

Word Anatomy: Breaking Down Words into Parts

Prefix: a group of letters that come at the beginning of a word.

Root: the basic part of a word; the prefixes and suffixes are added to it.

Suffix: a group of letters that come at the end of a word.

un + change + able = unchangeable

Some words are just root words, meaning they don't have a prefix or suffix. Some words have a root word and just a prefix or just a suffix.

Here is a list of commonly used prefixes:

	Prefix	Meaning	Example	Meaning of Example
1	Ab-	Away, from	Absent	
2	An-	Without	Anarchy	Without government
3	Anti-	Against	Antibacterial	
4	Auto-	Self	Autobiography	
5	Bene-	Well, good	Benefit	A good thing for someone
6	Bi-	Two	Bicycle	
7	Bio-	Life	Biology	The study of living things
8	Co-	With, together	Cooperate	Work together
9	Com-, Con-	Together, with	Combination	
10	Dis-	Not	Disrespect	Not respect
11	Ex-	Out	Exit	
12	Geo-	Earth	Geology	The study of the earth
13	Hyper-	Over	Hypertension	
14	Hypo-	Under, beneath	Hypodermic	
15	Im-	Not	Impossible	Not possible
16	In-	Not	Incomplete	
17	Inter-	Between	Interstate	Between states
18	Mal-	Bad, ill	Malevolent	
19	Micro-	Small	Microbiology	The study of tiny living things
20	Mid-	Middle	Midway	
21	Mis-	Wrong, Ill, Mistaken	Misunderstood	
22	Mono-	One	Monorail	A train that runs on one track
23	Non-	Not	Nonsense	
24	Post-	After	Post-test	A test taken after the unit
25	Pre-	Before	Pre-test	
26	Re-	Do again	Repeat	To do something again
27	Sub-	Under	Subway	
28	Trans-	Across	Transatlantic	Across the Atlantic Ocean
29	Un-	Not	Unhappy	
30	Uni-	One	Unity	

	List of root words that do not stand alone as full words			
	Root Word	Meaning	Example	Meaning of Word
1	agri–	field	agriculture	science of growing crops in a field
2	ann–	year	annual	once a year
3	antrop–	man/human	philanthropy	being generous to people
4	arch–	government, first	monarch	king
5	aqua–	water	aquatic	having to do with water
6	aud–	hear	auditorium	a place for people to come and hear a speech or performance
7	auto–	self	autobiography	the story of your life, written by you
8	cent–	one hundred	centipede	an insect with 100 legs
9	chrono–	time	chronology	a list of events in time
10	civi–	citizen	civilian	a person who is not in the military
11	cord–	heart	accord	agree (from the heart)
12	demos–	people	epidemic	a disease that affects many people at the same time
13	fac– ,fic– fect– , fec–	to make or do	fiction	a made-up story
14	graph–, gram–	writing	graphic	something that is written
15	labor–	to work	laboratory	a place where scientists work
16	man–	hand	manual	done by hand
17	mar–	sea	maritime	having to do with the sea
18	port–	carry	portable	able to be carried
19	terr–	land	subterranean	under the ground or land
20	vita–	life	vital	something important for life

Like prefixes, suffixes are letters that are added to a word to give it a different meaning. However, they are added at the end of the word.

Here is a list of commonly used suffixes:

	Suffix	Meaning	Example	Meaning of Example
1	-able	can do (something)	portable	able to be carried
2	-ible	can do (something)	edible	able to be eaten
3	-ed	has happened, past tense	walked	the walk has already happened
4	-er	a person who does an action	teacher	one who teaches
5	-ful	full of	hopeful	full of hope
6	-fy	to make	magnify	to make bigger
7	-ing	is happening, present tense	talking	there is talk happening
8	-ist	person who does an action or believes in a certain idea of religion	artist	person who works with art
9	-ize	to make	victimize	make someone a victim; harm someone
10	-less	not having	hopeless	having no hope
11	-ment	the action of	amendment	the action of changing
12	-ness	condition of	brightness	how much light there is
13	-ology	the study of	zoology	study of animals
14	-ous	full of, having	joyous	having much joy
15	-tion	action, process of	creation	the act of making