What are prefixes?

A prefix is a group of letters that appears at the front of a word. A prefix affects the meaning of the root (base) word to which it is attached. To determine whether or not a group of letters is a prefix, remove them from the word. The letters are a prefix if a known word remains. For example, remove the letters ***un*** from the following words: ***unhappy, untie, uncle, uninterested***. In which word are the letters ***un*** not a prefix? Yes, these letters are not a prefix in the word **uncle.**

Most prefixes have more than one meaning. For example, the prefix un can mean "not" as in unhappy, or "do the opposite of" as in untie.

Meaning	Prefix	New Words
not	**un-**	unhappy, unclear, unsafe, untie, undo, unsure
not (sometimes used before l)	**il-**	illegal, illegible, illicit, illogical, illiterate
not (used before b, m, p)	**im-**	impossible, immobile, impartial, immutable, impolite, imbalance
not (used before certain letters)	**in-**	incorrect, indecisive, invisible, inaudible, infertile,
opposite of, not	**dis-**	disagree, disapprove, displace, disuse, disintegrate
again, back	**re-**	review, return, rewrite, recall, reunite, recycle, reclaim
to, toward (changes based on the root word)	**ad-**	adjoin, adjust, admit, adopt, advance, adhere, administer
wrongly	**mis-**	mistake, mislead, misplace, misfire, misunderstand
two	**bi-**	bicycle, bilingual, biweekly, binary, bipedal
too much	**over-**	overload, overreact, oversee, overestimate, overcook
three	**tri-**	triangle, tricycle, triathlon, trilogy, tricolor
before	**pre-**	preview, predict, preface, prepay, preapprove, premature
not (used before r)	**ir-**	irrational, irresistible, irregular, irresponsible, irreplaceable
against	**anti-**	antifreeze, antibiotic, antidote, antithesis, anti-inflammatory
self	**auto-**	automobile, autobiography, autograph, automatic, autofocus
away from	**ab-**	abnormal, abduct, abstain, abdicate, abhor
not enough	**under-**	underestimate, underpaid, undercooked, underdeveloped, underuse
under, below	**sub-**	submarine, submerge, subtitle, subtext, subtract



LIVEWORKSHEETS

Match each prefix with its meaning	
Prefix	**Meaning**
un-	Under, below
il-	Not (used before l)
im-	Two
in-	Not (used before b, m, p)
dis-	Wrongly
re-	Opposite of, not
ad-	Before
mis-	Three
bi-	Self
over-	Against
tri-	Too much
pre-	Again, back
ir-	Away from
anti-	Not (used before r)
auto-	Not (used before certain letters)
ab-	To, toward (adapts based on the root word)
under-	Not enough
sub-	Not

Match each prefix on the left with its correct meaning on the right	
Prefix	**Root Word**
un-	legal
il-	balance
im-	correct
in-	load
dis-	cycle
re-	mature
ad-	place
mis-	possible
bi-	rational
over-	view
tri-	mobile
pre-	take
ir-	fix
anti-	direct
auto-	write
ab-	marine
under-	lock
sub	not

Complete the table below by making a list of words to which each prefix can be added

ad	dis	il	re	mis	ab	in	un
here	mantle	legal	apply	fortune	normal	appropriate	happy

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Add the appropriate prefix from the list above to the given word in the blank space to complete the sentence correctly.

Prefixes: un-, il-, im-, in-, dis-, re-, ad-, mis-, bi-, over-, tri-, pre-, ir-, anti-, auto-, ab-, under-, sub-, mal

1. Although she took a long hike up the mountain she was feeling _____ **(tired)** at the end and had no need to rest.
2. The movie was rated_____ **(appropriate)** for children under 12 due to its scary scenes.
3. The almost_____ **(possible)** puzzle was solved by the team, earning them a prize.
4. His actions were _____**(considerate),** causing harm to those around him.
5. The novel is a _____**(lingual)** edition, available in both English and Spanish.
6. The teacher told her students to _____**(organize)** their backpacks before they go home.
7. His decision to quit his job was _____**(advised),** considering the unstable economy.
8. She _____**(trusted)** the stranger, leading to a dangerous situation.
9. The chef decided to _____**(season)** the dish with salt and pepper before serving.
10. The athlete was _____**(prepared)** for the competition, resulting in a disappointing performance.
11. The doctor prescribed an _____**(biotic)** medication to fight the bacterial infection.
12. The accident was caused by a _____**(functioning)** in the machinery.
13. The company's stock price has been _____**(creasing**) steadily over the past month.
14. The kids were very _____**(polite)** to their guests during the party.
15. While consistently glancing at his watch, he _____(patiently) wait for his turn in line at the grocery store.
16. The meal is salty because mother _____**(estimated**) the amount of salt that she should put in the pot.

Activity:

Add a suitable root word to each prefix to form a new word.

Prefix **+** ***root word*** **= new word**

1. un- + _____ = _____
2. il- + _____ = _____
3. im- + _____ = _____
4. in- + _____ = _____
5. dis- + _____ = _____
6. re- + _____ = _____
7. ad- + _____ = _____
8. mis- + _____ = _____
9. bi- + _____ = _____
10. over- + _____ = _____
11. tri- + _____ = _____
12. pre- + _____ = _____
13. ir- + _____ = _____
14. anti- + _____ = _____
15. auto- + _____ = _____
16. ab- + _____ = _____
17. under- + _____ = _____
18. sub- + _____ = _____

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