**LECTURE 8 HANDOUT 1 (note)**

**READING SKILLS - AFFIXATION**

**WHAT IS AFFIXATION**

**SOURCE:** [**http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/affixes.htm**](http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/affixes.htm)

What is an affix?

An affix is added to the [root](http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/root_of_a_word.htm) of a word to change its meaning.

An affix added to the front of a word is known as a [prefix](http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/prefix.htm). One added to the back is known as a [suffix](http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/suffix.htm). Sometimes, prefixes are hyphenated.

[Read more about hyphens in prefixes](http://www.grammar-monster.com/lessons/hyphens_in_prefixes.htm). \*\* (see below)

Examples of Affixes

Here are some examples of affixes:

Incapable (The affix is the prefix in.)

ex-President (The affix is the prefix ex-.)

laughing (The affix is the suffix ing.)

Most Common Prefixes. The four most common prefixes are dis-, in-, re-, and un-. These account for over 95% of prefixed words

Most Common Suffixes. The four most common suffixes are -ed, -ing, -ly, and -es. These account for over 95% of suffixed words.

Here is a list of common **prefixes** with some examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Prefix** | **Meaning** | **Example** |
| a-, an- | Without | amoral, atypical |
| ante- | Before | antecedent, antenatal |
| anti- | Against | anti-establishment |
| auto- | Self | autopilot |
| circum- | Around | Circumvent |
| co- | With | co-conspirator, co-pilot |
| com-, con- | With | companion, contact |
| contra- | Against | Contradiction |
| de- | Off | delist, devalue |
| dis- | Not | Disappear |
| en- | put into | enclose, envelop |
| ex- | out of, former | extract, ex-governor |
| extra- | beyond, more than | Extracurricular |
| hetero- | Different | Heterosexual |
| homo- | Same | homonym, homophone |
| hyper- | over, more | Hyperactive |
| il-, im-, in-, ir- | not, without | illegal, impractical, inconsiderate, irresponsible |
| in- | Into | Insert |
| inter- | Between | internet, intersection, |
| intra- | Inside | intranet, intravenous |
| macro- | Large | Macronutrients |
| micro- | Small | Microscope |
| mono- | One | Monocle |
| non- | not, without | nonentity, nonstarter, |
| omni- | all, every | omnipresent, omniscient |
| post- | After | post-mortem |
| pre-, pro- | before, forward | precede, project |
| sub- | Under | submarine, substandard |
| syn- | same time | Synchronize |
| super- | Above | supervisor, superhuman |
| trans- | Across | transmit |
| tri- | Three | tripod, triceratops |
| un- | Not | undone, unfinished, |
| uni- | One | unicorn, unilaterally |

Here is a list of common **suffixes** with some examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Suffix** | **Meaning** | **Example** |
| -able, -ible | can be done | comfortable, passable |
| -al, -ial | having the characteristics of | personal |
| -ed | past-tense verbs (weak verbs) | danced, jumped |
| -en | made of | golden, wooden |
| -er | Comparative | tidier, nicer |
| -er, -or | one who | actor, narrator, worker |
| -est | Superlative | nicest, greatest |
| -ful | full or full of | cupful, careful |
| -ic | having characteristics of | linguistic, sarcastic |
| -ing | verb form (present participle and gerund) | dancing, singing |
| -ion, -tion, -ation, ition | act or process | attraction, attrition |
| -ity, -ty | state of | humility, infinity |
| -ive, -ative, itive | adjective form of a noun | expensive, plaintive |
| -less | Without | topless, fearless |
| -ly | adverb ending | nicely, quickly |
| -ment | action or process | enjoyment, entrenchment |
| -ness | state of, condition of | eagerness, kindness |
| -ous, -eous, -ious | possessing the qualities of | erroneous, joyous |
| -s, -es | Plural | tables, foxes |
| -y | characterized by | fatty, happy, jumpy |

A prefix is a half word (e.g., anti-, ex-, post-, pre-) placed before a word to modify its meaning. Most prefixed words can be written with or without a hyphen after the prefix.  
  
As a guideline, avoid the hyphen if you can, but if the unhyphenated version is a spelling mistake (let your spellchecker do its job) or looks too unwieldy for you, use a hyphen.  
  
That said, you should always use a hyphen with ex- and self-, and you should never allow ambiguity to creep in (e.g., you must write re-press the shirt not repress the shirt). There are more-detailed guidelines below.

**When do you need a Hyphen with a Prefix?**

There is often confusion over whether a hyphen should be used with a prefix. In other words, should you write re-consider or reconsider, or anti-aircraft or antiaircraft?  
  
Unfortunately, there is no simple rule governing this, but there are some guidelines.

**Guiding Principles for Hyphens with Prefixes**

If it's not a spelling mistake to avoid the hyphen and you can bear how the words looks without it, then avoid the hyphen.  
  
Often, it's your choice whether to use a hyphen. Lots of prefixed words can be written with or without a hyphen. The underlying guideline is:

Try to avoid a hyphen with a prefix. However, if you feel the word looks too unwieldy without a hyphen or if your spellchecker highlights it as wrong, then add a hyphen.

**Examples:**

Antiaircraft

(Antiaircraft is not wrong, but it looks a little unwieldy. If you feel the same way, go for anti-aircraft.)

The following words are all correct with or without a hyphen. Remember though, the guiding principle is avoid the hyphen if you can.

Proactive

Prehistoric

Ultraviolet

**Use a Hyphen with a Proper Noun**

If your prefix sits before a [proper noun](http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/proper_nouns.htm), you should use a hyphen. Examples:

non-British

pro-Nazi

**Do Not Allow the Same Vowel to Double Up**

If the prefix ends in the same vowel that the root words starts with, separate them with a hyphen. Examples:

Semi-industrious re-enter ultra-argumentative

However, particularly when the vowel is an o, if you can bear how the word looks without a hyphen and your spellchecker lets it through, then omit the hyphen.

Coordinates cooperate co-operation co-ordination

Coowner http://www.grammar-monster.com/images/bulx.gif

(Your spellchecker (or dictionary) will not let you have coowner.)

**You Can Let Different Vowels Double Up**

When a prefix ends in a vowel and the root word starts with a different vowel, it is usual to omit the hyphen. Examples:

Proactive reactivate semiautonomous

(However, if your spellchecker doesn't like it or you cannot bear how it looks, go for a hyphen. For many, semiautonomous looks too unwieldy.)

**Use a Hyphen with Ex and Self**

The prefixes ex and self are usually followed by a hyphen. Examples:

ex-husband self-aware

**Eliminate Ambiguity Every Time**

If the unhyphenated version could be confused with a different word, add the hyphen. (This is most common with the prefix re. Examples:

re-cover http://www.grammar-monster.com/images/bultick.gif / recover http://www.grammar-monster.com/images/bulx.gif

(If there were no hyphen in re-cover, it could be confused with recover, meaning return to a normal state.)

re-press http://www.grammar-monster.com/images/bultick.gif / repress http://www.grammar-monster.com/images/bulx.gif

(If there were no hyphen in re-press, it could be confused with repress, meaning subdue with force.)

**Enjoy the Leniency**

Most prefixed words exist in both forms. As you might have noticed in the guidelines above, it is often down to how the writer feels about the word.

The attack would take place at night as the anti-government troops did not possess infrared goggles. http://www.grammar-monster.com/images/bultick.gif

(In this example, the writer did not like the look of antigovernment or infra-red, so chose the versions above. That's fine. Readability – as the writer sees it – trumps all guidelines.)