

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)	illegal (but: disloyal)
im-	(before p, m, b)	impersonal, immature, imbalanced (but: unpleasant, unprofessional)
ir-	(before r)	irregular (but: unreasonable)
un-		unhappy, unreal
de-		deforestation, decompose
dis-		disapprove, dishonest
in-		insensitive, incomplete

Some prefixes are added to words to form verbs.

en-	enlarge
em- (before p, b)	empower, embed

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		