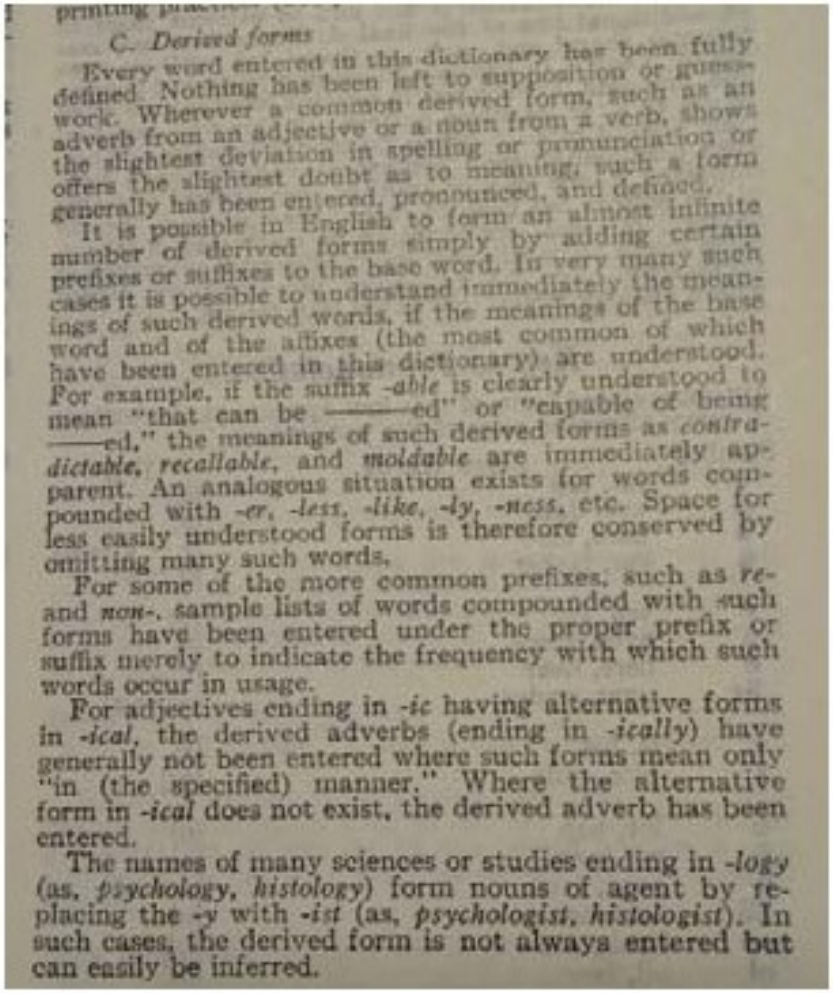
Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (1953)



printing practice ...

C. Derived forms

Every word entered in this dictionary has been fully defined. Nothing has been left to supposition or guesswork. Wherever a common derived form, such as an adverb from an adjective or a noun from a verb, shows the slightest deviation in spelling or pronunciation or offers the slightest doubt as to meaning, such a form generally has been entered, pronounced, and defined.

It is possible in English to form an almost infinite number of derived forms simply by adding certain prefixes or suffixes to the base word. In very many such cases it is possible to understand immediately the meanings of such derived words, if the meanings of the base word and of the affixes (the most common of which have been entered in this dictionary) are understood. For example, if the suffix *-able* is clearly understood to mean "that can be ———ed" or "capable of being ———ed," the meanings of such derived forms as *contradictable*, *recallable*, and *moldable* are immediately apparent. An analogous situation exists for words compounded with *-er*, *-less*, *-like*, *-ly*, *-ness*, etc. Space for less easily understood forms is therefore conserved by omitting many such words.

For some of the more common prefixes, such as *re-* and *non-*, sample lists of words compounded with such forms have been entered under the proper prefix or suffix merely to indicate the frequency with which such words occur in usage.

For adjectives ending in *-ic* having alternative forms in *-ical*, the derived adverbs (ending in *-ically*) have generally not been entered where such forms mean only "in (the specified) manner." Where the alternative form in *-ical* does not exist, the derived adverb has been entered.

The names of many sciences or studies ending in *-logy* (as, *psychology*, *histology*) form nouns of agent by replacing the *-y* with *-ist* (as, *psychologist*, *histologist*). In such cases, the derived form is not always entered but can easily be inferred.

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