Normally, to change an adjective into a noun, we add *NESS* (cute, cuteness) or *ITY* (popular, popularity). But there are many exceptions, some of which seem to follow a pattern and some of which seem to be unique.

Adjectives that end in *ANT* or *ENT*, for example, generally become nouns that end in *ANCE* (elegance, importance, significance, militance, arrogance, fragrance, ignorance, relevance, dominance) or *ENCE* (silence, violence, penitence, innocence, independence, pertinence, confidence, diffidence, eloquence, absence, obedience, adolescence, magnificence, obsolescence, negligence, diligence, difference), but occasionally in *ANCY* (constancy, vacancy, redundancy) or *ENCY* (delinquency, frequency, efficiency, decency, urgency, adjacency, currency). With some words (brilliant, dependent) there is a choice between *NCE* and *NCY*. In at least three cases (pleasant, recent, ancient), the noun ends in *NESS*. And one eight-letter adjective ending in *ANT* takes TION to make it a nominative. Can you think of it?

Similarly, adjectives that end in *ATE* usually turn into nouns that end in *ACY* (accuracy, intimacy, effeminacy, legitimacy, privacy, adequacy, literacy, immediacy, confederacy, indeterminacy), but some take ION instead (desperation, moderation, desolation, corporation). Again, there are anomalies: appropriate and ultimate take *NESS*, while one nine-letter adjective replaces *ATE* with *ANCE*, not *ANCY* or *ATION*. What is it?

Where the *NESS* suffix boasts no variations, *ITY* has many, including *TY* (----ty, cruelty, subtlety, frailty, loyalty, certainty, entirety, novelty), *TE* (------te), *RY* (------ry, ------ry), *ERY* (-----ery) and just *Y* (difficulty, orthodoxy, ------y). When we add *NESS*, the only change we have to make is a *Y* to *I* (messy, messiness). When we add *ITY*, we must similarly change an *E* to an *I* (sane, sanity), but *ITY* often necessitates other, internal changes (proper, propriety; sober, sobriety; brief, brevity; clear, clarity; noble, nobility; humble, humility; pompous, pomposity; generous, generosity). In at least one case, we change the stem and drop the *I* in the suffix. The adjective has four letters, the noun seven. Can you name this unusual pair?

Another noun-making suffix is *TH*, as in warmth and many numbers (eleventh), but it is usually accompanied by an internal adjustment (true, truth; dead, death; wide, width; broad, breadth; five, fifth; nine, ninth; deep, depth; long, length; young, youth; strong, strength). In almost all of these, the vowel sound is changed.
In many cases, though, the change from adjective to noun is unexpected, even weird. Listed below are some of the most interesting cases, but we’ve left out the letters shared by the adjective and the noun. Can you fill in the blanks? In each case, the answer is unique. If you run out of patience, check the answers in Answers and Solutions.

1. ----, -----eur
2. ----y, ----ment
3. ----, -----hood
4. ----, -----ice
5. ----, -----itude
6. ------e, -----acy
7. ----, -----dom
8. ------ary, ------ude
9. -----o-s, -----m
10. -----ic, -----dy
11. -----ous, -----ety
12. -----ous, -----sy
13. ------able, ------y
14. ------id, ------or
15. ------ic, ------s
16. ------ti-r, --------e
17. ------etic, ------x
18. ------ic, -------es
19. ------ic, ------ry
20. ------y, -----e-
21. ------eutic, ------y
22. ------al, -------on
23. ------al, ------us
24. ------cial, -------t
25. -------d, -------a
26. -------c, -------a
27. ------zen, -------t
28. --------l, -------
29. ------y, ------
30. ------ious, -------e
31. ------al, -------
32. ------al, -------
33. ------ic, -------
34. -------some, -------
35. ------n, -------
36. ------en, -------
37. ------ed, -------
38. ------our, ------e
39. ------o, ------a
40. ------, ------t
41. ------e, -------
42. ------y, ------hood
43. ------, ------itude
44. ------, ------ism
45. ------ious, -------ion
46. ------ious, -------y
47. ------etic, -------os
48. -------t-c, -------s

In oddNESS (cute, many exceptions, which seem to be

Generally become
mance, militance, ENCE (silence, rence, confidence, magnificence, occasionally in ANCY
ancy, frequency, with some words
ANCY. In at least
NESS. And one
t a nominative.

Nouns that end
vacy, adequacy, end take ION in-
Again, there are
one nine-letter
that is it?

many, including
ainty, entirety, eny) and just Y
only change we
necessitates
briety; brief,
pompous,
we change the
four letters, the

many numbers
five, fifth; nine, strength). In