



SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

(An Autonomous Institution)

COIMBATORE-35

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

PREFIX AND SUFFIX



PREFIX

A prefix is a short morphological unit that is added to the beginning of a root word in order to alter its meaning and/or function. It can be just a single letter or two to five letters. The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines a prefix as "a letter or group of letters added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning, such as *un-* in *unhappy* and *pre-* in *preheat*".

SUFFIX

A suffix, on the other hand, is a short morphological unit that follows the root word. In other words, it is added to the end of the root word. A suffix can contain two to four letters. It is defined as "a letter or group of letters added to the end of a word to make another word, such as *-ly* in *quickly* or *-ness* in *sadness*".

Spelling Rules to Be Followed When Adding a Prefix or a Suffix

When adding a prefix,

- You need not make any changes to the spelling of the base word; you can just write the prefix followed by the base word. For example, popular *unpopular*.
- In the case of prefixes such as 'non' and 'ex', you might have to add a [hyphen](#) in between the prefix and the root word. For example, *non-violence*, *ex-serviceman*.

When adding a suffix,

- The spelling of the root word might/might not change.
- For all words that end with [consonants](#) other than 'y', you can simply add the suffix to the end of the root word. For example, truth *truthful*, quick *quickly*.
- For words ending with 'y', you will have to remove the 'y', add an 'i' and then add suffixes such as 'al' or 'ly'. For instance, try *trial*, happy *happily*.

- An exception to the above rule is in the case of monosyllabic words without [vowels](#). For example, shy *shyly*, sly *slyly*.
- There are words to which 'ity' is added instead of 'ty'. This is for words that end with an 'e'. The 'e' is omitted and 'ity' is added. For example, sensitive *sensitivity*, creative *creativity*. This is also the case when the suffix 'al' is already added to the base word. For example, sentimental *sentimentality*, functional *functionality*.
- For most monosyllabic words and some disyllabic words ending in 'e', you will have to remove the 'e' and add suffixes such as 'able' and 'age'. For example, use *usage*, move *movable*, love *lovable*, adore *adorable*, relate *relatable*.
- There are some exceptions to the above rule. For instance, like *likeable*, manage *manageable*, recharge *rechargeable*.
- The same is the case with words that take the suffix 'ible'. For example, sense *sensible*, collapse *collapsible*.

When adding a prefix and a suffix,

The above-said spelling rules of prefixes and suffixes apply. For example, success unsuccessful, happy unhappily.

Let us take a look at words that take both prefixes and suffixes.

Prefix	Base Word	Suffix	New word
Im-	Mortal	-ity	Immortality
Un-	Success	-ful	Unsuccessful
Un-	Manage	-able	Unmanageable
Un-	Truth	-ful	Untruthful
Im-	Mature	-ity	Immaturity
Im-	Perfect	-tion	Imperfection
Un-	Certain	-ity	Uncertainty
Un-	Aware	-ness	Unawareness

EXERCISE A Prefixes

Complete the sentences by writing the correct prefix in the blank space. You can use a dictionary to help you.

dis- -in mis- re- un- under-

1. I just can't believe it! The story is _____believable!

2. No, that answer is _____correct. It is wrong.

3. Let's look at this information again. We should _____view it before the test.
4. I saw Allison just a moment ago, but now I can't find her! It seems that she _____appeared!
5. Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't hear you correctly. I _____understood you.
6. The subway does not go over the land like a normal train. It moves _____ground.

Exercise A: Prefixes

1. I just can't believe it! The story is unbelievable!
2. No, that answer is incorrect. It is wrong.
3. Let's look at this information again. We should review it before the test.
4. I saw Allison just a moment ago, but now I can't find her! It seems that she disappeared!
5. Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't hear you correctly. I misunderstood you.
6. The subway does not go over the land like a normal train. It moves underground.

Exercise B: Adjective suffixes

Complete the words that describe the pictures below. Use the suffixes from the list.

-able

-ful

-less

1. The first woman is very tired. She wants to rest!

The second woman can't stay still. She always wants to move! She is rest_____.

2. The first dog isn't cute. He's a little scary!

The second dog is very cute! He's ador_____!

3. Jason writes lots of lists, so he always remembers what he has to do. He never forgets!

But Melanie can't remember anything! She's very forget_____!

Exercise C: Noun suffixes

Complete the sentences that describe the pictures using the correct suffix. You can use a dictionary to help you.

-dom

-er

-ment

-ness

1. I teach science in big a university. I am a physics teach_____.
2. Sir Alan is King Richard's best knight. He is brave and strong. He is the most important knight in Richard's whole king_____!
3. Henrietta is my best friend. She is wonderful! The best thing about her is her kind_____. She is always so nice to people!
4. The kids always have fun together. They never disagree or have an argu_____.

Answer Key

Exercise A: Prefixes

1. I just can't believe it! The story is unbelievable!
2. No, that answer is incorrect. It is wrong.
3. Let's look at this information again. We should review it before the test.
4. I saw Allison just a moment ago, but now I can't find her! It seems that she disappeared!
5. Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't hear you correctly. I misunderstood you.
6. The subway does not go over the land like a normal train. It moves underground.

Exercise B: Adjective suffixes

1. The first woman is very tired. She wants to rest!
The second woman can't stay still. She always wants to move! She is restless.
2. The first dog isn't cute. He's a little scary!
The second dog is very cute! He's adorable!
3. Jason writes lots of lists, so he always remembers what he has to do. He never forgets!
But Melanie can't remember anything! She's very forgetful!

Exercise C: Noun suffixes

1. I teach science in big a university. I am a physics teacherer.
2. Sir Alan is King Richard's best knight. He is brave and strong. He is the most important knight in Richard's whole kingdom!
3. Henrietta is my best friend. She is wonderful! The best thing about her is her kindness. She is always so nice to people!
4. The kids always have fun together. They never disagree or have an argument.