

Word Study

Common Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefixes A prefix is a letter or group of letters added to the beginning of a root to change its meaning.

Prefix	Definition	Prefix	Definition
acro-	high, topmost, at the extremity	mis-	bad, badly, wrongly
ambi-, amph-	both, around, about	mono-	one, alone, single
anti-	against, opposed to	multi-	many
auto-	self	neo-	new, young, recent, latest
bi-	two, twice, on two sides	non-	not, lacking, without
by-	near, side, secondary or incidental	ob-, oc-, of-	before, against, over
co-, col-, com-, con-, cor-	together with, joint, to the same degree	oct-, octa-, octo-	eight
de-	from, down, reverse the action	over-	upper, outer, superior, passing above, too much
deca-	ten	paleo-	ancient, early
deci-	one-tenth	pan-	all, every, universal
di-	two, double, twice; not, away from (see dis-)	para-	at the side of, in a secondary position
dia-	through, throughout, apart, between	penta-	five
dis-	not, opposite of, lack of, away from	per-	through, throughout, completely, very thoroughly
e-	out, beyond, away from, without	peri-	around, about, enclosing, near
em-, en-	put into or on; cover, make, subject to	poly-	many, much, excessive
endo-	within	post-	after, later
epi-	upon, over, on the outside	pre-	before, in front of, superior to
equa-, equi-	equal, equally	pro-	for, forward
ex- (w/ hyphen)	former	proto-	first
ex-	out of, outside, from	pseudo-	false, deceptive
fore-	before, ahead of, front	quad-	four
hemi-	half	quint-	five
hetero-	different	re-	again, back, reverse
hex-, hexa-	six	self-	by oneself, within, automatic
homo-	same, equal to, like	sest-, sex-	six
il-, im-, in-, ir-	not, lack of	sub-	under, beneath, to a lesser degree, bordering
in-, in-	in, into, within	super-, surpr-	above, beyond, over
inter-	between	syl-, sym-, syn-, sys-	with, together
intra-	within, inside	tele-	at, over, or from a distance, far away
macro-, macr-	large, long	tetra-	four
mal-	bad, badly, wrong, ill	trans-	across, beyond, over
mega-	very large, great, powerful	tri-	three
meta-	change in, after, going beyond or higher	un-	not, the opposite of
micro-	very small, minute	under-	beneath, below normal, too little
mid-	middle	uni-	one, only

Common Prefixes and Suffixes (continued)

Suffixes A suffix is a letter or group of letters added to the end of a root to form a new word. Adding a suffix often requires a spelling change to the root word.

Suffix	Definition	Suffix	Definition
-able, -ible	capable of, likely to, worthy of	-ish	having the characteristics of, native to
-al, -ial	of, related to, having the characteristics of	-ism	act of, state of, school of, system, manner
-ance, -ancy	state of, quality of, act of, process of	-ist	a person who, that which
-ant, -ent	someone who, agent of, performing the task of	-itis	disease, inflammation of, preoccupation with
-ar, -er, -or	someone who, something that, native of	-ity, -ty	state of, quality of being, instance of
-ary, -ory	relating to, having the qualities of, place where	-ive, -ative, -itive	causing, tending to do something
-asis, -esis, -osis	action, condition, process	-ize	make, cause to become, subject to, engage in
-ate	cause, make, provide or treat with	-less	without, not able to be
-cian, -ian	a person who practices or performs a skill	-like	similar to, resembling
-cide	kill, killing, killer	-ly	in the manner of, in the order of
-cy	action, function, rank, condition of being	-mania	exaggerated enthusiasm, uncontrollable desire
-dom	quality of, state of, realm of, power of	-ment	action of, process of, result of, degree of being
-ee	one who is receiving or performing an action	-meter	measure; device for measuring
-en	made of, added to	-ness	state of, quality of
-ence, -ency	state of, quality	-ology, -log	study of, science of, branch of learning
-er	more than (compares two things); one that is or engages in some activity or profession	-or	one that does a specific thing
-ery	place to or for, practice of, product of, condition of	-ous, -eous,	full of, having the qualities of
-ese	native of, language of	-ious	fear, hatred
-est	most (compares three or more things)	-phobia	an instrument for seeing
-ful	full of, having the quality of, able to cause	-ship	condition of, state of, quality of being, skill of
-fy	make	-tude	state of, condition of, instance of being
-hood	place, time, period, state of, quality of, group of	-ure	state of being, process of, condition of, result of
-ic	having the characteristics of, causing	-ward	in the direction of
-ice	condition of, state of	-y	characterized by, inclined to, tending to
-ile	related to, capable of, suitable for	-ion, -sion, -tion,	act of, state of, process of
		-ation	