

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 → <input type="text"/>	countable	valid → <input type="text"/>	valid
tolerant → <input type="text"/>	tolerant	available → <input type="text"/>	available
suitable → <input type="text"/>	suitable	critical → <input type="text"/>	critical
rational → <input type="text"/>	rational	responsible → <input type="text"/>	responsible
necessary → <input type="text"/>	necessary	flexible → <input type="text"/>	flexible
permanent → <input type="text"/>	permanent	educated → <input type="text"/>	educated
believable → <input type="text"/>	believable	definite → <input type="text"/>	definite
even → <input type="text"/>	even	patient → <input type="text"/>	patient
loyal → <input type="text"/>	loyal	agreeable → <input type="text"/>	agreeable
breakable → <input type="text"/>	breakable	liberal → <input type="text"/>	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		