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ENGLISH

Prefixes and Suffixes

System of Affixation in English

In English, fixing a group of letters to a word to change its meaning, number, state or form is known as the **System of Affixation**.

Base word	Affixation	Word
determined	pre + determined	predetermined
play	play + er	player
weekly	bi + weekly	biweekly
follow	follow + ing	following

There are two primary types of affixation:

- Prefix
- Suffix

Prefix

A prefix is a small group of letters which are affixed at the beginning of the word.

- **Subsidiary**
- **Nonviolence**
- **Intolerance**

They perform the following functions:

- Indicate presence or absence

amoral	without morals
injected	put into
congenital	present from birth

- Indicate position

hypodermic	under the skin
circumnavigate	to sail around
antechamber	a chamber before another
Interstellar	between stars

- Indicate qualities, size or number

thermometer	heat measuring instrument
macrocosm	big world or universe
polyglot	someone who speaks many languages

- Indicates time, frequency or order

post dated	later than the stipulated date
redo	do again
primary	first

Types of Prefixes

Negative Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Usage
un-	not	uncomfortable, unbearable, unforgivable
in-	not	incomplete, indecisive, independent
dis-	opposite of	disinterested, disproportionate, displeasure
ir-	not	irresponsive, irresponsible, irrevocable
il-	not	illogical, illegitimate, illegible
im-	not	improbable, impossible, impenetrable
non-	not	nonviolent, nonchalant, non-invasive
mis-	wrong/wrongly	misinterpret, misunderstand, miscalculation
mis-	hate	misogynist, misogynist, misanthrope
mal-	bad/ badly	malfuction, malevolent, malediction, malnutrition
anti-	against	antinational, antibacterial, antibiotics
de-	down, reduce	descend, decry, deject, demote, decline
a-	without, not	asocial, amorphous, abiotic, atrophy
dis-	apart, off, away	disband, disturb, disburse, dismiss
dys-	bad	dystopia, dysfunctional, dyslexia

Prefixes of Size

Prefix	Meaning	Usage
semi-	half	semicircle, semiconductor, semi-active, semicolon
equi-	equal	equidistant, equivalent, equisonant
micro-	small, tiny	microscope, microorganism, microcosm, micromanage
macro-	big	macroeconomics, macrocosm, macrolevel
mega-	big	megalomaniac, megapolis, megapixel
mini-	small	minimum, minicomputer, miniature
maxi	big	maximum, maximal, maxim
hemi-	half	hemisphere

Prefixes of Position or Location

Prefix	Meaning	Usage
inter-	between	interstellar, intermediate, interval, intervene
super-	over, above	superfluous, supersede, superintendent, supervisor
trans-	across	transfer, transport, transgress, transmit
ex-	out	exterior, external, extraneous, extract
in-/ im-	inside	internal, induce, imbibe, impregnate, influence
sub-, suc-, sus	under	subterranean, susceptible, submit, submarine
sur-	over	surface, surfeit, surrender, survive, surcharge
circum-	around	circumspect, circumnavigate, circumscribe, circumvent
peri-	around	perimeter, periscope, perimortem
per-	through	percolate, pervade, perfect, perforated, perceive
infra-	below	infrared, infravision, infrarealism
ab-	away	abduct, abstain, abjure, abdicate
contra-	against	contravene, contradict, contralto, contrast
de-	down	descend, decline, demote, decrease
dia-	across	diagonal, diaphanous, diachronical, diagnosis
hyper-	over	hypertrophy, hyperactivity, hyperbole, hypertension
hypo-	under	hypothermia, hypothyroid
ob-	against	obloquy, obnoxious, object, obfuscate
pro-	for	prologue, provide, protect, project, procreate
syn-, sym-	together	synthesis, syndicate, sympathy
ultra-	beyond	ultraviolet, ultramodern, ultra-royalist, ultrasonic
under-	under	underground, underachiever, underestimate
meta-	beyond	metastasis, metabolise, metamorphic, metaphysics
mid-	between	midterm, middle, midday
by-	near	bypass, bygone, by-product
epi-	upon	epidermis, epilogue, epitaph
post-	back	postern, posterior

Prefixes of time and sequence

Prefix	Meaning	Usage
pre-	before	prevent, prepare, predict, premonition, prelude
ante-	before	antediluvian, antebellum
prime-	first	primary, primordial, prima donna, primate, primeval
post-	after	posterity, posthumous, postlude, post marital
retro-	before	retrogression, retroflex, retrospect
pro-	before	progenitor, proceed, prologue, prophecy, prophylactic
re-	again	recur, recount, rethink
fore-	before	foretell, forestall, foresight
after-	after	after-effects, afterthought
chron-	time	chronology, chronicle

Prefixes of numbers and amount

Prefix	Meaning	Usage
mono-	one	monotheism, monologue, monochromatic, monarch
uni-	one	universe, unitary, union, unanimous, unity
bi-	two	bicentennial, biannual, bicycle, bigamous, bipolar
du-, di-	two	duo, dual, dicotyledon, dichromatic
tri-	three	trident, tricolour, triumvirate, trifecta, trilogy, tripod
quad-	four	quadruple, quadruplets, quadrilateral,
tetra-	four	tetrapods, tetrameter,
penta-	five	pentagram, pentacle, pentagon
quint-	five	quintuplets, quintal
hex-	six	hexagon, hexadecimal, hexameter
sex-	six	sextuplets, sextet
sept-	seven	septuagenarian, septuplets
hept-	seven	heptagonal, heptathlon
octa-	eight	octagon, October, octopus, octuplets
nov-	nine	novena, November
dec-	ten	decade, decimal, decathlon
hendeca-	eleven	hendecacolic, hendecagonal
dodeca-	twelve	dodecahedron, dodecaphony
triskaideka-	thirteen	triskaidekaphobia
cent-	hundred	century, century, centipede
hector-	thousand	hector, hectogram
kilo-	thousand	kilogram
mega-	million	megaton, megahertz
giga-	billion	gigabyte
multi-	many	multimillionaire, multipurpose
poly-	many	polynomial, polygon, polymath