# Answers Unit 3

1. The regular past tense morpheme has the following realisations:

   [t] after all voiceless sounds (except [t] itself),
   [d] after all voiced sounds (except [d] itself), and
   [ɪd] after voiced/voiceless alveolar plosives [d] and [t]

   As *attacked* ends in a voiceless plosive (/k/), the appropriate past ending is [t]. *Frightened* ends in a voiced consonant other than /d/ and therefore requires the [d] ending for the past tense. *Insult* ends in /t/, which triggers the [ɪd] ending. Note that it is this rule which makes the forms *spilt*, *spoilt*, *learnt* and others irregular. Particularly in British English, these irregular forms persist alongside their regular equivalents *spilled*, *spoiled*, *learned*.

2. Such irregular plurals are not very frequent in present-day English. *Houses* is the only noun in English that ends in a voiceless /s/ in the singular, but turns this into /z/ in the plural: /haʊzɪz/. There are several nouns ending in the voiceless fricative /f/ in the singular, but in the voiced fricative /v/ + /z/ in the plural: *calf – calves*, *knife – knives*, *elf – elves*, *half – halves*, *leaf – leaves*, *life – lives*, *loaf – loaves*, *self – selves*, *sheaf – sheaves*, *shelf – shelves*, *thief – thieves*, *wife – wives*,*wolf – wolves*.

   In addition, there are some nouns ending in the voiceless fricative /f/ where both a regular and an irregular plural form are possible: *dwarf – dwarfs/dwarves*, *hoof – hoofs/hooves*, *scarf – scarf/scarves*, *wharf – wharfs/wharves*. As such variants are easy to search in corpora, looking for their distribution in contemporary English might make a good project for corpus-linguistic practice.

   Irregular plurals can also occur with nouns ending in the voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ if a vowel precedes the fricative; the voiceless fricative in the singular becomes voiced in the plural: *path – paths*, *truth – truths*, *oath – oaths*, *sheath – sheaths*, *youth – youths*, *wreath – wreaths*.
   (Cf. e.g. Quirk et al. 1985 : 305-306)

   The genitive follows the regular allomorphic rules for the distribution of the {-s} morpheme: /z/ after voiced sounds except sibilants (*boy's, children's, Dickens', Bob's*), /s/ after voiceless sounds except sibilants (*wife's, Pat's*), and /ɪz/ after sibilants (*Jones's*). Note that, in contrast to the exceptional plurals noted above, the genitive –s does not become voiced: *wife* [waɪf] – genitive *wife's* [waɪfs] vs. plural *wives* [waɪvz]. Note also that there is some variation with words ending in /s, z/. While the plural of *Jones* will always be *the*

*Joneses*, there is an additional genitive variant *Jones'*.
(cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 319-320; Wells 2000 *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, s.v. –s, -es).

**3.** The derivational morpheme {-tion} has (at least) two allomorphs: [eɪʃn] and [ʃn], as in

*organise - organisation* [...eɪʃn]
*realise - realisation* [...eɪʃn]
*detain - detention* [...ʃn]
*retain - retention* [...ʃn]

In these words, although the vowel of the verb may change with the change to noun, the final consonant of the verb is retained also in the noun. Now consider the following verb-noun pairs:

*act - action* [ækʃn]
*recuperate - recuperation* [rɪkjupəreɪʃn]
*designate - designation* [dezɪgneɪʃn]
*obstruct - obstruction* [obstrʌkʃn]
*destroy - destruction* [dɪstrʌkʃn]

In the first four of these verb-noun pairs, the final consonant /t/ merges with [ʃ] in the process of derivation to a noun. This is called morphophonemic alternation – the form of a morpheme is affected by phonological factors. Note, by the way, that pronunciations such as [æktʃn] are typical of German learners of English and should be avoided. *Destruction* is an even more complex case, as the base verb **destruct* does not exist. There is an exception to this exception in the verb *to self-destruct*, which is a back-formation from the noun *self-destruction*.

4. *Painter*:
Predictable meaning: somebody or something that paints
Conventionalised meaning: an artist; a person who applies paint (to walls, etc.), esp. as an occupation

*Baker*:
Predictable meaning: somebody or something that bakes
Conventionalised meaning: a person whose business it is to make bread

*(Pencil-)sharpener*:
Predictable meaning: somebody or something that sharpens pencils
Conventionalised meaning: a device for sharpening a pencil, usually by rotating it against a cutting edge

*Computer*:
Predictable meaning: somebody or something that computes/calculates
Conventionalised meaning: an automatic electronic device for performing mathematical or logical operations

*Teller*:
Predictable meaning: somebody or something that relates, communicates or counts
Conventionalised meaning: one who counts or keeps tally; esp. one who counts money; an officer in a bank who receives or pays money over the counter

Note that, strictly speaking, the noun *teller* is thus not derived from the verb *tell*, but from one of its specific meanings.

*Goer*:
Predictable meaning: somebody or something that goes
Conventionalised meanings: a person who regularly attends social events; a person or thing who/which moves or does things at high speed; a person who behaves in a lively, persevering, or profligate manner; also, a successful man; an expert

*Printer*:
Predictable meaning: somebody or something that prints
Conventionalised meaning: a person whose work is printing; an output device which produces a printed record of data, text, etc., from a computer or other electronic device to which it is connected

*Sitter*:
Predictable meaning: a person who sits or occupies a seat
Conventionalised meaning: a person who sits to an artist, photographer, or sculptor, for a portrait, etc., or as a model; an easy chance or opportunity, esp. when missed, e.g. an easy shot at goal in soccer or an easy catch in cricket

All these examples make the important point that the meanings of complex words are determined by the word formation rules of a particular language, but then specified additionally by convention. To understand a complex word, we thus need the rules of the linguistic system and the encyclopedic or "real-world" knowledge which is the basis for the additional specifications. This specification process is also called **lexicalisation**.

5. Similar examples are *theatre-hater*, *marathon-runner*, or *wrong-doer*

   *Lover* generally refers to someone who has feelings of affection or love for another person. A *cinema-lover* is a person who loves the cinema.

   *Goer*: cf. Question 4 above
   A *movie-goer* is someone who regularly goes to the cinema.

   *Teller*: cf. Question 4 above
   A *story-teller* is a person who tells stories.

   In contrast to the lexicalised base forms, the meaning of the compound forms is still relatively close to what would be predicted purely on the basis of our knowledge of English word-formation rules. Basically, a *movie-goer* is a person who goes to the movies, and the only additional specification is that this occurs repeatedly or habitually.

   The problem raised by phrasal verbs such as *make up* is that in most cases the agentive morpheme is added to the verbal base (*passer-by*, *maker up*). Occasionally, however, forms in which the morpheme is attached to the adverbial particle (*make-upper*) are attested in corpora. Most of these have the affix added to both the verb and the particle. A common lexicalized case is *fixer-upper*, North American slang for a house bought cheaply that requires a lot of repairs.

   Consult large corpora such as COCA or the BNC for forms ending in *–upper* to get an idea of the extent of the phenomenon.

   The interesting thing about the grammatical frame "a VERB+er of" is that in this frame agentive nouns become productive which are not attested outside it. Thus, the form given, *a maker up of fantastic tales*, is possible, whereas *maker-up* would not occur by itself.

6. The grammatical morphemes *–ing* (*obstructing*), plural *–s* (*doors*, *delays*), third person singular *–s* (*causes*) and two free morphemes with dominantly grammatical function (*and*, *can*) were deleted. The reduction of the original words to their base forms breaks up the original sentence structure and profoundly changes the meaning of the remaining sequence of free morphemes. The "new" sentence is a series of three imperatives: *obstruct the door*; *cause delay*; *be dangerous*.

7. *trumpet-type*: free lexical morpheme + bound derivational morpheme; word formation process: derivation; see below for further comments and justification of this analysis
   *spindly*: free lexical morpheme *spindle* + bound derivational morpheme *-y*; word formation process: derivation
   *fox-turdy*: (free lexical morpheme + free lexical morpheme) + bound derivational morpheme; word formation process: compounding + derivation
   *tetanus-ey*: free lexical morpheme + bound derivational morpheme; word formation process: derivation
   *meaty*: free lexical morpheme + bound derivational morpheme; word formation process: derivation
   *raunchy*: free lexical morpheme; no word formation process involved as there is no base morpheme {raunch}; cf. *silly* for a comparable case
   *dead bodyish*: free lexical morpheme + free lexical morpheme, with resulting compound forming the base for addition of bound derivational morpheme; compounding + derivation

   A further note on *raunchy*:
   At first sight, *raunchy* looks like a free lexical morpheme *raunch* + a derivational morpheme *–y* but actually (as looking up the word in the OED, for example, shows) *raunch* is a back-formation from *raunchy*, and *raunchy* should therefore be considered mono-morphemic.(If in an attempt to rigorously separate the diachronic and synchronic levels of analysis we refuse to take this piece of language-historical knowledge into consideration, we can of course analyse it in analogy to all the other *–(e)y* forms. The price to pay for such wilful ignorance will probably be that we may encounter informants who are aware of the existence of the adjective *raunchy*, but not of its supposed source noun *raunch*.)

   In general, the examples illustrate the very high productivity of the adjective-forming morphemes *–y* and *–ish* in contemporary English. As for *trumpet-type*, a derivational analysis is adopted here. It is not treated as free morpheme, but in analogy with derivational morphemes such as *–like* and *–wise*, which also create adjectives and adverbs (*childlike*, *money-wise*). Like *type*, *like* and *wise* occur as free morphemes but function rather like bound morphemes in the usages in question here.

8. To answer this question, think about other nouns ending in *-ling* in German first. As a source of information, use the *Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache des 20. Jahrhunderts* (www.dwds.de). By typing in the search string **ling* in the search window, you will find numerous words ending in *-ling*, e.g. *Lehrling, Sonderling, Häuptling, Säugling, Zögling, Jüngling,*

*Fremdling, Schwächling, Wüstling, Flüchtling, Abkömmling, Neuling, Eindringling, Schützling*.

In terms of morphology, {-ling} is a bound derivational morpheme, turning an adjective or a verb into a noun characterising a person. In contrast to the English agent-noun morpheme {-er} or the corresponding German form, {-ling} describes persons in terms of what they are rather than what they do – with the exception of *Flüchtling* and *Eindringling*. It is clear from these examples that this German derivational suffix does not carry a single meaning which could be paraphrased easily. Rather, {-ling}-forms have been subject to considerable additional specification through lexicalisation. In some words, meanings could be glossed as "young, uninitiated, without experience, under the protection of someone" (*Lehrling, Säugling, Zögling, Neuling, Schützling*). In *Sonderling, Schwächling, Wüstling, Abkömmling, Jüngling*, *Eindringling* or *Feigling*, the suffix has pejorative meaning, whereas *Liebling* is used as term of endearment. Other words ending in *-ling*, e.g. *Häuptling, Flüchtling*, do not sit easily in either of these two categories.

Extra task for "Germanisten":
With these facts laid out before you, comment on the wisdom of recent recommendations to replace *Flüchtling(e)* with *Geflüchteter/ Geflüchtete*. Consider the potential for confusion with nominalised uses of the past participle of *flüchten*, as in: *die vor der lauten Musik ins Nebenzimmer Geflüchteten versammelten sich um Diana …*