

THE TESL TEACHER AND ENGLISH PREFIXES

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A large percentage of English lexicon starts with a prefixed morpheme, i.e., a prefix, which has a meaning of its own and which recurs in dozens, and sometimes thousands, of different words. If the TESL or TEFL teacher can bring these prefixes to his students' consciousness, this will help them learn English vocabulary more easily, develop their ability to guess lexical meanings correctly, and make them abler to derive new words from familiar ones. This will also help in reducing students' mistakes in spelling and pronouncing these prefixed morphemes.

Therefore, it may be helpful to us as TESL or TEFL teachers to list down such

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common prefixes with their most common meanings and with some examples of each prefix. We shall also state the part of speech with which each prefix is connected and the possible effect of this affixation on the morphological or syntactic class of the original word, i.e., the root, since some prefixes may cause a change in the class of the root. For example, (dis-) in (discourage) has changed the class from a noun, i.e., courage, to a verb, i.e., discourage.

1. *ante* = before.

ante + V V (antedate)
 N N (anteroom)
 Adj Adj (antenatal)

2. *anti* = against

anti + N N (anti-Semite)
 Adj Adj (anti-Semitic)

3. *arch* = head

arch + N N (archbishop, archdeacon)

4. *be* = all around

be + Adj Adj (beflagged)
 Adj V (belittle)

5. *bi* = having two or coming twice.

Adj (biannual, bilateral)
 N N (bicycle, biplane)

6. *by* = less important.

by + N N (by-road, by-product)

7. *co* = together.

co + V V (co-operate)
 N N (co-author)

8. *de* = away, double.

de + V V (decentralize)
 N N (decompound)

9. *deci* = one tenth.

deci + N N (decigram, decilitre)

10. *demi* = half.

demi + N N (demi-monde)
 Adj Adj (demi-official)

11. *dis* = not.

dis + N N, V (dishonesty, discourage)
 Adj Adj (disadvantageous)
 V V (disapprove)

12. *ex* = formerly.

ex + N N (ex-president, ex-wife)

13. *fore* = in front, the front part of.

fore + N V (forefoot, fore-runner)
 V V (forecast)

14. *grand* = great.

grand + N N (grandson, grandfather)

15. *hecto* = one hundred.

hecto + N N (hectogram, hectometer)
 V V (hectograph)

16. *hydro* = related to water.

hydro + Adj Adj (hydropathic)
 N N (hydrophobia)

17. *il* = not

(before words starting with L).

il + N N (illiterate)

Adj Adj (illegal, illiberal)

18. *im* = not.

(before words starting with b, m, p).

im + N N (immobility)

V V (immobilize)

Adj Adj (immortal)

19. *in* = not.
in + N N (inability)
 Adj Adj (inaccurate)
 V V (incapacitate)
20. *in* = in.
in + Adj Adj (inborn)
 N N (inbreeding)
 V V (incarnate)
21. *ir* = not (before words starting with R)
ir + Adj Adj (irrelevant)
 N N (irregularity)
 V V (irrationalize)
22. *kilo* = one thousand.
kilo + N N (kilogram)
 Adj Adj (kilogram)
23. *mal* = bad, badly, un-
mal + N N (malformation)
 Adj Adj (malodorous)
24. *micro* = very small, one-millionth.
micro + N N (microphone)
 Adj Adj (microscopic)
25. *milli* = one one-thousandth.
milli + N N (millimeter, milligram)
26. *mis* = badly, wrongly.
mis + V V (misuse)
 N N (miscalculation)
 Adj Adj (misanthropic)
27. *multi* = having many.
multi + N N (multimillionaire)
 Adj Adj (multilateral)
28. *non* = not, neutral, negation.
non + Adj Adj (non-logical, non-human)
 N N (non-acceptance)
29. *over* = excess over the desirable limit.
over + N N (over-anxiety, over-confidence)
30. *pan* = of all.
pan + Adj Adj (pan-Islamic, pan-American)
 N N (pan-Hellenism, pan-cosmism)
31. *poly* = many.
poly + Adj Adj (polyatomic)
 N N (polyglot)
32. *post* = late, after, behind.
post + N N (post-graduate)
 Adj Adj (post-natal)
 V V (post-fix)
33. *pre* = before.
pre + V V (pre-define, pre-estimate)
 N N (pre-election, pre-digestion)
 Adj Adj (pre-human, pre-ocular)
34. *pro* = siding with, in front of, instead of.
pro + N N (pro-leg)
 Adj Adj (pro-British)
35. *pseudo* = false, falsely.
pseudo + N N (pseudomorph)
 Adj Adj (pseudo-classic)
36. *re* = again.
re + V V (rearrange, reaffirm)
 N N (reconstruction)
 Adj Adj (reproductive)
37. *radio* = of rays or radiation.
radio + N N (radio-therapy)
 Adj Adj (radio-active)
38. *self* = automatic, reflexive action.
self + N N (self-dependence)
 Adj Adj (self-evident)
39. *semi* = half, imperfect, imperfectly.
semi + N N (semi-circle, semi-vowel)
 Adj Adj (semi-official, semi-cylindrical)
40. *sub* = under.
sub = N N (subagency, subheading)
 V V (subdivide, subclassify)
 Adj Adj (subnormal, subhuman)
41. *super* = beyond, over.
super + V V (superimpose)
 N N (superintendent)
 Adj Adj (supernatural)
42. *tele* = far.
tele + V V (telephone, telegraph)
 N N (telecommunication)
 Adj Adj (telescopic)
43. *trans* = across, beyond.
trans + N N (transformer)
 V V (transcribe)
 Adj Adj (transcontinental)
44. *tri* = three.
tri + N N (triangle, trioxide)
 V V (triradiate)
 Adj Adj (trifloral, trilateral)
45. *ultra* = beyond, excessively.
ultra + Adj Adj (ultraviolet)
 N N (ultramicrometer)
46. *un* = contrary to.
un + N N (unrestfulness)
 V V (unjust, unkind)
 Adj Adj (unbind, uncork)
47. *under* = below, insufficiently.
under + V V (under-develop)
 N N (under-production, under-ground)

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English Prefixes

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48. *vice* = acting in the place of, next in rank to.

vice + *N* *N* (Vice-Admiral, Vice-President)

49. *en* = give, make, put in.

en + *N* *V* (encourage, enslave)
 Adj *V* (enable, enrich)

The TESL teacher may handle these prefixes when they occur as parts of new words he intends to teach. He may teach each prefix with respect to its meaning, pronunciation, and spelling. Of course, in the case of pronunciation, the prefix is spoken of as an inseparable component of the word during students' practice. However, segmentation for the sake of focusing during the teacher's explanation remains possible. Such focusing on the prefix is expected to result in enriching learners' knowledge of vocabulary derivation and vocabulary comprehension. Further, it may result in reducing mistakes of the spelling of these prefixes, which have a high frequency of occurrence in the spoken or written forms of English.