adjectival complement rather than an adverb). Various sound changes and spelling changes occur for -ly: If an adjective ends with a consonant followed by y, it changes into i before adding the suffix (e.g. ready > readily, easy > easily). Speakers who pronounce final unstressed -y as /i/ replace this vowel sound with /ɪ/ or /ə/ before -ly. If an adjective ends with -ary, the stress is often moved to the -a- in the derived adjective in -arily. If an adjective ends with ll, one l drops out to avoid a triple letter (e.g. full > fully, shrill > shrilly). The pronunciation may or may not be simplified to have a single /l/ sound: this is normal in frequent words such as fully, but less frequent words such as shrilly may be pronounced with double /lɪl/. If an adjective ends with a syllabic /l/ (spelled -le after a consonant), euphony causes the -le to drop out. Examples include -ably and -ibly, but also noble > nobly, ample > amply, and idle > idly, among others. Adjectives ending in -ic generally take -ally (public > publicly being an exception). If an adjective ends with -ed, the pronunciation is sometimes changed from /d/ or /t/ to /ɪd/ before -ly. For example, deserved /dɪˈzɜːv(j)vd/ and deservedly /dɪˈzɜːv(j)vɪdli/. From Old English -līċ. Related to lich. -lich, -liche, -lyche, -lych, -li, -lie, -lye, -like, -lik, -lyke, -lyk, -le, -lei, -lice, -lic, -liʒ, -lece, -luch IPA(key): /-lɪ.iː/, /-lɪ.t͡ʃ/, /-lɪd͡ʒ/ -ly (comparative -lyere, superlative -lyest) Used to form adverbs from adjectives, and nouns; the adverbs having the sense of "in the manner of what is denoted by the adjective/noun". Optionally appended to adverbs without suffixes with no change to the meaning. As with its adjectival equivalent, -ly is generally the most common variant of this suffix, though in some words, other variants may be more common, such as -lich(e). From Old English -līċe, itself a combination of the adjective-forming suffix -līċ (see etymology 1 above) and the adverbial suffix -e. -lich, -liche, -lyche, -lych, -li, -lie, -lye, -like, -lik, -licke, -lyke, -lyk, -lycke, -leche, -le, -lei, -loche, -lice, -liʒ, -luche IPA(key): /-lɪ.iː/, /-lɪ.t͡ʃ(ə)/, /-lɪd͡ʒ(ə)/ -ly (comparative -lyere, superlative -lyest) Used to form adverbs from adjectives, and nouns; the adverbs having the sense of "in the manner of what is denoted by the adjective/noun". Optionally appended to adverbs without suffixes with no change to the meaning. As with its adjectival equivalent, -ly is generally the most common variant of this suffix, though in some words, other variants may be more common, such as -lich(e).