

COMMON ROOTS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES

The following tables list some common roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Use these tables to help you determine the meaning of a word by examining its structure.

ROOTS		
BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>act</i>	to do, drive	action, actor, react, transact, enact
<i>alt</i>	high	altitude, altimeter
<i>ann, enn</i>	year	annual, perennial, bicentennial
<i>aqua</i>	water	aquarium, aquamarine, aquanaut
<i>aster, astro</i>	star	astronomy, astronomical, asterisk
<i>aud</i>	to hear	audience, auditorium, audible
<i>biblio, bibli</i>	book	bibliographer, bibliomania, biblical
<i>bio</i>	life	biology, biochemistry, biodegradable
<i>cede</i>	to go; to yield	intercede, supercede, concede
<i>cent</i>	one hundred	percent, bicentennial, centennial
<i>chrono</i>	time	chronology, chronometer, chronoscope
<i>circ, circum</i>	around	circumference, circle, circular
<i>cred</i>	to believe, trust	credibility, incredible, credit, credential
<i>dem</i>	people	democracy, demagogue, epidemic
<i>dent</i>	tooth	dentist, dental, dentifrice
<i>dic, dict</i>	to say, to speak; to assert	diction, dictionary, dictate
<i>dur</i>	hard, lasting	duration, durable, endure
<i>fin</i>	end, limit	finish, finite, infinite, final
<i>gen</i>	race, family, kind	genealogy, general, generation
<i>geo</i>	earth	geology, geocentric, geodynamics
<i>graph, gram</i>	to write, draw, record	autograph, telegram, paragraph
<i>hab</i>	to have, hold; to dwell	habit, habitat, inhabit
<i>hydro</i>	water	hydrogen, hydrodynamics, hydroplane
<i>hypo</i>	under, below	hypodermic, hypotension, hypothermia
<i>jur, jus, judic</i>	law, right, judgment	jurist, justify, judicial
<i>leg</i>	law	legal, legislator, legitimate
<i>loc</i>	place	local, localize, relocate, dislocate

ROOTS (continued)

BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>logue, logo</i>	idea, word, speech, reason	dialogue, monologue, epilogue, logical
<i>manu</i>	hand	manual, manufacture
<i>med, medi</i>	middle	mediate, medieval, mediocre
<i>meter, metr</i>	measure	diameter, metric, millimeter
<i>morph</i>	form	pseudomorph, mesomorph, metamorphosis
<i>micro</i>	small	microscope, microorganism
<i>mono</i>	one	monologue, monogamy, monograph
<i>mov, mob, mot</i>	to move	mob, mobile, remove, motion
<i>noc, nox</i>	night	equinox, nocturnal, nocturne
<i>ped</i>	foot	pedestal, pedestrian, pedal
<i>peri</i>	around	perimeter, periscope, periphery
<i>petr</i>	rock	petrify, petroleum, petroglyph
<i>phon</i>	sound, voice	phonetics, phonics, telephone
<i>photo</i>	light	photography, photoflash, photogenic
<i>port</i>	to carry	import, export, portable
<i>pyr</i>	fire	pyromania, pyrotechnic
<i>sci</i>	to know	conscience, science, scientist
<i>scope</i>	to see	kaleidoscope, telescope, microscope
<i>scrib, script</i>	to write	inscribe, subscription, script
<i>sign</i>	mark	signal, signature, insignia
<i>spec, spect, spic</i>	to see, look at, behold	inspect, respect, spectacle, species
<i>syn, sym</i>	together	symphony, synthesize
<i>techn</i>	art, skill	technical, technology, technique
<i>temp</i>	time	temporary, temper
<i>therm</i>	heat	thermometer, thermonuclear
<i>tract</i>	to pull, draw	attract, retract, traction
<i>vis, vid</i>	to see, look	revision, video, visible
<i>volve</i>	roll	involve, revolve, revolution

PREFIXES

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>ab-</i>	from; away from	abnormal, abduct, absent, abhor
<i>ad-</i>	to; motion toward; addition to	adapt, addict, adhere, admit
<i>aero-</i>	air	aerobic, aerobiology, aerospace
<i>amphi-</i>	both, around	amphibian, amphitheater
<i>an-</i>	not	anarchy, anesthesia, anonymous
<i>ante-</i>	before	antebellum, antecede, antedate
<i>anti-</i>	against; opposite; reverse	antiaircraft, antifreeze, antibiotics
<i>ap-</i>	to; nearness to	approximate, appoint, approach
<i>auto-</i>	self	automatic, autograph, autobiography
<i>bene-</i>	good	benediction, benefactor, benevolent
<i>bi-</i>	two	bifacial, bifocal, biennial
<i>circum-</i>	around	circumnavigate, circumference
<i>co-, con-</i>	together	coauthor, cooperate, confront, confound
<i>contra-</i>	against	contradict, contradistinguish, contrary
<i>de-</i>	opposite of; away from; undo	deactivate, deform, degrade, deplete, descend
<i>dis-</i>	opposite	disagree, disarm, discontinue, dishonest
<i>ex-</i>	out; beyond; away from; former	excel, exclude, exhale, exile
<i>extra-</i>	outside; beyond; besides	extraordinary, extracurricular
<i>for-</i>	not	forbid, forget, forgo
<i>fore-</i>	before	forecast, foreword, forestall, forethought
<i>hyper-</i>	more than normal; too much	hyperactive, hypercritical, hypertension
<i>il-</i>	not	illegal, illegible, illiterate, illogical
<i>im-</i>	into	immediate, immerse, immigrate, import
<i>im-</i>	not	imbalance, immature, immobilize
<i>in-</i>	not; go into	inaccurate, inactive, inhabit
<i>inter-</i>	among; between	interaction, intercede, interchange
<i>intra-</i>	within	intramural, intrastate, intravenous
<i>ir-</i>	not	irredeemable, irregular, irresponsible
<i>mal-</i>	wrong; bad	maladjusted, malfunction, malice
<i>mis-</i>	wrong; bad; no; not	misfire, misbehave, misconduct
<i>non-</i>	not; opposite of	noncommittal, nonconductor, nonpartisan
<i>ob-</i>	against	obstacle, obstinate, obstruct, object

PREFIXES (continued)

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>per-</i>	through	percolate, perceive
<i>post-</i>	after	postglacial, postgraduate, posterior
<i>pre-</i>	before	preamble, prearrange, precaution
<i>pro-</i>	before; for; in support of	prognosis, program, prologue, prophet
<i>pro-</i>	forward	proceed, produce, proficient, progress
<i>re-</i>	back; again	recall, recede, reflect, repay
<i>retro-</i>	backward	retroactive, retrospect, retrocede
<i>se-</i>	apart	secure, secede, secession
<i>self-</i>	of the self	self-taught, self-worth, self-respect, selfish
<i>semi-</i>	half; partly	semicircle, semiformal, semitrailer
<i>sub-</i>	under; beneath	subcontract, subject, submarine, submerge
<i>super-</i>	over	superabound, superabundant, superhuman
<i>sur-</i>	over; above	surcharge, surface, surmount, surpass
<i>trans-</i>	across; over	transatlantic, transcend, transcribe, transfer
<i>ultra-</i>	extremely	ultraliberal, ultramodern, ultrasonic
<i>un-</i>	not	unable, uncomfortable, uncertain, unhappy

SUFFIXES

SUFFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>-able, ible</i>	able to be; capable of being	intelligible, probable, inevitable
<i>-ade</i>	action or process	blockade, escapade, parade
<i>-age</i>	action or process	marriage, pilgrimage, voyage
<i>-al, -ial</i>	of; like; relating to; suitable for	potential, musical, national
<i>-ance</i>	act; process; quality; state of being	tolerance, alliance, acceptance
<i>-ant</i>	one who	assistant, immigrant, merchant
<i>-ary</i>	of; like; relating to	customary, honorary, obituary
<i>-ate</i>	characteristic of; to become	officiate, consecrate, activate
<i>-cle, -icle</i>	small	corpuscule, cubicle, particle
<i>-cy</i>	fact or state of being	diplomacy, privacy, relevancy
<i>-dom</i>	state or quality of	boredom, freedom, martyrdom
<i>-ence</i>	act or state of being	occurrence, conference
<i>-ent</i>	doing; having; showing	fraudulent, dependent, negligent
<i>-er</i>	one who; that which	boxer, rancher, employer
<i>-ery</i>	place for; act, practice of	surgery, robbery, nursery
<i>-esque</i>	like	picturesque, statuesque
<i>-ess</i>	female	goddess, heiress, princess
<i>-ful</i>	full of	careful, fearful, joyful, thoughtful
<i>-ible</i>	capable of being	collectible, legible, divisible
<i>-ic</i>	relating to; characteristic of	comic, historic, poetic, public
<i>-ify</i>	to make; to cause to be	modify, glorify, beautify, pacify
<i>-ion</i>	act, condition, or result of	calculation, action, confederation
<i>-ish</i>	of or belonging to; characterized by	tallish, amateurish, selfish
<i>-ism</i>	act, practice, or result of; example	barbarism, heroism, cynicism
<i>-ity</i>	condition; state of being	integrity, sincerity, calamity, purity
<i>-ive</i>	of; relating to; belonging to; tending to	inquisitive, active, creative
<i>-ize</i>	make; cause to be; subject to	jeopardize, standardize, computerize
<i>-less</i>	without	ageless, careless, thoughtless, tireless
<i>-let</i>	small	islet, leaflet, owlet, rivulet, starlet
<i>-like</i>	like; characteristic of	childlike, waiflike
<i>-logy</i>	study or theory of	biology, ecology, geology

SUFFIXES (continued)

SUFFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
-ly	every	daily, weekly, monthly, yearly
-ly	like; characteristic of	fatherly, queenly, deadly
-ly	resembling	officially, sincerely, kindly
-ment	action or process	development, government
-ment	state or quality of	amusement, amazement, predicament
-ment	product or thing	fragment, instrument, ornament
-ness	state or quality of being	kindness, abruptness, happiness
-or	one who	actor, auditor, doctor, donor
-ous	having; full of; characterized by	riotous, courageous, advantageous
-ship	state or quality of being	censorship, ownership, governorship
-some	like; tending to be	meddlesome, bothersome, noisome
-tude	state or quality of being	solitude, multitude, aptitude
-y	characterized by	thrifty, jealousy, frequency, sticky

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