

WORD FORMATION - PREFIXES

- Prefixes are syllables which we add before certain words to form new words.
- The meaning of the new word depends on the prefix that has been used.

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLE
anti-	= against	antibacterial
bi-	= two	bilingual
co-	= with, together	co-exist
counter-	= opposing or reacting to sth	counterproductive
ex-	= previous, former	ex-husband
inter-	= between, among	intercontinental
mis-	= done wrongly or badly	misunderstand
mono-	= one	monorail
multi-	= many	multipurpose
non-	= not	non-smoker
out-	= do/be more than	outrun
over-	= too much, more than	overweight
post-	= after	postwar
pre-	= before, in advance	prepaid
pro-	= in favour of	pro-British
re-	= again	reunite
semi-	= half	semicircle
sub-	= under, less than	subzero
super-	= big, more than	supercomputer
trans-	= (travelling) from one side, group, etc. to another	trans-siberian
tri-	= three	triangle
under-	= not enough	undervalue
uni-	= one	unicycle

The prefixes below are used to express opposite meaning.

il -	(before l)	il legible (but: disloyal)
im-	(before p, m, b)	im personal, im mature, im balanced (but: unpleasant, unprofessional)
ir-	(before r)	ir regular (but: unreasonable)
un-		un happy, un real
de-		de forestation, de compose
dis-		dis approve, dis honest
in-		in sensitive, in complete

Some prefixes are added to words to form verbs.

en-		en large
em-	(before p, b)	em power, em bed

Exercise 1. Write the correct prefix with a negative meaning.

countable →	countable	valid →	valid
tolerant →	tolerant	available →	available
suitable →	suitable	critical →	critical
rational →	rational	responsible →	responsible
necessary →	necessary	flexible →	flexible
permanent →	permanent	educated →	educated
believable →	believable	definite →	definite
even →	even	patient →	patient
loyal →	loyal	agreeable →	agreeable
breakable →	breakable	liberal →	liberal

Exercise 2. Match the prefix to its meaning. Choose the correct answer.

1. **dis –** a. not b. after c. again
2. **im –** a. not b. before c. wrong
3. **mis –** a. correctly b. wrongly c. after
4. **pre –** a. before b. not c. wrongly
5. **re –** a. correctly b. again c. after
6. **semi –** a. one b. two c. half
7. **ex –** a. previous b. next c. again
8. **post –** a. previous b. before c. after
9. **anti –** a. again b. against c. in favour of
10. **under –** a. many b. too much c. not enough

Exercise 3. In the New Word column, combine the prefix and the root word to form a new word. Write the meaning of the new word in the Meaning column.

Prefix	Root Word	New Word	Meaning
mis-	understood	misunderstood	understood wrongly
bi-	lingual		
dis-	connect		
im-	possible		
re-	read		
re-	start		
mis-	read		
pre-	war		