

- **Compounding**
- **Other word-formation processes**

Background reading:

- *CL Ch 4, §3*

1. Review: Words and morphemes

- We've seen that **morphemes** are either **free** or **bound**, and are either **roots** or **affixes**
 - **Affixes** are always **bound**
 - **Roots** may be **free** or **bound**
- **Words** are, by definition, **free**
 - A word may be composed of **one**, or **more** than one, **morpheme**
 - Every word contains at least one **root**
- Now we will look at words with **more than one root**

2. Compounding

- A **compound** is “the combination of two already existing words” (*CL*, p 134)
 - Actually, “combination of two **roots**” would be a more general definition (beyond English)
- What are some examples of compounds?

2. Compounding

- What are some examples of compounds?

greenhouse *breakdance* *overripe*

(See CL Figure 4.9, p 134 for more examples)

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 - word category of the compound?
 - basic meaning of the compound?

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*green+**house** break+**dance** over+**ripe***

- The element that determines the **category** of a compound, and its **basic meaning**, is called the **head** of the compound
 - In English compounds, the **rightmost** root is *usually* the head

2. Compounding

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- But: Not all compounds have a head — their basic meaning does not come from either element
 - redhead* *redneck* *sabertooth*
 - A sabertooth is a tiger, not a tooth (or a saber)
- Headless compounds have some interesting properties
 - What is the plural of *eyetooth*? (headed)
 - What is the plural of *sabertooth*? (headless)

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 - Plural of *sabertooth*? (headless) | *sabertooths*

3. Compounds vs. phrases

- English orthography (spelling) does not represent compounds systematically: they may be spelled with no space, with a hyphen, or even with a space
- Some compounds as spelled in the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*:

greenhouse

blackbird

boat-house

canary-bird

crack house

rhinoceros bird

- How can we tell if we have a **compound word** or a **phrase**?

3. Compounds vs. phrases

- Stress test (works for nouns, in English):
 - A two-root N compound has the stress pattern *STRONG-weak*
 - A two-word phrase ending in a N (and not being specially emphasized) has the stress pattern *weak-STRONG*
- Try: *French teacher* (what do they teach?)
- Does a *black BIRD* have to be *black*?
What about a *BLACKbird*?

European Blackbird (female).

Photo credit: Andreas Trepte, www.photo-natur.de



3. Compounds vs. phrases

- A compound is a **word**
 - What did we learn last class about the defining characteristics of a word?
- The elements of a phrase can often be separated, but the parts of a compound word typically can't be (without changing the meaning)

greenhouse → *That *house* is very *green*.

French teacher → That *teacher* is very *French*.

(Which meaning does this work for?)

4. Exploring word formation

Some questions to explore:

- Can **derivation** happen before **compounding**?
After?
 - Can **inflection** happen before **compounding**?
After?
- Can you think of some examples (data) to check these questions with?

4. Exploring word formation

- What are some other ways that words can be formed? (not on exam, but see *CL* Ch 4, §5.2 for more information if you're interested)
 - acronyms: *ATM, laser*
 - clipping/truncation: *math, dorm*
 - blends: *brunch, spork*