

# Negative prefixes

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We add a prefix such as **in-** or **un-** or **dis-**, **im-**, **il-**, **non**, **ir-** etc. to the beginning of adjectives, adverbs and verbs to give them the opposite meaning.

For example,

- Before "r" one has to use "ir"            irreparable;
- Before "l", use "il"                        illogical;
- Before "t", use "dis"                      distrust; distasteful
- Before "c, b or s" use "un or in"        uncomfortable/unbelievable and incomplete/incredible/insanity;
- Before "p", use "im"                      impossible
- Before "m", use "im"                      immature, immortal
- Before "h or f", use "un"                 unhappy/unfettered;
- Before a noun, use "non"                 non-smoker, etc.

## Exercise 1

Write the negative form of these words by adding a negative prefix: "un-", "dis-", "ir-", "il-", "in-", or "im-".

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|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 ___ comfortable | 2 ___ patient  | 3 ___ honest      | 4 ___ lucky   |
| 5 ___ formal      | 6 ___ possible | 7 ___ popular     | 8 ___ lock    |
| 9 ___ appear      | 10 ___ agree   | 11 ___ legal      | 12 ___ polite |
| 13 ___ like       | 14 ___ logical | 15 ___ convenient |               |

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**Exercise 2:** Write the negative form of these words by adding a negative prefix:

**"un-", "dis-", "ir-", "il-", "in-", or "im-".**

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|----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 ___ frequent | 6 ___ believable | 11 ___ relevant    |
| 2 ___ mature   | 7 ___ approve    | 12 ___ dependent   |
| 3 ___ legible  | 8 ___ curable    | 13 ___ responsible |
| 4 ___ moral    | 9 ___ familiar   | 14 ___ accurate    |
| 5 ___ regular  | 10 ___ grateful  | 15 ___ resistible  |

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**Exercise 3:** Fill in negative prefixes to form the OPPOSITE of each of the adjectives below. In some cases, more than one pre-fix is possible.

___ acceptable	___ accurate	___ adequate	___ agreeable	___ approachable
___ appropriate	___ bearable	___ compatible	___ complete	___ conscious
___ contented	___ convenient	___ credible	___ decisive	___ desirable
___ discreet	___ excusable	___ experienced	___ faithful	___ flexible
___ frequent	___ grateful	___ healthy	___ helpful	___ hospitable
___ legal	___ legible	___ legitimate	___ literate	___ logical
___ mature	___ moral	___ mortal	___ obedient	___ organised
___ passive	___ patient	___ perfect	___ personal	___ polite
___ probable	___ readable	___ regular	___ resolute	___ responsible
___ respectful	___ sane	___ satisfactory	___ satisfied	___ sociable
___ sufficient	___ variable	___ visible	___ willing	

**Exercise 4:** Complete the sentences by adding the correct pre-fix for each word.

- 1 It's rather \_\_\_polite if you don't say 'Please' a lot in English.
- 2 My parents are extremely generous with their time and money. They are very \_\_\_selfish.
- 3 If the traffic is bad, it'll be \_\_\_possible to get to the match on time.
- 4 It's \_\_\_legal to drive along that street; it's for pedestrians only.
- 5 My mum thought a burglar had been in my bedroom, but it's always really \_\_\_tidy.
- 6 It was completely \_\_\_responsible of you to go away for the weekend without telling us.
- 7 Mike's pretty \_\_\_happy about going on holiday with his girlfriend's parents.
- 8 I never know when to expect the post. It's so \_\_\_regular.
- 9 Taking a large suitcase on a waling holiday is a bit \_\_\_practical

