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Prefix power

A prefix goes at the start of a word and changes its meaning.

1 Learn



A **prefix** is a group of letters added to the **start** of a root word. You just add it on: the root word's spelling **never changes**.

dis	+	agree	=	disagree
mis	+	spell	=	misspell
im	+	possible	=	impossible

un-, **dis-** = not, the opposite

mis- = wrongly

re- = again

in-, **il-**, **im-**, **ir-** = not

mis + spell keeps **both** s's: misspell.

Example: which "not" prefix goes with possible?

1. Look at the **first letter** of the root word: **p**ossible.

2. Before **l** use **il-** (illegal). Before **m** or **p** use **im-** (immature, impatient). Before **r** use **ir-** (irregular). Otherwise use **in-** (incorrect).

3. possible starts with p, so it's **im** + possible = **impossible**.

Flip's tip: never drop or change a letter. If the prefix ends with the same letter the root starts with, you get a double: **mis**+**s**pell = mi**ss**pell, **ir**+**r**egular = i**rr**egular.

Warm up: join the prefix to the root word.

re + do = _____ dis + appear = _____ mis + behave = _____

Grown-ups: say each new word aloud together and talk about how the prefix changed its meaning: "If you rebuild something, you build it again."

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2 Try it together a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Prefix pairs

You need: 12 small pieces of scrap paper and a pencil.

1. Write one prefix on each of 6 papers: **un**, **dis**, **mis**, **re**, **im**, **ir**.
2. Write one root word on each of the other 6: **happy**, **like**, **lead**, **build**, **polite**, **regular**.
3. Lay the prefixes in one row and the roots in another. Take turns to join a prefix to a root and say the new word. Is it a real word?
4. Find a partner for every card, then write each new word and what it means.

Prefix	Root word	New word	What it means
un	happy	unhappy	not happy

Grown-ups: if your child makes a word that isn't real (like "irhappy"), ask "Does that sound like a word?" and look at the first letter of the root word again.

3 Practise

A. Ring the correct spelling in each box.

unpossible / impossible	**mispell / misspell**	**illegal / inlegal**
disappear / dissappear	**irregular / iregular**	**imcorrect / incorrect**

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B. Add **in-**, **il-**, **im-** or **ir-** to make each word mean "not".

_____mature _____active _____responsible

_____patient _____legible _____perfect

C. Write one word with a prefix for each meaning.

Meaning	Word
1. to write again	
2. to behave badly	
3. not agree	
4. not kind	
5. to appear again	

D. Write a sentence using **disappear** or **impossible**.

Challenge

Ava writes **mispell**. Leo says it needs two s's. Who is right? Use the rule about prefixes to explain.

I can... Tick when you can.

- [ ] add a prefix without changing the root word
- [ ] choose il-, im-, ir- or in- by looking at the first letter
- [ ] say how a prefix changes a word's meaning