

A With the meaning 'not'

Prefixes can be added to some words to give them a negative meaning.

happy	unhappy	like (v)	dislike (v)
possible	impossible	legal	illegal (= against the law/wrong)
correct	incorrect	regular	irregular, e.g. irregular verbs

NOTE

Word stress doesn't usually change, e.g. happy/unhappy; but it can to emphasise the negative:

A: Was he happy about the change?

B: No, he was very unhappy about it.

un- is the most common, e.g. **unfriendly**, **unable**, **unusual**, **unnecessary**, **unemployed** (= without a job), **untidy** (= not in order; also, **in a mess**), **unkind**, **unpleasant** (= horrible).

in- is often used before words with a Latin origin, e.g. **invisible** (= cannot be seen), **informal**, **inadequate** (= not good enough, e.g. The car park is inadequate for a big supermarket like that).

im- is used before some words beginning with 'm' or 'p', e.g. **impolite**, **impossible**, **impatient** (someone who is 'impatient' wants things to happen now; they cannot wait for things), **immoral**.

il- can be used before 'l', e.g. **illegible** (= impossible to read because the writing is bad).

ir- is only used before a few words beginning with 'r', e.g. **irresponsible**.

dis- is used before some adjectives, e.g. **dishonest** (a 'dishonest' person is someone you cannot trust, and often does not tell the truth), and a few verbs, e.g. **dislike**, **disagree**.

B Verb prefixes: un- and dis-

With some verbs, these prefixes can also mean 'the opposite of an action'.

The plane **appeared** in the sky, then suddenly **disappeared** behind a cloud.

I **locked** the door when I left, but then I lost the key and couldn't **unlock** it when I got back.

I **got dressed** (= put on my clothes) and had my breakfast.

I **got undressed** (= took off my clothes) and got into bed.

I had to **pack my suitcase/do my packing** (= put everything in it) very quickly, so when I **unpacked** (= took things out) at the hotel, most of my clothes looked terrible.



C Other verb prefixes with specific meanings

re- (= again) The shop closed down but it'll **reopen** next month.
I failed my **exam** but I can **retake/redo** it next year.

over- (= too much) My boss is **overdoing** it at the moment. (= working too hard)
I went to bed very late and I **overslept** (= slept too long) **this morning**.
The shop assistant **overcharged** me.
(= asked me for too much money)

mis- (= badly or incorrectly) I'm afraid I **misunderstood** what he said.
Two of the students **misread** the first question.

Maybe I overate.



Exercises

6.1 What's the opposite of these words? (The words in the last column are verbs, the rest are adjectives.)

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1happy | 5patient | 9polite | 13lock |
| 2correct | 6regular | 10visible | 14pack |
| 3legible | 7friendly | 11employed | 15agree |
| 4possible | 8formal | 12honest | 16like |

6.2 What's the reverse of these actions?

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------|---------------|
| 1 do one's packing | unpack | 3 appear |
| 2 lock the door | | 4 get dressed |

6.3 Agree with these sentences, using a synonym from the left-hand page for the underlined words.

- 1 It's against the law, isn't it?
Oh yes, it's illegal.
- 2 His room is always in a mess, isn't it?
Yes, it's very
- 3 He took off his clothes!
Yes, he got
- 4 This handwriting is impossible to read.
Yes I know, it's completely
- 5 She can never wait for five minutes, can she?
No, she's very
- 6 The conference centre wasn't good enough for 500 people, was it?
No, it was completely for that number.
- 7 She's horrible sometimes.
Yes, she can be very
- 8 I'm afraid they sometimes steal things and tell lies.
I know. They're both

6.4 Complete the verbs in these sentences.

- 1 I completely disagree with him on this subject.
- 2 I'm sorry, I mis..... her message.
- 3 We un..... as soon as we got to the hotel, then went out for a walk.
- 4 She was here a minute ago, then she dis..... . I don't know where she is now.
- 5 My homework was so bad that I'll have to re..... it.
- 6 Her alarm clock didn't go off and she over.....
- 7 She finally managed to un..... the door and we were able to go inside.
- 8 I dis..... the film, but the others enjoyed it.
- 9 I don't think I'll pass the exam, but I can always re..... it in September.
- 10 She's over..... things at the moment. She needs a complete break from her job.
- 11 The post office shuts for lunch but it should re..... at 2.00 pm.
- 12 I was very angry because they over..... me by about £5 in that shop.

6.5 Keep several pages in your notebook for verbs or adjectives which combine with these prefixes. You can add new words to your lists and test yourself at the same time.

Noun suffixes

A Verb + noun suffix

<i>verb</i>	<i>suffix</i>	<i>noun</i>
improve (= get better)	-ment	improvement
govern (= control affairs of a city or country)		government
manage (= direct or control a business)		management
elect (= choose somebody by voting)	-ion	election
discuss (= talk about something seriously)		discussion
inform (= tell someone something)	-ation	information
jog (= running to keep fit or for pleasure)	-ing	jogging
spell (e.g. S-P-E-L-L)		spelling

There has been a **big improvement** in the economy. Who do you think will win the election?
The problems are due to **bad management**. I'm not very good at **spelling**.

B Adjective + noun suffix

<i>adjective</i>	<i>suffix</i>	<i>noun</i>
weak (<i>opp</i> strong)	-ness	weakness
happy		happiness
ill (= sick/not well)		illness
stupid (<i>opp</i> intelligent, clever)	-ity	stupidity
active		activity
similar (= almost the same; <i>opp</i> different)		similarity

We have a **weak government**. What's her **main weakness** as a manager?
She was **ill** for a long time. Hepatitis is a very **serious illness**.
The two boys are **quite similar**. There is a **similarity between** all three sons.

C Pronunciation

Adding a suffix to a verb or adjective may change the pronunciation.

<i>verb</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>noun</i>
educate	education	similar	similarity
advertise	advertisement	stupid	stupidity

D -er/-or and -ist

These suffixes can be added to nouns or verbs. They often describe people and jobs.

-er	-er	-or	-ist
ballet dancer	bus driver	television actor	artist, e.g. Picasso
pop singer	shop manager	film director	economist
murderer (= person who kills someone)	professional footballer	translator	psychologist
	employer	computer operator	journalist

Exercises

- 7.1** Complete the tables and mark the stress on each word. The last two in each column are not on the opposite page, but do you know or can you guess the noun formed from them?

<i>verb</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>noun</i>
educate	stupid
improve	happy
jog	weak
govern	similar
spell	active
hesitate	sad
arrange	popular

- 7.2** Combine words on the left with the correct suffix on the right to complete the text.

improve	televis	weak	govern	-ment	-ity	-ness
elect	educate	manage	stupid	-ion	-ation	

In his first broadcast on (1) television since he won the (2) last month, the Prime Minister promised to make health and (3) his top two priorities.

And in a strong attack on the previous (4), he said that the present (5) of the British economy was caused by their (6) and bad (7) He said things were going to change, and he hoped the British people would be able to see a big (8) in the economy by the end of the year.

- 7.3** Write down the name of the person who does these things as a job.

1 drive driver 3 act 5 economics

2 translate 4 psychology 6 football

- 7.4** Match words from left and right to find the names of eight jobs.

pop	bus	psychologist	dancer
shop	child	singer	manager
film	ballet	operator	driver
computer	professional	footballer	director

- 7.5** Complete the definitions below.

1 An employer is a person or company that employs people

2 A murderer is a person who

3 A bank manager is a person who

4 A television actor is a person who

5 A translator is a person who

6 A lorry driver is a person who

7 A journalist is a person who

8 An artist such as Picasso is a person who

Adjective suffixes

A Noun or verb + suffix

<i>noun or verb</i>	<i>suffix</i>	<i>adjectives</i>
danger, fame	-ous	dangerous, famous (= known by lots of people)
music, politics, emotion, economics, industry	-al	musical, political, emotional (= have or show strong feelings), economical (= saves you money), industrial (= connected with industry and factories)
cloud, sun, fog, dirt	-y	cloudy, sunny, foggy, dirty (<i>opp</i> clean)
attract, create	-ive	attractive (= pretty, good-looking); creative (= ability to produce new ideas; with imagination)

The roads were **dangerous** this morning: it was **foggy** and I couldn't see far. He was very **emotional** when he said 'goodbye'.
Did you buy a diesel car because it's more **economical** than petrol?
I'm afraid you'll have to clean the floor – it's very **dirty**.

B -able

This common suffix creates adjectives from nouns and verbs:
an **enjoyable** evening a **comfortable** chair Jeans are still **fashionable**.
suitable (= right/correct for a situation), e.g. A grey suit is very **suitable** for a wedding.

Sometimes **-able** means 'can be done':

washable (= can be washed), e.g. Is this jacket **washable**?

reliable (= can be trusted), e.g. I've never had a problem with the car – it's very **reliable**.

Words ending **-able** quite often express the opposite meaning with the prefix **un-**:

unsuitable (= not right/correct for a situation), e.g. Jeans are **unsuitable** for weddings.

unbreakable (= cannot be broken), e.g. The glass in the shop window is **unbreakable**.

Words ending **-ible** sometimes add the prefix **in-** to form an opposite:

incomprehensible (= cannot be understood), e.g. This street map is **incomprehensible**.

invisible (= cannot be seen), e.g. Trees surround the house, so it's **invisible** from the road.

C -ful and -less

-ful often means 'full of' or 'having the quality of the noun':

careful (= doing sth with care and attention), e.g. **careful driver**

helpful (= able to help), e.g. Her **advice** was very **helpful**.

painful (= giving pain), e.g. It was **painful** when I hit my hand.

useful (= has a lot of use), e.g. I found it a **useful book**.

thoughtful (= kind and thinks of others)



painful

thoughtful

-less often means 'without':

careless (= without care, and causing mistakes), e.g. His work is full of **careless mistakes**.

useless (= without use and often terrible), e.g. This knife is **useless** – it won't cut anything.

homeless (= with nowhere to live), e.g. Many families are **homeless** because of the war.

Exercises

8.1 Write an adjective (or adjectives) formed from these nouns or verbs. Cover the opposite page first.

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------------|------------|------------|
| 1 danger | <i>dangerous</i> | 7 care | 13 sun |
| 2 attract | | 8 thought | 14 music |
| 3 create | | 9 politics | 15 comfort |
| 4 cloud | | 10 enjoy | 16 fame |
| 5 suit | | 11 pain | 17 rely |
| 6 use | | 12 dirt | 18 emotion |

8.2 Fill the gaps with suitable adjectives from the opposite page.

- You must be very *careful* when you drive in wet weather.
- Everyone in my country has heard of her; she's very
- The tourist information office was very, and told us everything we needed to know.
- This is a very road, you know. There were three serious accidents on it last year.
- It was very when I hit my leg against the corner of that table.
- This bag is very : I take it to work and when I go on holiday.
- We've never had problems with our TV in ten years; it's been very
- The factory is in the part of the city, and it's not very attractive.
- A 100 gram bag is 80 pence, but the 200 gram bag is only £1.20, so it's more to buy the larger bag.
- It's terrible that there are so many people in a country that is so rich.
- Teenagers want to be, and wear all the latest styles.
- I can't understand a word of these instructions – they're

8.3 How many of these words can form opposites with the suffix *-less*?

- 1 wonderful 2 useful 3 awful 4 careful 5 beautiful

What are the opposites of the other words (the ones without *-less*)?

8.4 Match adjectives from the left with the most suitable nouns from the right.

homeless	famous	actor	bed
careless	useful	party	mistake
comfortable	cloudy	advice	area
industrial	enjoyable	family	morning

8.5 From the adjectives on the opposite page, choose two or three which could describe each of these people or things. (You can use the same adjective more than once.)

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *famous, creative, musical*
- the weather
- someone's driving
- an area of a city
- a car
- yourself

