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

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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**forestration, **de**compose
dis-		**dis**approve, **dis**honest
in-		**in**sensitive, **in**complete

Some prefixes are added to words to form verbs.

en-		**en**lage
em-	(before p, b)	**em**power, **em**bed

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

countable → ☐ countable

tolerant → ☐ tolerant

suitable→ ☐ suitable

rational → ☐ rational

necessary → ☐ necessary

permanent → ☐ permanent

believable → ☐ believable

even → ☐ even

loyal → ☐ loyal

breakable → ☐ breakable

valid → ☐ valid

available → ☐ available

critical → ☐ critical

responsible → ☐ responsible

flexible → ☐ flexible

educated → ☐ educated

definite → ☐ definite

patient → ☐ patient

agreeable → ☐ agreeable

liberal → ☐ liberal

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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		

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