**Vocabulary: Roots, Prefixes and Suffixes  
  
Knowing the parts of a word can help you build your reading vocabulary. An English word can consist of three parts:   
the**[**root**](http://www.southampton.liunet.edu/academic/pau/course/webroot.htm)**, a**[**prefix**](http://www.southampton.liunet.edu/academic/pau/course/webpre.htm)**and a**[**suffix**](http://www.southampton.liunet.edu/academic/pau/course/websuf.htm)**.**

Prefixes:

A **prefix** is a word part that is added to the beginning of a base word.  
**Base Word Prefix New Word**  
 typical a- (not) atypical

**Here are the most common:**

          ab (away, not)--abnormal                           ex (out)--extract

          ad (to)--adhesion                                in, il, un, ir (not)--inadequate

          be (by)--belittle                                   pre (before)--predict

          com, con, co, col (with)--conjunction  pro (in front of)--proceed

          de (from)--decentralize                        re (back)--rebuttal

          dis, di (apart)--dissect                         sub (under)--subway

          en (in)--enact                                      un (not)--unannounced

**Other common prefixes and their meanings include:**

          ante (before)--antedate                        non (not)--non-union

          anti (against)--antidote                         out (beyond)--outweigh

          auto (self)--autobiography                   peri (around)--perimeter

          bi (two)--bisect                                   poly (many)--polygon

          bene (well)--benefactor                       post (after)--postscript

          circum (around)--circumnavigate         retro (backwards)--retrogressive

          contra (against)--contradict                 semi (half)--semicircle

          equi (equal)--equilateral                       super (above)--superimpose

          fore (before)--forewarn                       syn, sym (with)--synthesis

          inter (between)--international               trans (across)--transform

          mono (one)--monologue                     tele (afar)--telescope

suffixes:

A **suffix** is a word part that is added to the ending of a base word.  
**Base Word Prefix New Word**  
assist -ant assistant

**Common suffixes:**

***Noun Suffixes***

-ness -- happiness

-ment -- government

-ance -- disturbance

-tion -- irrigation

-ant – assistant  
-er/or - -(doer) painter  
-ism/ist (belief) terrorism

***Adjective Suffixes***

-able or -ible -- divisible

-al or -ial -- coastal

-ful -- fearful

-ive -- productive

-ous -- mountainous

***Verb Suffixes***

-ize -- Americanize

-fy -- magnify

-ate -- emancipate

-en -- soften

***Adverb Suffixes***

-ly-- rapidly

-wise-- lengthwise

-ways-- sideways

-ward-- southward

**Here are some common affixes in science:**

homo- (same or like)--homogeneous        pro- (forth)--progenitor

hetero- (different)--heterogeneous    -phobia -- (fear) - - claustrophobia

inter- (between)—intercellular -cide -- (killing) infanticide

hydro- (water)--hydrocarbon                   -ectomy – (cutting) appendectomy

equi- (equal)--equidistant                         -logy (study of)--biology

aqua- (water)--aqueduct                         -ism (state of condition)--alcoholism

**Here are some common prefixes in math:**

hemi-, demi- (half)--hemisphere

uni-, mono- (one)--unitary, monologue

bi-(two)--bisect

tri- (three)--triangle

quadri-, tetra- (four)--quadrilateral, tetrameter

penta-, quin- (five)--pentagon, quintet

hex-, hexa- (six)--hexagonal

sept-, hepta- (seven)--septuagenarian, heptameter

octa- (eight)--octagon

nona- (nine)--nonary

dec- (ten)--decade

centi- (hundred)—centimeter

roots:

A **root** is the base part. It is the main word definition or meaning.  
**Base Word Prefix New Word**  
assist -ant assistant

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **ROOTS** | **MEANING** | **WORD** |
| **ami, amic-** | love | amiable, amicable |
| **ann, enni** | year | anniversary, annual, biennial, perennial |
| **arch** | chief, leader, ruler | archangel, monarch, archaic, archenemy |
| **aud** | sound | auditorium, audible, audiologist, audiotape |
| **biblio** | book | bibliography, bibliophile |
| **bio-** | life | biography, autobiography, biology, antibiotic |
| **brev** | short | brief, abbreviate |
| **chrom-** | color | chromatic, monochrome, polychrome |
| **chron-** | time | chronicle, chronology, chronometer, synchronize |
| **cogn** | know | recognize, cognitive, incognito |
| **corp** | body | corpus, corpse, corporal |
| **crac, crat** | rule, ruler | autocrat, democracy, bureaucrat, democracy |
| **cred** | believe | credible, credulous, credibility, credit, credo |
| **culp** | guilt | culpable, culprit |
| **dei** | god | deity, deify |
| **demo-** | people | demography, democracy, epidemic |
| **dent** | tooth | dentist, dentifrice, dentin |
| **derm-** | skin | dermatology, epidermis, hypodermic |
| **dic** | speak, say | dictate, predict, diction, indict |
| **dox** | belief, opinion | orthodoxy, paradox, heterodoxy |
| **duc, duct** | lead | induce, deduce, seduction, conduct, abduct |
| **equ** | equal | equal, equity, equanimity, equate, equidistant |
| **fac** | make, do | manufacture, factory, benefactor |
| **frater** | brother | fraternal, fraternize |
| **gam-** | marriage | monogamy, polygamy, bigamy |
| **geo-** | earth | geopolitical, geology, geography, geothermal |
| **graph-** | writing, printing | graphology, biography, telegraph, geography |
| **hydro, hydr** | water | dehydrate, hydraulics, hydroelectric, hydroplane |
| **loc** | place | local, location |
| **magn** | large | magnify, magnate, magnificent |
| **man** | hand | manufacture, manual, manuscript |
| **mar** | sea | marine, mariner |
| **mater** | mother | maternal, maternity, matriarchy, matricide |
| **metri, meter-** | measure | geometric, thermometer, odometer |
| **min** | small | minority, minuscule, minute |
| **mit, miss** | send | permit, submission, mission, emit, |
|  |  |  |
| **mob, mot, mov** | move | mobile, automobile, motion, promote, movie |
| **mor, mort** | death | mortal, mortician, immortality |
| **morph** | form, structure | metamorphosis, amorphous, morphology |
| **mut** | change | mutant, mutability, mutate |
| **neuro** | nerve | neurology, neurosis, neurobiology |
| **nomen /nomin** | name | nominal, nominate, nomenclature |
| **nov** | new | novel, renovate, innovation, novella |
| **nym, onym** | word, name | synonym, acronym, anonymous, pseudonym |
| **pac** | peace | pacify, Pacific Ocean, pacifist |
| **pater** | father | paternal, paternity, patricide, patrilineal, patriotic |
| **path** | feeling, suffering | sympathy, apathy, empathy, telepathy, pathology |
| **ped, pod** | foot | pedal, pedometer, centipede, gastropod |
| **pel, puls** | push | pulsate, repulsive, impulse, compel, propel |
| **phon-, phono-** | sound, voice | telephone, euphony, cacophony, phonograph |
| **port** | carry | portable, transport, portage, report, |
| **pot** | power | potent, omnipotent, potentate |
| **psych-** | soul, spirit, mind | psychology, psychic, psychobiography |
| **quer, quis** | ask | query, inquisition, |
| **scent, scend** | climb | ascend, ascent |
| **schizo, schiz** | division, split | schizophrenic |
| **sci** | know | scientific |
| **scrib, script** | write | manuscript, scribe, proscribe, scripture |
| **sec, sect** | cut | dissect, section |
| **sens, sent** | feel, be aware | sensible, sentient |
| **sequ, secu** | follow | sequence, sequel, consecutive |
| **simil** | same | similar, assimilate, simile, facsimile (fax) |
| **sol** | sun | solar |
| **son** | sound | sonar, resonate, unison |
| **soph** | wisdom, knowledge | philosophy, sophisticated, sophomore (wise fool) |
| **spec, spic** | look, see | spectacles, spectator, inauspicious, prospect |
| **spir** | breathe | inspire, respiration, conspire, perspiration |
| **stat** | stay, position | station |
| **tang, tact** | touch | tactile, tangible |
| **temp** | time | temporary, temporize |
| **terr** | earth | subterranean, terrain, terrestrial, disinter |
| **theo** | god, deity | theology, polytheism, atheist, monotheism |
| **therm-** | heat | thermal, thermos, thermometer |
| **trophy** | nutrition, food | atrophy—without nutrition |
| **vac** | empty | vacation, vacuum, vacuous, vacant |
| **ven, vent** | come, go | intervene, convene, contravene |
| **ver** | truth | veracity, verify, verity |
| **vit** | life | vital, revitalize, vitamin |
| **zoo** | animal | zoo, zoology, zoolatry |

\*Most come from Greek and Latin