

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



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- + _____ = _____