

9

Prefixes

A Prefixes are often used to give adjectives a negative or an opposite meaning. For example, comfortable/uncomfortable, convenient/inconvenient and similar/dissimilar are opposites. Other examples are 'unjust', 'inedible', 'disloyal'. Unfortunately, there is no easy way of knowing which prefix any adjective will use to form its opposite.

TIP

When you learn a new adjective note down whether it has an opposite formed with a prefix and, if so, what it is.

- **in-** becomes **im-** before a root beginning with 'm' or 'p', e.g. immature, impatient, impartial, improbable. Similarly **in-** becomes **ir-** before a word beginning with 'r', and **il-** before a word beginning with 'l', e.g. irreplaceable, irreversible, illegal, illegible, illiterate.
- The prefix **in-** (and its variations) does not always have a negative meaning – often it gives the idea of inside or into, e.g. internal, import, insert, income.

B

The prefixes **un-** and **dis-** can also form the opposites of verbs, e.g. tie/untie, appear/disappear. These prefixes are used to reverse the action of the verb. Here are some more examples: disagree, disapprove, disbelieve, disconnect, discredit, dislike, dismount, disprove, disqualify, unbend, undo, undress, unfold, unload, unlock, unveil, unwrap, unzip.

C

Here are examples of other prefixes in English. Some of these words are used with a hyphen. Check in a dictionary if you're not sure.

prefix	meaning	examples
anti	against	anti-war antisocial antibiotic
auto	of or by oneself	autograph auto-pilot autobiography
bi	two, twice	bicycle bilateral biannual bilingual
ex	former	ex-wife ex-smoker ex-boss
ex	out of	extract exhale excommunicate
micro	small	micro-cassette microwave microscopic
mis	badly/wrongly	misunderstand mistranslate misinform
mono	one/single	monotonous monologue monogamous
multi	many	multi-national multi-purpose multi-media
over	too much	overdo overtired oversleep overeat
post	after	postwar postgraduate post-impressionist
pre	before	preconceived pre-war pre-judge
pro	in favour of	pro-government pro-revolutionary
pseudo	false	pseudo-scientific pseudo-intellectual
re	again or back	retype reread replace rewind
semi	half	semicircular semi-final semi-detached
sub	under	subway submarine subdivision
under	not enough	underworked underused undercooked

TIP

Knowing about English prefixes can help you to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Exercises

- 9.1 Write the opposites of the words underlined. Not all the words you need are on the left hand page.

Example: He's a very honest man.dishonest....

- 1 I'm sure she's discreet.
- 2 I always find him very sensitive.
- 3 It's a convincing argument.
- 4 That's a very relevant point.
- 5 She's always obedient.
- 6 He's very efficient.
- 7 I always find her responsible.
- 8 He seems grateful for our help.
- 9 I'm sure she's loyal to the firm.
- 10 He's a tolerant person.

- 9.2 Which negative adjective fits each of the following definitions?

- 1 means not having a husband or wife.
- 2 means impossible to eat.
- 3 means unable to read or write.
- 4 means not having a job.
- 5 means fair in giving judgement, not favouring one side.
- 6 means unable to be replaced.

- 9.3 Use the word in brackets to complete the sentences. Add the necessary prefix and put the word in the correct form.

Example: The runner was disqualified after a blood test. (QUALIFY)

- 1 Children (and adults) love parcels at Christmas time. (WRAP)
- 2 I almost always find that I with his opinion. (AGREE)
- 3 I'm sure he's lying but it's going to be hard to his story. (PROVE)
- 4 After a brief speech the Queen the new statue. (VEIL)
- 5 It took the removal men an hour our things from the van. (LOAD)
- 6 His phone was because he didn't pay his last bill. (CONNECT)

- 9.4 Answer the following questions. The answers are all in the table opposite.

- 1 What kind of oven cooks things particularly fast?
- 2 What kind of drug can help somebody with an infection?
- 3 What kind of company has branches in many countries?
- 4 How does a passenger aeroplane normally fly?
- 5 What is a student who is studying for a second degree?
- 6 What means 'underground railway' in the US and 'underground passage' in the UK?

- 9.5 Using the table opposite construct words or phrases to replace the underlined words.

Example: He's in favour of the American approach.he's pro-American....

- 1 The BBC tries to avoid pronouncing foreign words incorrectly.
- 2 Most people say they have to work too hard but are paid too little.
- 3 He dated his cheque with a date that was later than the real date.
- 4 She's still on good terms with the man who used to be her husband.
- 5 He made so many mistakes in the letter that he had to write it again.

Follow-up: Find two more examples for each prefix in C opposite. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 7 to break the telephone connection (e.g. by unplugging it from the wall or by doing something at the telephone exchange so that calls can no longer be made, possibly because a bill has not been paid.)
 8 letters that have not been delivered to the people they were addressed to

Unit 8

- 8.1** 1 windscreen wiper(s) 5 payee
 2 classical violinist 6 dishwasher (normally written as one word)
 3 professional photographer 7 organ donor
 /fə'tɒgrəfə/ 8 addressee
 4 amateur actor
- 8.2** 1 stapler 3 can-opener (or tin-opener) 5 coat-hanger
 2 grinder 4 nail-clipper
- 8.4** 1 a cooker – a thing (the stove on which you cook); the person who cooks is a cook.
 2 a typewriter – a thing (machine for typing); the person is a typist.
 3 a ticket-holder – person or thing; a person who has a ticket, e.g. for a concert, or a kind of wallet for holding tickets, e.g. a season ticket for the train/bus.
 4 a CD player – a thing (machine for playing CDs).
 5 a cleaner – person or thing; person who cleans, e.g. in an office or other place of work; a substance or instrument for cleaning, e.g. 'this cleaner will get the grease off your oven'.
 6 a smoker – a person or thing; a person who smokes; a short name for a seat in the smoking area of a plane or a train (or the whole smoking compartment on a train).
 7 a drinker – a person (someone who drinks alcohol, usually regularly or in large quantities).
 8 a dresser – a person or thing; the person is someone who helps actors with their costumes; the thing is a piece of furniture.
- 8.5** 1 forgivable 2 admission 3 laziness 4 productive 5 readable
- 8.7** 1 neighbourhood: it is a place (an area); all the others refer to human relationships, quantities or identities.
 2 handful: it is a noun; all the others are adjectives.
 3 compliment: all the others are verb + 'ment', e.g. appoint + ment. There is no verb 'compli'.
 4 worship: all the others are kinds of human relationships; worship refers to paying tribute to a God, or, figuratively, as a verb, to loving someone very, very much, e.g. 'They worshipped their teacher'.

Unit 9

- 9.1** 1 indiscreet 4 irrelevant 7 irresponsible 10 intolerant
 2 insensitive 5 disobedient 8 ungrateful
 3 unconvincing 6 inefficient 9 disloyal
- 9.2** 1 Unmarried 3 Illiterate 5 Impartial
 2 Inedible 4 Unemployed 6 Irreplaceable

- 9.3** 1 unwrapping 3 disprove 5 to unload
2 disagree 4 unveiled 6 disconnected
- 9.4** 1 microwave 3 multi-national 5 postgraduate
2 antibiotic 4 on auto-pilot 6 subway
- 9.5** 1 mispronouncing 3 post-dated his cheque 5 rewrite it
2 are overworked but underpaid 4 her ex-husband

Follow-up: Some possibilities:

<i>prefix</i>	<i>examples</i>	<i>prefix</i>	<i>examples</i>
anti	anti-government antiseptic	over	overrun overcharge
auto	autocue automobile	post	post-colonial post-industrial
bi	bi-plane bi-focals	pre	predict pre-conference
ex	ex-flatmate ex-partner	pro	pro-Iranian pro-nuclear
ex	express extort	pseudo	pseudo-democracy pseudo-liberal
micro	micro-chip microprocessor	re	rephrase redefine
mis	misspell mislead	semi	semi-literate semi-conscious
mono	monorail monosyllable	sub	sub-editor sub-human
multi	multi-cultural multi-faceted	under	underachieve underweight

Unit 10

- 10.1** The stress is on the underlined syllable in each of the words in the table.

<i>verb</i>	<i>person noun</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>abstract noun</i>
<u>convert</u>	<u>convert</u>	con <u>vert</u> ed	con <u>vers</u> ion
pro <u>duce</u>	pro <u>duc</u> er	pro <u>duct</u> ive	pro <u>duct</u> ion, <u>pro</u> duce, <u>pro</u> duct, productivity
con <u>duct</u>	con <u>duc</u> tor	con <u>duc</u> tive	con <u>duc</u> t, con <u>duc</u> tion
im <u>press</u>	–	im <u>press</u> ive	im <u>press</u> ion
sup <u>port</u>	sup <u>port</u> er	sup <u>port</u> ive	sup <u>port</u>
im <u>pose</u>	–	im <u>pos</u> ing	im <u>pos</u> ition

- 10.2** 1 oppressive 3 advertisements 5 inspector(s) 7 inspect
2 deported 4 introduce 6 introductory 8 composed

- 10.3** 1 It isn't easy to find synonyms for these words; the meanings are as follows: 'She spends a lot of time thinking about her own thoughts and feelings and so does he; he's quite shy and not very talkative.'
2 argue against 5 made public
3 hold back 6 hold back
4 work out 7 put into an appropriate form

- 10.4** support – hold up postpone – put off oppose – go against inspect – look at
reduce – cut down deposit – put down divert – turn away

In each case the word based on the Latin root is more formal than its two part verb equivalent.