

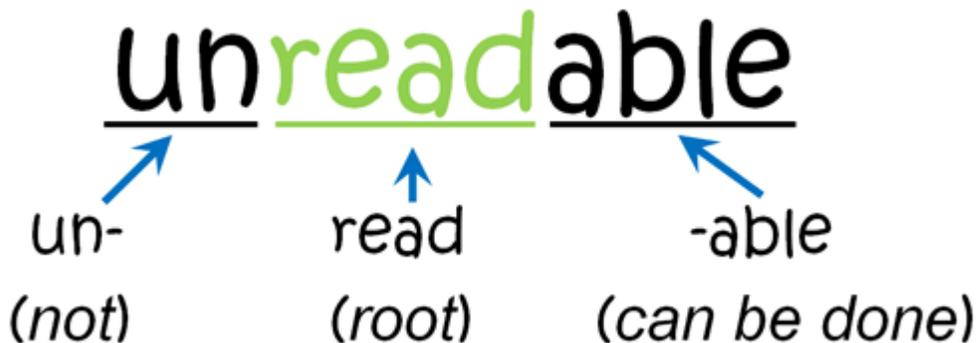
# Prefixes and Suffixes

When you see a word you don't know, that word might have a prefix or suffix that can help you understand it.

When this group of letters is at the front of a word, it is called a *prefix*. Prefixes usually change the meaning of the word.

When this group of letters is at the end of a word, it is called a *suffix*. Suffixes usually change the part of speech (e.g. a noun becomes a verb, a verb becomes an adjective,...)

The basic part of a word is called the *root*. We add prefixes and suffixes to roots to create new words.



Look at the word *unreadable*:

- The word *read* means 'to understand the meaning of words in written or printed material'.
- The prefix *un-* means 'not'.
- The suffix *-able* indicates that the word is an adjective.

Something that is *unreadable* is *some words on a page or screen that cannot be understood*.

Now look at the word *autobiographical*.

- The root *biograph* means 'writing about life'.
- The prefix *auto-* means 'by oneself'.
- The suffix *-ical* means 'having to do with' and indicates that the word is an adjective.

*Autobiographical* is related to *a life story written by that person*.

If you knew these word parts, you might be able to guess the meaning of the word. You might not need to use a dictionary. You may not always know the exact meaning of the word, but you can make a reasonable guess, and, if you use the context of the sentence, you should have a good idea if you are correct.

A good understanding of basic prefixes and suffixes will help you understand the meanings of words without using a dictionary.

**Prefixes usually change just the meaning of the root – not the part of speech. They tell us many things about a word, such things as whether a root is negative or positive, when something happened, or how much of something exists.**

**Negative:**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<i>a-, an-</i>	not, without	<i>amoral, atheist, atypical,</i>
<i>anti-</i>	against	<i>antisocial, antiseptic, anticlimax</i>
<i>contra-</i>	against	<i>contradict, contravene, contrary</i>
<i>counter-</i>	against	<i>counteract, counterproductive, counterintuitive</i>
<i>ex-</i>	former	<i>ex-student, exhale, explode</i>
<i>il-</i>	not	<i>illegal, illogical, illegitimate</i>
<i>im-</i>	not	<i>impossible, immoral, immoderate</i>
<i>in-</i>	not	<i>insensitive, inadequate, indecent</i>
<i>ir-</i>	not	<i>irresponsible, irrational, irrelevant</i>
<i>mal-</i>	badly	<i>malformed, malpractice, maladjusted</i>
<i>mis-</i>	wrongly	<i>misguided, misinterpret, mispronounce</i>
<i>non-</i>	not	<i>nonrefundable, nonfiction, nonabrasive</i>
<i>un-</i>	not	<i>unable, unresponsive, unintended</i>

**Time:**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>ante-</i>	before	<i>antedate, anteroom, antenatal</i>
<i>post-</i>	after	<i>postmortem, postdated, postmodernism</i>
<i>pre-</i>	before	<i>prerequisite, precaution, prehistoric</i>

**Number:**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>bi-</i>	two	<i>bicycle, bimonthly, bilingual</i>
<i>cent-, centi-</i>	one hundred	<i>centipede, centigrade, centimeter</i>
<i>mono-</i>	one	<i>monologue, monolingual, monophonic</i>
<i>multi-</i>	many	<i>multifaceted, multilingual, multipurpose</i>
<i>poly-</i>	many	<i>polymorphous, polychrome, polycyclic</i>
<i>tri-</i>	three	<i>tricycle, triangle, triannual</i>
<i>uni-</i>	one	<i>unicycle, uniform, universe</i>
<i>under-</i>	not enough	<i>underpay, underprivileged, underachiever</i>

**Placement:**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>ab-</i>	away from	<i>abnormal, abdicate, abhorrence</i>
<i>circum-</i>	around	<i>circumvent, circulate, circumnavigate</i>
<i>com-</i>	with, together	<i>communicate, compact, communal</i>
<i>de-</i>	down from	<i>descend, detach, depart</i>
<i>dis-</i>	away	<i>disembark, distaste, disconnect</i>
<i>ex-</i>	out of	<i>expel, exclude, explode</i>
<i>inter-</i>	among	<i>interview, interconnect, international</i>
<i>sub-</i>	under	<i>subterranean, submarine, subtext</i>
<i>super-</i>	above	<i>supersede, superscript, supernatural</i>
<i>trans-</i>	across	<i>transportation, trans-national, transcend</i>

**Other Common Prefixes:**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>audio-</i>	relating to sound	<i>audiovisual, auditorium, audiophile</i>
<i>auto-</i>	of or by oneself	<i>autopilot, autograph, automobile</i>
<i>bio-</i>	relating to living things	<i>biology, biometric, biochemistry</i>
<i>co-</i>	with or together	<i>coexist, cooperate, cohabitate</i>
<i>cyber-</i>	relating to computers	<i>cybercrime, cyberspace, cyberwar</i>
<i>eco-</i>	relating to environment	<i>ecology, eco-friendly</i>
<i>re-</i>	again	<i>rewrite, recycle, recharge</i>
<i>micro-</i>	small	<i>microscope, microwave, microchip</i>
<i>over-</i>	too much	<i>overdo, overweight, overdose</i>
<i>pro-</i>	in favor of	<i>pro-government, proactive, proclaim</i>
<i>pseudo-</i>	false	<i>pseudoscience, pseudonym</i>

**Common Suffixes** – Suffixes come at the end of the word and tell you whether a word is a noun, adjective, verb, or adverb.

**Common Noun Suffixes**

<b>Suffix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>-dom</i>	state or quality of	<i>wisdom, kingdom, sheikdom</i>
<i>-hood</i>	state or quality of	<i>statehood, fatherhood, sisterhood</i>
<i>-ion</i> <i>-tion</i> <i>-sion</i>	state or quality of	<i>union, action, confusion</i> <i>relaxation, description</i> <i>explosion, erosion, division</i>
<i>-ism</i>	state or quality of	<i>communism, feminism, pacifism</i>
<i>-ity</i>	state or quality of	<i>eligibility, reality, elasticity</i>
<i>-ment</i>	state or quality of	<i>appeasement, acknowledgement, apartment</i>

<b>Suffix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>-able</i> <i>-ible</i>	can be done	<i>transportable, drinkable, washable</i> <i>edible, flexible, legible</i>

<b>Suffix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>-al</i>	related to	<i>regal, proposal, denial</i>
<i>-ance</i> <i>-ence</i>	related to	<i>resistance, temperance,</i> <i>independence,</i>
<i>-ic</i>	related to	<i>caloric, heroic, specific</i>

<b>Suffix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>-er</i> <i>-or</i>	one who	<i>teacher, driver, sweeper</i> <i>mentor, doctor, actor</i>
<i>-ist</i>	one who	<i>scientist, dentist, biologist</i>

<b>Suffix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>-ful</i>	full of	<i>beautiful, wonderful, thankful</i>
<i>-y</i>	full of	<i>sappy, milky, soapy</i>