

6 Prefixes

Activity A

What does that prefix mean?

The meanings and functions of words in English can be changed by attaching *affixes*, and you can often work out the meanings of words by looking at their beginnings and endings. *Suffixes*, which are affixes at the ends of words, often have a grammatical function such as changing a noun into an adjective. *Prefixes*, which are affixes at the beginning of words, usually change the meaning. Look at the following prefixes and example words. Think about how the prefix changes the root word in each case and find the meaning of the prefix in the list on the right. Check your answers in the dictionary.

Find the meaning from the list on the right for each prefix:

1 hyper-	hypermarket, hyperactive, hypersensitive	a before
2 anti-	anti-smoking, anti-war, anti-virus	b together with
3 semi-	semicircle, semi-detached, semi-final	c bad or wrong; badly or wrongly
4 sub-	subculture, subset, subsection	d not enough
5 under-	underestimated, underpaid, undercooked	e a smaller part of something
6 pre-	pre-paid, preheat, prehistoric	f half; partly
7 mis-	mishear, misunderstand, misbehave,	g greater, better, further, longer,
8 co-	co-worker, cooperate, coexist	h not; the opposite of
9 il-	illegal, illegible, illogical	i opposed to; against
10 out-	outrank, outlive, outnumber	j more than normal; too much

Activity B

Test your vocabulary. Can you think of words that combine with these prefixes to make other words? Complete the word forks.

ex-	[_____
]	_____

trans-	[_____
]	_____

over-	[_____
]	_____

inter-	[_____
]	_____

Does each prefix work in the same way in all of the words you've chosen to create? (Prefixes can have more than one meaning.) Check your words in the dictionary, both for spelling and meaning.