

42. Prefixes—Alphabetical Order

Prefixes—small but meaningful letter groups added before a base word or root—change the meaning of a word. Knowing the meaning of these prefixes, together with the meaning of common base words and Greek and Latin roots, will give students the tools for unlocking the meanings of hundreds of words. In addition to teaching these prefixes directly, it is also a good idea to explain prefixes and their meanings when students encounter them in new vocabulary words throughout the year.

ALPHABETICAL ORDER

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES			
a-	on	aboard, afire, afoot, ashore, atop	dis-	opposite	disagree, disarm, discontinue, disgust, dishonest
a-	not	apathy, atheist, atrophy, atypical	du-	two	dual, duet, duo, duplex, duplicate
ab-	from	abnormal, abhor, abolish, abstain, abstract	dys-	bad	dysentery, dysfunction, dyspepsia, dysphasia
ac-	to	accent, accept, access, acquire	e-	out, away	effect, effort, eject, emigrate, erupt
ad-	to	adapt, add, addict, adhere, admit	em-	in	embalm, embed, embezzle, embrace, embroider
af-	to	affair, affect, affiliate, affirm, afflict	en-	in	enchant, enclose, encounter, encourage, envelop
after-	after	afterglow, afternoon, aftertaste, afterward	ennea-	nine	enneagon, enneahedron, ennead
ag-	to	agglomeration, aggrandize, aggravate, aggregate, aggressive	enter-	among, between	enterprise, entertain
ambi-	both, around	ambidextrous, ambience, ambiguous, ambivalent	epi-	after	epilogue, epitaph
amphi-	both, around	amphibian, amphitheater, amphora	epi-	upon	epicenter, epidemic, epidermis, epithet
an-	not	anemia, anarchy, anesthesia, anorexia, anonymous	equi-	equal	equal, equilibrium, equidistant, equator, equation
an-	to	annex, annihilate, annotate, announce, annul	eu-	good	Eucharist, eugenic, euphoria, eulogy
ante-	before	antebellum, antecedent, antedate, antediluvian, anterior	ex-	out	excel, exalt, exceed, exhaust, exit
anti-	against	antiwar, antisocial, antislavery	exa-	quintillion	exameter
as-	to	ascend, ascertain, aspect, aspire, assert	extra-	outside	extracurricular, extraordinary, extravagant
atto-	quintillionth	attosecond	femto-	quadrillionth	femtosecond
auto-	self	automobile, automatic, autograph, autobiography	for-	not	forbid, forget, forgo, forswear
be-	make	becalm, befriend, beguile, bewitch	giga-	billion	gigameter, gigawatt, gigahertz
bene-	good	benediction, benefactor, beneficial, benefit, benign	hect-	hundred	hectogram, hectare, hectometer
bi-, bin-	two	bicycle, binocular, biceps, bifocal	hemi-	half	hemisphere, hemicycle
by-	near, aside	bypass, byplay, bystander, byway	hept-	seven	heptagon, heptameter
cent-	hundred	centigrade, century, cent, centimeter	hetero-	different	heterodox, heteronym, heterosexual
circu-	around	circulate, circumference, circumspect, circumstance, circus	hex-	six	hexagon, hexameter, hexagram
co-	together	co-author, cognate, coincide, cooperate, coordinate	homo-	same	homogeneous, homogenize, homograph, homophone, homosexual
col-	with	collaborate, collateral, colleague, collect	hyper-	excessive	hyperactive, hyperbole, hypercritical, hypertension, hyperglycemia
com-	with	combat, combine, comfort, commune, complain	hypo-	under, too little	hypochondria, hypodermis, hypothesis
con-	with	concede, concur, concert, confident, connect	il-	not	illegal, illegible, illegitimate, illiterate, illogical
counter-	opposite	counteract, countermand, counteroffensive, counterproposal	im-	into	immediate, immerse, immigrate, implant, import
contra	against	contraband, contraception, contradict, contrary, contraindicated	im-	not	imbalance, immaculate, immature, immobilize, impossible
de-	from, down	debate, decay, deceive, decide, deform	in-	into	incision, include, induce, inhale, infect
de-	opposite	deactivate, deform, degrade, deplete, descend	in-	not	inaccurate, inactive, inadvertent, incognito, indecisive
dec-	ten	decade, decathlon, December, decagram	inter-	among, between	interrupt, intermission, international, interpret, intervene
deci-	ten	decimal, decimeter, decimate, decile	intra-	within	intramural, intrastate, intravenous
demi-	half	demi-god, demitasse	intro-	inside	introduce, introspect, introject, introvert
di-	two	digraph, dioxide, diploma, diphthong	ir-	not	irregular, irreconcilable, irredeemable, irregular, irresponsible
dia-	through, across	diagnose, diagonal, dialogue, diameter	is-	equal	isometric, isomorph, isosceles, isotope
			kilo-	thousand	kilometer, kilogram, kilowatt, kiloliter
			macro-	large, long	macrocosm, macron, microscope, macrobiotic
			magni-	great	magnify, magnitude, magnificent, magnanimous, magnum
			mal-	bad	maladjusted, malaise, malevolent, malfunction, malice
			mega-	large	megacycle, megalith, megalomania, megaphone, megaton

mega-	million	megawatt, megaton, megabyte, megabuck	quadr-	four	quadrangle, quadrant, quart, quarter
meta-	change	metabolism, metamorphosis, metaphor, metastasis	quint-	five	quintuplet, quintessential, quintet
micro-	small, short	microphone, microscope, microbe, microfilm	re-	again	redo, rewrite, reappear, repaint, relive
micro-	millionth	microsecond	re-	back	recall, recede, reflect, repay, retract
mid-	middle	midnight, midshipman, midsummer, midway, midyear	retro-	back	retroactive, retrogress, retrospect
milli-	thousand	millibar, milligram, millimeter, million	self-	self	self-denial, self-respect, selfish, self-support, self-taught
mis-	bad	misanthrope, misbehave, miscarriage, misconduct, misfortune	semi-	half	semiannual, semicircle, semiconscious
mon-, mono-	one	monk, monarch, monocular, monogamy, monorail	sept-	seven	September, septuagenarian
multi-	many, much	multicolored, multifarious, multimillionaire, multiply, multitude	sex-	six	sextet, sextant, sextuple
myria-	ten thousand	myriad, myriameter	sub-	under	subcontract, subject, submerge, subordinate, subterranean
nano-	billionth	nanosecond, nanowatt, nanometer	super-	over	superimpose, superscript, supersede, supervisor
ne-	not	nefarious, never	super-	more than	superfine, superhuman, supernatural, superpower, supernova
neg-	not	negative, neglect, negotiate	syl-	together	syllable, syllogism
neo-	new	neoclassic, neologism, neon, neonatal, neophyte	sym-	together	symbiosis, symbol, symmetry, sympathy, symphony
non-	not	nonchalant, nonconformist, nondescript, nonpartisan, nonsense	syn-	together	synchronize, syndrome, synergy, synonym, synthesis
non-	nine	nonagenarian	tele-	distant	telephone, telescope, telegram, television
nove-	nine	November, novena	tera-	trillion	terameter, teracycle
oct-	eight	October, octet, octane, octopus	tetra-	four	tetrahedron, tetrameter
off-	from	offset, offshoot, offshore, offspring, offstage	trans-	across	transatlantic, transcend, transcribe, transfer, translate
olig-	few	oligarchy, oligopoly, oligophagous	tri-	three	triangle, tricycle, trillion, triplet
omni-	all	omnibus, omnificent, omnipotent, omnivorous	ultra-	beyond	ultraconservative, ultramodern, ultranationalism
on-	on	oncoming, ongoing, onrush, onshore, onward	un-	not	unhappy, unable, uncomfortable, uncertain, unbeaten
out-	surpassing	outbid, outclass, outdo, outlive, outnumber	under-	below	underneath, undercover, underground, underpass
over-	too much	overactive, overbearing, overblown, overdo, overprice	under-	less than	underage, underdone, underripe, undervalue, underweight
pan-	all	panacea, pandemonium, Pandora, panorama, panegyric	uni-	one	unicorn, uniform, unify, universe
para-	beside	paradigm, paragraph, parallel, paraphrase	with-	back, away	withdraw, withhold, within, without, withstand
para-	almost	paralegal, paramedic			
pen(e)-	almost	peninsula, penultimate, peneplain, penumbra			
pent-	five	pentagon, pentathlon, Pentecost			
per-	throughout	perceive, percolate, perfect, perform, pervade			
peri-	all around	perimeter, periscope, peripatetic, periphery			
peta-	quadrillion	petameter			
pico-	trillionth	picosecond, picometer			
poly-	many	polyandry, polyester, polygamy, polyglot, polysyllabic			
post-	after	postdate, postdoctoral, posterior, postpone, postscript			
pre-	before	preamble, precaution, prefix, prejudice			
pro-	before	prognosis, progeny, program, prologue, prophet			
pro-	forward	proceed, produce, proficient, progress, project			
pro-	favor	prowar, pro-American, pro-education			
prot-	first	protagonist, protein, proton, prototype			
pseudo-	false	pseudoclassic, pseudonym, pseudopod			

43. Suffixes

Suffixes are letter groups that are added to the end of a base word or root. Suffixes frequently signify the part of speech and sometimes add meaning. In this list, suffixes are grouped by part of speech.

Some suffixes are best understood, not as having a particular meaning but as expressing grammar or syntax. These suffixes enable you to express an idea in many different ways by using the variation of the key word that best fits the sentence structure.

NOUN SUFFIXES

SUFFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES	SUFFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
-a	plural	data, criteria, memoranda	-hood	state or quality of	childhood, adulthood, falsehood
-ade	action or process	blockage, escapade, parade, promenade	-i	plural	alumni, foci
-ade	product or thing	lemonade, marmalade	-ics	scientific or social system	physics, economics, politics, statistics
-ae	plural (feminine)	alumnae, formulae, larvae, algae	-ier, -yer	one who	cashier, financier, gondolier, lawyer
-age	action or process	marriage, voyage, pilgrimage	-ide	chemical compound	fluoride, bromide, peroxide
-ance	state or quality of	repentance, annoyance, resistance	-ina	female	czarina, Wilhelmina, ballerina
-ancy	state or quality of	buoyancy, truancy, vacancy, vagrancy	-ine	chemical or basic substance	iodine, chlorine, caffeine, quinine
-ant	one who	servant, immigrant, assistant, merchant	-ine	female	heroine, Josephine, Pauline
-ar	one who	beggar, liar	-ing	material	bedding, roofing, frosting, stuffing
-ard	one who	drunkard, steward, coward, wizard	-ion	state or quality of	champion, companion, ambition, suspicion
-arian	one who	librarian, humanitarian, libertarian	-ism	state or quality of	baptism, heroism, racism, despotism
-arium	place for	aquarium, planetarium, solarium	-ism	doctrine of	capitalism, socialism, hedonism
-ary	place for	library, mortuary, sanctuary, infirmary	-ist	one who practices	biologist, capitalist, communist
-ation	state or quality of	desperation, starvation, inspiration	-ite	mineral or rock	granite, anthracite, bauxite
-ation	action or process	emancipation, narration, computation	-itis	inflammation of	laryngitis, arthritis, bronchitis
-cle	small	corpuscle, particle, icicle, cubicle	-ity	state or quality of	necessity, felicity, civility, parity
-cule	small	minuscule, molecule	-ization	state or quality of	civilization, standardization, organization
-cy	state or quality of	accuracy, bankruptcy, ecstasy, conspiracy	-kin	small	lambkin, napkin, manikin, Munchkin
-cy	action or process	truancy, diplomacy, vagrancy, piracy	-let	small	owlet, rivulet, starlet, leaflet, islet
-dom	state or quality of	freedom, boredom, martyrdom, wisdom	-ling	small	duckling, yearling, suckling, fledgling
-ectomy	surgical removal of	tonsillectomy, appendectomy, mastectomy	-man	one who works with	cameraman, mailman, doorman
-ee	object of action	payee, lessee, employee	-ment	action or process	embezzlement, development, government
-ence	state or quality of	violence, absence, reticence	-ment	state or quality of	amusement, predicament, amazement
-ency	state or quality of	frequency, clemency, expediency, consistency	-ment	product or thing	instrument, ornament, fragment
-enne	female	commedienne, equestrienne, tragedienne	-mony	product or thing	testimony, matrimony, ceremony, alimony
-ent	one who	superintendent, resident, regent	-ness	state or quality of	happiness, kindness, goodness, darkness
-er	one who	teacher, painter, seller, shipper	-ol	alcohols	methanol, ethanol, glycol
-er	action or process	murder, thunder, plunder, waiver	-ology	study or science of	biology, psychology
-ery, -ry	trade or occupation	surgery, archery, sorcery, dentistry	-or	one who	actor, doctor, donor, auditor
-ery	establishment	bakery, grocery, fishery, nunnery	-or	state or quality of	error, stupor, candor, fervor, pallor
-ery, -ry	goods or products	pottery, jewelry, cutlery	-orium	place for	auditorium, emporium
-ery, -ry	state or quality of	bravery, savagery, forgery, butchery	-ory	place for	laboratory, conservatory, purgatory
-ess	one who (female)	waitress, actress, countess, hostess	-ose	sugars	glucose, sucrose, fructose, dextrose
-et	small	midget, sonnet, bassinet, cygnet	-phobia	fear of	claustrophobia, acrophobia (see List 40, -phobia Word Family)
-ette	small (female)	dinette, cigarette, majorette	-s, -es	plural	pens, books, boxes, parentheses
-eur	one who	chauffeur, connoisseur, masseur	-ship	skill or art of	penmanship, showmanship, horsemanship
-eur	state or quality of	hauteur, grandeur	-ship	state or quality of	friendship, hardship, citizenship
			-sion	state or quality of	tension, compulsion
			-th	state or quality of	strength, warmth, filth, depth, length
			-tion	state or quality of	attention, caution, fascination
			-trix	female	aviatrix, executrix
			-tude	state or quality of	gratitude, fortitude, beatitude
			-ty	state or quality of	loyalty, honesty, amnesty, unity
			-ure	action or process	censure, failure, enclosure, exposure
			-wright	one who works	playwright, shipwright, wheelwright

ADJECTIVE SUFFIXES

-acious	inclined to	loquacious, mendacious, audacious, fallacious
-al	relating to	natural, royal, maternal, suicidal
-an	relating to	urban, American, Alaskan, veteran
-ant	inclined to	vigilant, pleasant, defiant, buoyant
-ary	relating to	honorary, military, literary, ordinary
-ate	state or quality of	fortunate, desperate, passionate
-ative	inclined to	demonstrative, pejorative, talkative
-ble	inclined to	gullible, perishable, voluble, durable
-en	relating to	golden, ashen, wooden, earthen
-ent	inclined to	competent, different, excellent
-er	more (comparative)	fatter, smaller, crazier, smarter
-ern	direction	eastern, western, northern, postern
-ese	state or quality of	Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese, Siamese
-esque	relating to	statuesque, picturesque, Romanesque
-est	most (comparative)	fattest, smallest, smartest, fastest
-etic	relating to	alphabetic, dietetic, frenetic
-ful	full of	thoughtful, joyful, careful, fearful
-ial	relating to	filial, commercial, remedial
-ian	relating to	barbarian, physician, Christian
-ic	relating to	comic, historic, poetic, public
-ical	relating to	comical, rhetorical, economical
-ide	state or quality of	candid, sordid, lucid, splendid, rigid
-ile	state or quality of	virile, agile, volatile, docile, fragile
-ine	relating to	feminine, bovine, feline, marine
-ious	state or quality of	gracious, ambitious, religious
-ish	relating to	childish, whitish, fiftyish, Scottish
-ive	inclined to	active, passive, negative, affirmative
-less	without	thoughtless, tireless, ageless, careless
-like	resembling	childlike, homelike, lifelike, boylike
-ly	resembling	fatherly, motherly, scholarly
-ly	every	daily, weekly, monthly, yearly
-most	most	utmost, westernmost, innermost
-oid	resembling	humanoid, asteroid, paranoid, planetoid
-ose	full of	verbose, morose, bellicose, comatose
-ous	full of	joyous, virtuous, nervous, wondrous
-some	inclined to	meddlesome, awesome, tiresome
-th, -eth	numbers	fifth, twelfth, twentieth, fiftieth
-ulent	full of	turbulent, corpulent, fraudulent
-ular	relating to	granular, cellular, circular, popular
-und	state or quality of	rotund, fecund, moribund, jocund
-uous	state or quality of	contemptuous, tempestuous, sensuous
-ward	direction	forward, backward, eastward, upward
-y	state or quality of	fruity, sunny, rainy, funny, gooe

ADVERB SUFFIXES

-ly	forms adverb from adjective	slowly, beautifully, happily, largely
-ways	manner	sideways, always, longways, crossways
-wise	manner, direction	clockwise, lengthwise
-wise	reference	schoolwise, marketwise, timewise

VERB SUFFIXES

SUFFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
-ade	action or process	blockade, promenade, parade
-age	action or process	ravage, pillage
-ate	to make	activate, fascinate, annihilate, liberate
-ble	repeated action	stumble, squabble, mumble, tumble, fumble
-ed, -d	past tense	talked, walked, baked, raised
-en	past completed action	taken, eaten, proven, stolen
-en	to make	strengthen, fasten, lengthen, frighten, weaken
-er	action or process	discover, murder, conquer, deliver
-fy	to make	satisfy, terrify, falsify, beautify
-ing	continuous action	singing, talking, jumping, eating
-ish	action or process	finish, flourish, nourish, punish
-ize	to make	standardize, computerize, popularize
-ure	action or process	censure, procure, endure, inure