

Word Parts IV: basic prefixes

This list contains some of the most common and important prefixes in English. All in this list derive from Latin or Greek, except the two "un-" prefixes. Both homographs for "un-" derive from Old English.

prefix	meaning	example word
anti-	against	antibacterial, antiwar, antislavery, anticancer drug
auto-	self	automobile, autobiography, autograph, automatic
bi-	two	bicycle, bilingual, bisect, binoculars
circu-, circum-	around	circular, circus, circulate, circumnavigate
com-	with; together	combine, combat, compose, component
dis-	not; apart; reverse, negate	disappear, disagree, dishonest, disbelief
en ⁻¹ , em ⁻¹	to put into; cause to be or have	enjoy, envelope, enlarge, employ
ex-	out, out of, away from	exit, exhaust, exclude, export
il ⁻² im ⁻² in ⁻² ir ⁻²	not, without	illegal, impossible incomplete, incorrect, irregular
inter-	between, among	international, internet, interrupt, intersect
micro-	small	microscope, microsurgery, microbe, microwave
mis-	bad, badly, wrongly	mistake, misunderstand, misbehave, mistreat
multi-	many	multiply, multicolored, multitude, multitask
non-	not	nonsense, nonfiction, nondairy, nonessential
pre-	before	predict, precede, preheat, prejudice
re-	again, back, back again	rewrite, review, redo, rebuild, recall
sub-	under, below	subway, submarine, subcategory, submerge
trans-	across, over, to the other side	transport, transit, transatlantic, translate
un ⁻¹	not	unnecessary, unable, unusual, unequal
un ⁻²	reverse (an action)	untie, undo, unbutton, unlock