

Prefixes and suffixes (Free PDF included)

Prefixes and suffixes in English: what is it?

These are letters that attach to a basic word to transform it into a new word (it can be a noun, an adjective, a verb or an adverb). Prefixes go in front, and suffixes go behind that word.

The same word can have one or more translations depending on the prefix or suffix that is added to it, and there are many of them!

⚠ Prefixes and suffixes each have a meaning, for example:

- les préfixes dis-, il-, im-, ir- ont une valeur négatives, d'opposé: [appear](#) → [disappear](#)
- le préfixe un- signifie l'inverse: [friendly](#) → [unfriendly](#)
- le préfixe *mis-* signifie 'de manière fausse': [understand](#) → [misunderstand](#)
- le suffixe -ity a une valeur d'exagération: [brutal](#) → [brutality](#)
- le suffixe -wards implique la direction: [back](#) → [backwards](#)

and so on....

The prefixes

Here are the main English prefixes in a table.

Prefixes	Example
co-	co-worker, co-pilot, co-operation
de-	devalue, defrost, derail, demotivate
dis-	disagree, disappear, disintegrate, disapprove
em-, en-	embrace, encode, embed, enclose, engulf
ex-	ex-president, ex-boyfriend, exterminate, ex-wife
extra-	extracurricular, extraordinary, extra-terrestrial
fore-	forecast, forehead, foresee, foreword, foremost
il-	illegal
im-	import, impossible, impolite
in-	inside, insert, indefinite
inter-, intra-	interact, intermediate, intergalactic, intranet
ir-	irresponsible
micro-	microscope, microbiology, microfilm, microwave

mid-	middle, midway, midsummer
mis-	misbehave, mistake, misunderstand, misread
mono-	monotone, monobrow, monolithic
out-	outpatient, outlive sb
over-	overstate, overrated
post-	post-mortem, postpone, post-natal, post-war
pre-	prepaid, preschool
re-	return, rediscover, refresh, reunite
sub-	submerge, submarine, sub-category, subtitle
super-	superfood, superstar, supernatural, supermarket
trans-	transport, transnational, transatlantic, transparent
tri-	triangle, tripod, tricycle
un-	unfinished, unfriendly, undone, unknown, unable, unhappy
under-	underground, underestimate
uni-	unicycle, universal, unilateral, unanimous
up-	uproot, upgrade
mini-	minivan, minimarket

⚠ We use *im-* instead of *in-* with words that start with the letter *m* or *p*: There are a few rules to remember:

- *impolite*
- *impossible*

⚠ Many words with a prefix or suffix have a base that does not exist by itself, for example *immediate* (the word *mediate* alone does not exist).

Suffixes

It's the same as for prefixes except that they are added at the end!

⚠ The same word can have different meanings depending on the suffixes assigned to it, and can transform it into a noun or adjective:

- *read + er = reader*
- *read + able = readable*

⚠ you can also put both a prefix and a suffix to certain words!

- *un + read + able = unreadable*

Suffix	Example
SUFFIX TO A NAME	
-acy	democracy, accuracy, lunacy
-al	remedial, denial, trial, criminal
-ance, -ence	nuisance, ambience, tolerance
-dom	freedom, boredom, kingdom
-ee	employee, trainee
-er, -or	reader, creator, interpreter, inventor, collaborator, teacher
-holic	alcoholic
-hood	brotherhood, childhood, neighbourhood
-ism	communism, scepticism, socialism
-ist	geologist, protagonist, sexist, scientist, theorist, communist
-ity, -ty	brutality, equality, cruelty
-ment	government, argument
-ness	happyness, highness, sickness
-ship	friendship, hardship, internship, relationship
-sion, -tion	position, promotion, cohesion
SUFFIX TO A VERB	
-ate	irritate, collaborate, create, complicate
-en	sharpen, strengthen, loosen, harden, soften
-ify, -fy	justify, simplify, magnify, satisfy, clarify
-ise, -ize	publicise, synthesise, hypnotise

ADJECTIVE SUFFIXES

-ible	edible, incredible, audible
-able, -ible	usable, laughable
-al	fiscal, thermal, herbal, colonial
-ese	Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese
-en	broken, golden, wooden
-esque	picturesque, burlesque, grotesque
-ful	handful, playful, hopeful, skilful, armful, useful
-ic,	classic, Islamic, poetic
-ical	psychological, hypocritical, methodical, nonsensical, musical
-ious, -ous	jealous, religious, ridiculous
-ish	spanish, british, childish
-ive	inquisitive, informative, attentive
-less	meaningless, hopeless, homeless
-ly	daily, monthly, weekly
-y	dainty, beauty, airy, jealousy
-est	biggest

ADVERB SUFFIXES

-ly	softly, slowly, happily, crazily, madly, easily
-ward, -wards	towards, afterwards, backwards, inward
-wise	otherwise, likewise, clockwise