

Prefixes

A **prefix** is placed at the beginning of a word to modify or change its meaning. This is a list of the most common prefixes in English, together with their basic meaning and some examples. You can find more detail or precision for each prefix in any good dictionary. The origins of words are extremely complicated. You should use this list as a guide only, to help you understand possible meanings. But be very careful, because often what appears to be a prefix is not a prefix at all. Note also that this list does not include elements like "auto-" or "bio-", because these are "combining forms", not prefixes.

Prefix		Meaning	Examples
a-	<i>also</i> an-	not, without	atheist, anaemic
a-		to, towards	aside, aback
		in the process of, in a particular state	a-hunting, aglow
a-		of	anew
		completely	abashed
ab-	<i>also</i> abs-	away, from	abdicate, abstract
ad-	<i>also</i> a-, ac-, af-, ag- al-, an-, ap-, at- as-, at-	movement to, change into, addition or increase	advance, adulterate, adjunct, ascend, affiliate, affirm, aggravate, alleviate, annotate, apprehend, arrive, assemble, attend
ante-		before, preceding	antecedent, ante-room
anti-	<i>also</i> ant-	opposing, against, the opposite	anti-aircraft, antibiotic, anticlimax, Antarctic
be-		all over, all around	bespatter, beset
		completely	bewitch, bemuse
		having, covered with	bejewelled
		affect with (added to nouns)	befog
		cause to be (added to adjectives)	becalm

From: "Prefixes." *English Club*. 2012. Web. 2 July 2012.
<http://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/prefixes.htm>.

com-	<i>also</i> co-, col-, con-, cor-	with, jointly, completely	combat, codriver, collude, confide, corrode
contra-		against, opposite	contraceptive
counter-		opposition, opposite direction	counter-attack, counteract
de-		down, away	descend, despair, depend, deduct
		completely	denude, denigrate
		removal, reversal	de-ice, decamp
dia-	<i>also</i> di-	through, across	diagonal
dis-	<i>also</i> di-	negation, removal, expulsion	disadvantage, dismount, disbud, disbar
en-	<i>also</i> em-	put into or on	engulf, enmesh
		bring into the condition of	enlighten, embitter
		intensification	entangle, enrage
ex-	<i>also</i> e-, ef-	out	exit, exclude, expand
		upward	exalt, extol
		completely	excruciate, exasperate
		previous	ex-wife
extra-		outside, beyond	extracurricular
hemi-		half	hemisphere
hyper-		beyond, more than, more than normal	hypersonic, hyperactive
hypo-		under	hypodermic, hypothermia
in-	<i>also</i> il-, im-	not, without	infertile, inappropriate, impossible
	<i>also</i> il-, im-, ir-	in, into, towards, inside	influence, influx, imbibe
infra-		below	infrared, infrastructure

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inter-		between, among	interact, interchange
intra-		inside, within	intramural, intravenous
non-		absence, negation	non-smoker, non-alcoholic
ob-	<i>also</i> oc-, of-, op-	blocking, against, concealing	obstruct, occult, offend, oppose
out-		surpassing, exceeding	outperform
		external, away from	outbuilding, outboard
over-		excessively, completely	overconfident, overburdened, overjoyed
		upper, outer, over, above	overcoat, overcast
peri-		round, about	perimeter
post-		after in time or order	postpone
pre-		before in time, place, order or importance	pre-adolescent, prelude, precondition
pro-		favouring, in support of	pro-African
		acting for	proconsul
		motion forwards or away	propulsion
		before in time, place or order	prologue
re-		again	repaint, reappraise, reawake
semi-		half, partly	semicircle, semi-conscious
sub-	<i>also</i> suc-, suf-, sug-, sup-, sur-, sus-	at a lower position	submarine, subsoil
		lower in rank	sub-lieutenant
		nearly, approximately	sub-tropical
syn-	<i>also</i> sym-	in union, acting	synchronize, symmetry

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		together	
trans-		across, beyond	transnational, transatlantic
		into a different state	translate
ultra-		beyond	ultraviolet, ultrasonic
		extreme	ultramicroscopic
un-		not	unacceptable, unreal, unhappy, unmanned
		reversal or cancellation of action or state	unplug, unmask
under-		beneath, below	underarm, undercarriage
		lower in rank	undersecretary
		not enough	underdeveloped

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Suffixes

A **suffix** is a group of letters placed at the **end** of a word to make a **new** word. A suffix can make a new word in one of two ways:

1. **inflectional** (grammatical): for example, changing singular to plural (dog > dogs), or changing present tense to past tense (walk > walked). In this case, the basic meaning of the word does not change.
2. **derivational** (the new word has a new meaning, "derived" from the original word): for example, teach > teacher or care > careful

Inflectional suffixes

Inflectional suffixes do not change the **meaning of the original word**. So in "Every day I walk to school" and "Yesterday I walked to school", the words **walk** and **walked** have the same basic meaning. In "I have one car" and "I have two cars", the basic meaning of the words **car** and **cars** is exactly the same. In these cases, the suffix is added simply for grammatical "correctness". Look at these examples:

suffix	grammatical change	example original word	example suffixed word
-s	plural	dog	dogs
-en	plural (irregular)	ox	oxen
-s	3rd person singular present	like	he likes
-ed	past tense past participle	work	he worked he has worked
-en	past participle (irregular)	eat	he has eaten
-ing	continuous/progressive	sleep	he is sleeping
-er	comparative	big	bigger
-est	superlative	big	the biggest

Derivational suffixes

With derivational suffixes, the new word has a new **meaning**, and is usually a different **part of speech**. But the new meaning is related to the old meaning - it is "derived" from the old meaning.

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We can add more than one suffix, as in this example:

derive (verb) + **tion** = derivation (noun) + **al** = derivational (adjective)

There are several hundred derivational suffixes. Here are some of the more common ones:

suffix	making	example original word	example suffixes word
-ation	nouns	explore hesitate	exploration hesitation
-sion		persuade divide	persuasion division
-er		teach	teacher
-cian		music	musician
-ess		god	goddess
-ness		sad	sadness
-al		arrive	arrival
-ary		diction	dictionary
-ment		treat	treatment
-y		jealous victor	jealousy victory
-al	adjectives	accident	accidental
-ary		imagine	imaginary
-able		tax	taxable
-ly		brother	brotherly
-y		ease	easy
-ful		sorrow forget	sorrowful forgetful
-ly	adverbs	helpful	helpfully

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-ize	verbs	terror private	terror ize privat ize
-ate		hyphen	hyphen ate

Note that the suffix **-er** can convert almost any verb into the person or thing performing the action of the verb. For example: a teacher is a person who teaches, a lover loves, a killer kills, an observer observes, a walker walks, a runner runs; a sprinkler is a thing that sprinkles, a copier copies, a shredder shreds.

Root Words

Root	Meaning	Examples
anthro	man	anthropology
aqua	water	aquatic, aquarium
arch	ruler	monarch, anarchy
astro	star	astronomy, astronaut
bene	good	beneficial, benevolent
bibl	book	bibliography
bio	life	biology, biography
cap, cep, ceive	take	capture, accept, receive
chrom	color	chromatic, monochrome
chron	time	chronology, synchronize
circum	around	circumference
clud, clus	close	include, seclusion
corp	body	corpse, corporation
cred	believe	credible, credence
cycl	round	unicycle, encyclopedia
demo	people	democracy, demographics
dict	say	dictionary, predict
dom	home	domestic, domicile
duc	lead	deduction, introduce
fact, fect	make	manufacture, effect
fer	carry	transfer, inference
flect, flex	bend	reflect, flexible

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fort	strong	fortress, effort
frac, frag	break	fragment, fracture
frat	brother	fraternity
gen	birth, race	generation, genetic
geo	earth	geography, geode
gram, graph	write	telegram, photography
gress	move	progress, aggressive
leg	law	legal, legitimate
ject	throw	eject, rejection
log	study, word	zoology, sociology
luc	light	lucid, translucent
mal	bad	malcontent, malicious
manu, mani	hand	manual, manipulate
mar	sea	maritime, submarine
mater, matri	mother	maternal
med	middle	intermediate, medium
mega	great	megaphone, megabytes
min	tiny, small	miniature, minute
mit, miss	send	transmit, mission
mort	death	mortal, mortuary
nas, nat	born	nascent, natural
neuro	nerve	neurology, neurosis
nom	name	nominate, nomenclature

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path	feeling, pain	sympathy, pathologist
pater, patri	father	patriarch, paternity
ped, pod	foot	pedicure, tripod
phil	love	philosophy, bibliophile
phon	sound	telephone, phonology
photo	light	photon, photograph
poli	city	politics, metropolitan
port	carry	transport, portable
pos	place	position, posture
psych	mind	psychiatrist, psychology
rect, reg	rule, right	rectify, regulate
scope	see	telescope, microscope
scrib, scrip	write	describe, prescription
spec	look	retrospect, inspection
struc	build	structure, construction
tact	touch	contact, tactile
tain, ten	hold	maintenance, contain
tele	distant	telegraph, telepathy
temp	time	temporal, contemporary
tend, tens	stretch	extend, tension
therm	heat	thermometer
trans	across	transcontinental, transit
vac	empty	vacuum, evacuate

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ven	come	convention, intervene
ver	true	verify, veracity
vert, vers	turn	convert, reverse
voc, vok	voice, call	vocal, invoke

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