Most common morphemes

Nation (2001:268) lists the most useful affixes (prefixes and suffixes) in terms of learnability, divided into five stages according to the following criteria:

(a) frequency, from high to low word frequency

(b) regularity, i.e., the degree of change in the base morpheme, in spelling or pronunciation (e.g., the sound changes in 
\textit{admire} – 
\textit{admiration}, 
\textit{nation} – 
\textit{national} - nationality)

(c) productivity, i.e., how often and readily it combines with other words; how often it is used as a morpheme to create new words

(d) predictability – how predictable the meaning is from the word base / stem and its affixes

These include grammatical suffixes (verb and noun endings for tense and plural markers), and derivational affixes, used for forming new words from other words (like -\textit{able}, -\textit{ment}, pre-, etc.).

\textbf{Stage 0. Standard grammatical morphemes (morphemes for grammatical markings)}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affix</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-s</td>
<td>dogs and cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(noun &amp; verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ending)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ed</td>
<td>it comes and goes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Stage 1. Frequent affixes - productive (taking novel base words), no change to base word (in writing or speech)}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affix</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-able</td>
<td>commendable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-er</td>
<td>fisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ish</td>
<td>fiendish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-less</td>
<td>feckless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ly</td>
<td>verbally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Stage 2. Frequent somewhat productive often impose change on base word}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affix</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-al</td>
<td>communal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ation</td>
<td>alliteration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ess</td>
<td>finess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ful</td>
<td>stressful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ism</td>
<td>naturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ist</td>
<td>hedonist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\footnote{This handout is adapted from http://www.lexutor.ca/morpho/mainfix. Oddly, a few affixes are repeated here. The source is: Nation, Paul. (2001). \textit{Learning vocabulary in another language}. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.}
Stage 3. Less frequent; low productivity; rarely imposes change on base word

- **-age** -age
  - leakage
- **-al** -al
  - arrival
- **-ally** -ally
  - idiotically
- **-an** -an
  - Alaskan
- **-ance** -ance
  - clearance
- **-ant** -ant
  - consultant
- **-ary** -ary
  - revolutionary
- **-atory** -atory
  - confirmatory
- **-dom** -dom
  - kingdom
- **-eer** -eer
  - marketeer
- **-en** -en
  - wooden
- **-ence** -ence
  - widen
- **-ent** -ent
  - emergence
- **-ery** -ery
  - absorbent
- **-ese** -ese
  - trickery
  - officialese
- **-esque** -esque
  - picturesque
  - usherette
- **-ette** -ette
  - employee
  - acidicy
  - reify
- **-ic** -ic
  - pianist
- **-ify** -ify
  - redaction
- **-ion** -ion
  - precondition
- **-ist** -ist
  - pianist
- **-ition** -ition
  - contrition
- **-ive** -ive
  - conducive
- **-th** -th
  - thirteenth
- **-y** -y
  - brawny
- **-pre** -pre
  - pre-condition
- **-re** -re
  - reverberate

Stage 4. Less frequent.

- **-able / -ible** -able
  - cabable, edible
- **-ee** -ee
  - employee
- **-ic** -ic
  - acidic
- **-ify** -ify
  - reify
- **-ion** -ion
  - redaction
- **-ist** -ist
  - pianist
- **-ition** -ition
  - contrition
- **-ive** -ive
  - conducive
- **-th** -th
  - thirteenth
- **-y** -y
  - brawny
- **-pre** -pre
  - pre-condition
- **-re** -re
  - reverberate

Stage 5. Less frequent.

- **-ar** -ar
  - circular
  - compassionate, electorate
- **-ate** -ate
  - packet
  - dis-proportionate
- **-et** -et
  - troublesome
- **-some** -some
  - departure
- **-ure** -ure
  - departure
- **-ure** -ure
  - departure
  - inhale
- **-ab** -ab
  - abject
  - inhale
- **-ad** -ad
  - adjoin
  - obstruct
- **-com** -com
  - commence
  - pertinent
  - pro-active
  - transition