

Affixes

An affix is a syllable put at the beginning or end of a word or root, to change its meaning. A prefix comes at the beginning of a word; a suffix comes at the end of a word. Following are lists of some of the most important prefixes and suffixes used in English.

PREFIXES

PREFIX	MEANING	SAMPLE WORDS
a -	on	ashore, aboard, afire, atop
a-, an-	not, without	atom, aseptic, anemia
ab-	from	absent, abduct, abdicate, abnormal
ad-	to	adhere, adjoin adverb, adjunct
ambi-	both, around	ambidextrous, ambiguous, ambivalent, ambient
amphi-	both, around	amphibious, amphitheater, amphipod, amphora
ante-	before	anteroom, anterior, antecedent, antechamber
anti-	against	antifreeze, antidote, antislavery, antiseptic
apo-	away from, from	apogee, apostle, apostasy, apocryphal
auto-	self	autograph, automobile, automatic, autobiography
bene-	well, good	benefit, beneficial, benediction, benefactor
bi-, bin-, bis-	two, twice	bicycle, binocular, bigamy, biceps
cent-	hundred	century, centigrade, centimeter, centennial
circu-	around, about	circus, circuit, circa, circular
circum -	around	circumnavigate, circumpolar, circumference, circumlocution
co-	with, together	co-worker, cooperator, coincident, coalition
col-	together, with	collect, collaborate, collate, colleague
com-	together, with	companion, compost, compact, compose
con-	together, with	connect, concentrate, conference, congress
contra-, contro-	against	contrast, contradict, contrary, controversy
counter-	against, in return, counterrevolution	counterclockwise, counteract, counterbalance,
de -	down	descend, degrade, depress, dejected
de-	away	deflect, deter, detract, dehydrate
dec-	ten	decade, decimal, December, decathlon
deci-	tenth	decimal, decimate, decibel, decimeter
demi-, hemi-, semi -	half, partly	demigod, hemisphere, semiliterate semiconscious
di-	two	diphthong, dioxide, digraph, dilemma
dia-	through, between	diameter, diagonal, dialogue, diagnosis
dis-	not	dishonest, distrustful, discontent, disobey
dis-	apart from	dismiss, discard, disarm, dislocate
dis-	opposite	disarrange, discomfort, disconnect, disown
du-	two	dual, duet, duplex, duplicate
dys-	bad	dyspepsia, dysfunction, dysentery, dystrophy
e-	out	eject, emit, erupt, elevate
en-	in	encircle, enfold, encase, enslave
endo-	inside, within	endoderm, endocrine, endocarp, endogamy
epi-	upon, in addition	epilogue, epidermis, epitaph, epidemic
eu-	well, good	eulogy, euphemism, euphoria, euphonious
ex-	out	exit, extract, exclude, excerpt
extra-	outside, beyond	extramural, extravagant, extraordinary, extradite
hept-, sept-	seven	heptagon, heptarchy, septennial, September
hetero-	different	heteronym, heterogeneous, heterodox, heterosexual
homo-	same	homonym, homogeneous, homogenesis, homologous
hyper-	over, beyond	hypersensitive, hyperbole, hyperacidity, hypertension

PREFIX	MEANING	SAMPLE WORDS
hypo-	under, too	hypoactive, hypochondriac, hypodermic, hypotenuse
il-	not	illegal, illogical, illegible, illiterate
im-	into	immerse, immigrate, implant, impale
im-	not	immovable, immobile, immaculate, impartial
in-	into	intake, inhale, include, incision
in-	not	inactive, incorrect, indecent, informal
infra-	below	infrared, infrahuman, infraglacial, infrastructure
inter-	between, among	international, interurban, intermission, interjection
intra-, intro-	within	intramural, introduce, introvert, introspective
ir-	not	irregular, irreverent, irrational, irrelevant
iso-	equal, same	isobar, isometric, isotope, isosceles
kilo-	1,000	kilocycle, kilogram, kilometer, kilowatt
macro-	large, long	macron, macroscopic, macrometer, macrocosm
mega-	large	megalomania, megaphone, megalith, megaton
meta-	change	metaphor, metamorphic, metabolism, metastasis
meta-	beyond	metaphysics, metapsychosis, metabiological, metachrome
micro-	small	microscopic, microphone, micrometer, microfilm
milli-	1/1,000	millimeter, milligram, millisecond, milliwatt
mis-	wrong	misspell, misdeed, misinterpret, misbehave
mono-	one	monarch, monocle, monorail, monotone
multi-	many	multitude, multimillionaire, multicolored, multilateral
neo-	new, modern	neologism, neophyte, neolithic, neonate
non-	not	nonstop, nonsense, nonentity, nonpolitical
non-, novem-	nine	nonagon, November, novena, novennial
ob-	against, opposite	objection, obstacle, obstruct, obverse
octa-, octo-	eight	octagon, octopus, October, octogenarian
olig-	few	oligarchy, oligopoly, oligochrome, oligocarpous
omni-	all	omnipotent, omnivorous, omniscient, omnibus
pan-	all	pandemonium, Pan-American, pandemic, panorama
para-	beside	paragraph, parallel, parasite, paraphrase
pen-, pene-	almost	peninsula, penannular, penultimate, peneplain
penta-	five	pentagon, Pentecost, pentameter, pentad
per-	throughout, thoroughly	pervade, perpetual, permanent, perforate
peri-	around, near, about	periscope, perimeter, periphery, perigee
poly-	many	polygon, polysyllable, polygamy, polytheism
post-	after	postscript, postpone, postdate, posterity
pre-	before	predict, presume, precede, premeditate
pro-	before	prognosis, program, progenitor, prophesy
pro-	in place of	pronoun, pronominal, proconsul, proconsulate
pro-	forward	project, propel, progress, promenade
pro-	in favour of	proslavery, pro-American, pro-liberal, proponent
pro-	in front	prologue, proboscis, program, proseminar
proto-	first	protozoa, prototype, protoplasm, protocol
pseudo-	false	pseudonym, pseudopod, pseudo-event, pseudoscience
quad-, quart-, quatr-	four	quadruplet, quadruped, quarter, quatrain
quasi-	seemingly, partly, as if	quasi-humorous, quasi-historical, quasi-judicial,
	quasi-legislative	
quin-	five	quintet, quintuplet, quintuple, quintessence
re-	back	refund, retract, repay, remit
re-	again	reread, rearrange, rediscover, reabsorb
retro-	back	retrorocket, retroactive, retrograde, retrospection
semi-	half	semicircle, semiannual, semiconscious, semifinals
sept-	seven	September, septennial, septet, septuagenarian
sesqui-	one and a half	sesquilateral, sesquicentennial, sesquioxide, sesquipedalian

PREFIX	MEANING	SAMPLE WORDS
sex-, hex-	six	sextet, sextuplet, hexagonal, hexameter
sub-	under, below	submarine, subsoil, submerge, subterranean
super-	over	supersede, supernatural, superheat, supercilious
sym-	together, with	sympathy, symphony, symmetry, symposium
syn-	together, with	synonym, synthesis, synopsis, synchronous
tetra-	four	tetragonal, tetrameter, tetrarchy, tetrachloride
trans-	across, over	transfer, transmit, transit, transcontinental
tri-	three	triangle, tricycle, trigonometry, triad
ultra-	beyond	ultraviolet, ultramodern, ultranationalism, ultrasonic
un-	not	unsafe, unsure, unreliable, unmanned
uni-	one	unit, unicycle, unify, unique
vice-	in place of	vice-president, vice-principal, vice-admiral, viceroy

SUFFIXES

SUFFIXE	MEANING	SAMPLE WORDS
-able, -ble, -ible	can be done	eatable, lovable, readable, credible
-able, -ble, -ible	inclined to	peaceable, perishable, affordable, durable
-acy, -cy	office, rank of, state of	candidacy, privacy, infancy, agency
-ade	result, product, substance made	orangeade, lemonade, limeade, marmalade
-ade	process, action	parade, blockade, escapade, promenade
-ae	Latin feminine plural	alumnae, formulae, algae, larvae
-age	place of	orphanage, parsonage, anchorage, frontage
-age	action, process	ravage, pillage, marriage, pilgrimage
-al	relating to	veteran, American, Anglican, European
-an	relating to	veteran, American, Anglican, European
-ance	state of	resistance, avoidance, importance, exuberance
-ancy	state of	vacancy, truancy, occupancy, ascendancy
-and,-end	to be done	multiplicand, addend, dividend, subtrahend
-ant	state of, condition of	defiant, radiant, vacant, buoyant
-ant, -ent	person who	immigrant, emigrant, assistant, resident
-arian	person who, place where, object which	grammarian, librarian, humanitarian, libertarian
-ary	person who, place where, object which	secretary, sanctuary, dictionary, infirmary
-ary	characterized by, relating to	literary, military, reactionary, secondary
-ate	to make, cause to be	annihilate, liberate, radiate, venerate
-ation	process, action	narration, continuation, visitation, computation
-ation	state of, quality of, result of	occupation, moderation, decoration, refrigeration
-atory	process, action place where	oratory, reformatory, laboratory, conservatory
-cule	small	minuscule, molecule, animalcule, pedicule
-dom	state of	freedom, martyrdom, wisdom, boredom
-ectomy	surgical removal	tonsillectomy, gastrectomy, appendectomy, hysterectomy
-en	to make	lengthen, shorten, weaken, strengthen
-ence	state, quality, condition of	dependence, confidence, competence, absence
-ency	quality of, state of	potency, despondency, clemency, frequency

SUFFIXE	MEANING	SAMPLE WORDS
-er	comparative degree	faster, lighter, clearer, tighter
-er, -or	person connected with	carpenter, barber, actor, orator
-ery, -ry	place where	bakery, rookery, bindery, laundry
-ese	derivation, language	Japanese, Maltese, Chinese, Nepalese
-esque	in the manner, style of, like	picturesque, burlesque, Romanesque, statuesque
-ess	feminine ending	actress, shepherdess, countess
-et, -ette	small	islet, dinette, kitchenette, statuette
-eur	agent	amateur, chauffeur, masseur, saboteur
-ful	enough to fill	capful, spoonful, mouthful, handful
-fy	make of, form into	satisfy, amplify, deify, qualify
-hood	state of, quality of, condition of	knighthood, manhood, falsehood, womanhood
-ial	characterized by, related to	connubial, industrial, commercial, remedial
-ian	characterized by, related to	Christian, physician, Parisian, barbarian
-ic	of the nature of, characterized by	angelic, iambic, volcanic, quixotic
-ic	to form nouns	magic, classic, public, rhetoric
-ical	of the nature of, characterized by	critical, fantastical, comical, political
-icle	little	canticle, particle, article, icicle
-ier, -yer	person who, place where	cashier, gondolier, chiffonier, lawyer
-ine	like, characterized by, pertaining to	canine, feline, asinine, feminine
-ine	feminine suffix	heroine, Caroline, Josephine, Clementine
-ing	present participle	sleeping, walking, writing, acting
-ing	material	roofing, bedding, siding, quilting
-ings	noun associated with the verb from	earnings, shavings, furnishings, filings
-ion	act, process	construction, rebellion, revolution, electrocution
-ion	state of	ambition, dominion, subjection, suspicion
-ious	characterized by	gracious, ambitious, infectious, dubious
-ise, -ize	subject to, make, carry on	exorcise, baptize, sterilize, civilize
-ish	like, pertaining to	Scottish, Turkish, clownish, whitish
-ism	action, process	baptism, plagiarism, despotism, heroism
-ism	state of, condition of	hypnotism, barbarism, racism, pacifism
-ism	doctrine, system	stoicism, Quakerism, Americanism, realism
-ist	person who	biologist, monopolist, botanist, socialist
-itis	inflammatory disease	appendicitis, bronchitis, arthritis, meningitis
-ity	state of	calamity, falsity, necessity, acidity
-less	without	witless, fruitless, doubtless, careless
-let	small	streamlet, ringlet, leaflet, bracelet
-like	like	homelike, lifelike, apelike, ghostlike
-ling	small	duckling, gosling, hireling, nestling
-logy	science of	anthropology, biology, zoology, psychology
-ly	characteristic of, in the manner of	fatherly, motherly, regally, timely
-ment	action, process	development, abridgment, government, embezzlement
-ment	state of	amazement, adornment, arrangement, refinement
-ness	state of, quality of, condition of	greatness, kindness, wilderness, dimness

SUFFIXE	MEANING	SAMPLE WORDS
-oid	like, resembling	adenoid, asteroid, spheroid, planetoid
-or	person who	auditor, donor, creditor, executor
-orium	place for, object used for	auditorium, natatorium, emporium, conservatorium
-ory	place where	laboratory, conservatory, consistory, purgatory
-osis	abnormal	hypnosis, psychosis, neurosis, otosis
	condition, state of	
-ous	possessing the	poisonous, riotous, joyous, polygamous
	qualities of	
-ry	collection of	jewelry, revelry, masonry, citizenry
-ship	state of	hardship, friendship, censorship, ownership
-ship	office, profession	clerkship, lordship, authorship, partnership
-ship	art, skill	stewardship, scholarship, penmanship, horsemanship
-ster	one belonging to,	mobster, gangster, huckster, youngster
	characterized by	
-ule	little, small	capsule, molecule, plumule, tubule
-wise	way, manner, respect	clockwise, counterclockwise, lengthwise, slantwise