

71 Word building: prefixes

A un-

In English, **un-** is the most common prefix and is added to some adjectives and verbs to give the opposite meaning.

*We were **unable** to go to the party because we were both ill.*

*It was **unnecessary** for them to come to the airport to meet us.*

*I think it was **unfair** giving the job to Ed: he wasn't the best person.*

*I've got an old car, and it's **unreliable** in very cold weather.*

*I was rude to Adam the other day, so he's very **unlikely** to invite me to his party.*

*I used to play rugby, but these days I'm very **unfit** and can't run far.*

*Certain films are completely **unsuitable** for young children to watch.*

*In some countries, Friday 13th is thought to be **unlucky**.*

*I **unlocked** the door and went in.*

*I usually **unplug** my washing machine if I go away on holiday.*

GLOSSARY

unfair	Sth or sb that is unfair does not treat people in the same way or the right way. OPP fair
unreliable	If sth or sb is unreliable , you cannot trust it or him/her. OPP reliable
unlikely	If sth is unlikely to happen, it's probably not going to happen. OPP likely
unfit	not in good physical condition OPP fit
unsuitable (for sb/sth)	not right for sb/sth OPP suitable
unlucky	having bad things happen to you which you cannot control OPP lucky
unlock	open sth, e.g. a door, using a key OPP lock
unplug	remove a piece of electrical equipment from the electricity supply OPP plug sth in

SPOTLIGHT word stress

When you add a prefix to an adjective, it doesn't usually change the stress, e.g. **happy**, **unhappy**. But the stress can change if you want to emphasize the negative.

■ Is he **likely** to come? ~ No, he's very **unlikely** to come.

- 1 Most of these words have the stress on the second syllable, but one word has the stress on a different syllable. Which word? Use the **APP** to help you. Practise saying the words.

▶ **unlikely** unfit unsuitable unnecessary unplug unlucky unable unfair unreliable

- 2 Complete the sentences with a word from the box.

unfair unlocked unlucky unlikely ✓ unreliable unsuitable unnecessary

- ▶ He probably won't get the job. It's very **unlikely**.
- You didn't need to do it. It was _____.
 - I turned the handle and the door opened. It was _____.
 - He never comes when he says he will. He's very _____.
 - Some people weren't able to vote, and they had the right to do so. It was _____.
 - The weather is usually good in July, but this year it was wet. We were _____.
 - Dad bought mum a saucepan for her birthday. What an _____ present!

- 3 Complete the sentences.

- ▶ I missed the plane by two minutes – it was so **unlucky**!
- Jacob often promises to help but rarely does – he's very _____.
 - I was _____ to see my relatives on this trip because I was too busy with work.
 - Why do men get paid more than women for the same job? It's very _____.
 - My brother can't get up the stairs. He smokes, and he's very _____.
 - Fiona is _____ to be here on time – she's usually late.
 - We were out in a storm, and the clothes we had on were _____, so we got wet.
 - Don't take _____ risks when you're climbing. It's a dangerous mountain.
 - Remember to _____ the iron when you've finished.
 - I tried to get in the flat but I couldn't _____ the door.

- 4 Which of these words form opposites with the prefix **un-**? Use the Word List or **APP** to help you.

kind friendly polite expected patient practical usual popular



TEST YOURSELF

B dis-, im-, il-, re-

- Is it **illegal** to ride a motorbike without a crash helmet?
 Is it **dishonest** to tell your boss you are ill when you aren't?
 Does it matter if a lawyer is **disorganized**?
 Can you **disagree** about politics and still be friends with someone?
 If you fail your final university exams, can you **retake** them?
 Is it ever OK to be **impolite**?
 Does it matter if a doctor's handwriting is **illegible**?
 Is it easy to learn **irregular** verbs in English?
 Do you always try to **reuse** or **recycle** plastic water bottles?



GLOSSARY

illegal	not allowed by the law OPP legal
dishonest	not telling the truth OPP honest
disorganized	not able to plan well OPP organized
disagree (with sb)	not have the same opinion as sb OPP agree (with sb)
retake	If you retake an exam, you take it again.
impolite	rude; not behaving in a good way towards people OPP polite
illegible	If handwriting is illegible , it is difficult or impossible to read. OPP legible
irregular	not following the normal rules of grammar OPP regular
reuse	use sth again SYN recycle

SPOTLIGHT re- with verbs

The prefix **re-** means 'again'. Common examples are:

- reuse recycle rewrite rebuild reappear rearrange reorganize**
- I must **rewrite** my essay. (= write it again)
 - Helena **reappeared** later, with a bottle of water. (= appeared again)

5 Right or wrong? Write R or W. Correct any wrong answers.

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------|-------|
| ▶ unpolite | <u>W - impolite</u> | 4 disagree | _____ |
| 1 disorganized | _____ | 5 unlegal | _____ |
| 2 dishonest | _____ | 6 reuse | _____ |
| 3 rewrite | _____ | 7 dislegible | _____ |

6 Complete the dialogues using words from the box with the correct prefix.

organized agree take use ✓ appear legible honest regular legal

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| ▶ Why do you want that empty bottle? | ~ Because I'm going to <u>reuse</u> it. |
| 1 Do you have the same ideas about fashion as Clara? | ~ No, we often _____. |
| 2 Did he pass the exam? | ~ No, he'll have to _____ it. |
| 3 Will Oliver come back? | ~ Yes, I think he will _____ later today. |
| 4 Does he usually tell the truth? | ~ No, he's quite _____. |
| 5 Can you read this letter? | ~ No, the handwriting is _____. |
| 6 Do you ever go in that bookshop? | ~ No, it's hard to find things: it's so _____. |
| 7 Is better the comparative form of good ? | ~ Yes, it's an _____ form. |
| 8 Does he park in front of the shop? | ~ Yes, he does, and it's _____. |

7 Complete the words in the sentences.

- ▶ Is it common for people to be impolite to the police?
- 1 Are many verbs i _____ in your language?
- 2 Is it d _____ to say someone looks nice when you don't really believe it?
- 3 Do you often r _____ the furniture in your house to change how it looks?
- 4 Is it i _____ to ride a bike on the pavement?
- 5 Is it common for you to d _____ with friends about politics?
- 6 Is it common for students to r _____ exams in your country?

ABOUT YOU

8 ABOUT YOU Write your answers to Exercise 7, or talk to another student. Then write your answers, or talk to another student about the questions at the top of the page.



TEST YOURSELF