

Word Formation: Prefixes & Suffixes



ENGLISH FOR COMPUTER SCIENCE

EXTRA NOTES #3

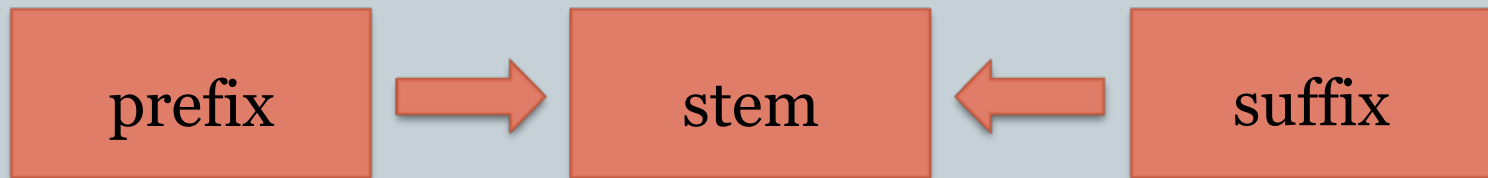
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Introduction

2

- Word formation in English:



- Examples:

- programmer: program + er (someone who programs)
- underestimate: under + estimate (estimate somebody/something too little)
- unrecognizable: un + recognize + able (cannot be recognized)

Interpreting the Meaning of Prefixes and Suffixes

3

- Prefixes usually change the meaning of a word
- Examples:
 - unpleasant
 - interactive
- Suffixes usually change the part of speech of the word
- Examples:
 - pleasantly
 - active
- Be careful when interpreting the meanings based on prefixes and suffixes; it is easy to misjudge
- Examples:
 - September, October, November, December

Prefixes

4

- Prefixes can be categorized as below
 - Negative and positive
 - Size
 - Location
 - Time and order
 - Number

Negative and Positive Prefixes

This prefix type is used to change the meaning of the stem negatively or positively.

Prefix Type	Prefix	Meaning	Examples
Negative	un- in- im- il- ir-	not	unmagnetized incomplete impossible illegal irregular, irrelevant
	non-	not connected with	non-programmable
	mis- mal-	bad, wrong	misdirect malfunction
	dis-	opposite feeling opposite action	disagree disconnect
	anti-	against	antiglare
	de-	reduce, reverse	demagnetize, decode
	under-	too little	underestimate
Positive	re-	do again	reorganize
	over-	too much	overload

Prefixes of Size

This prefix type is used to aggregate the meaning of a stem with a size concept.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
semi-	half, partly	semiconductor
equi-	equal	equidistant
mini-	small	minicomputer
micro-	very small	microcomputer
macro- mega-	large, great	macroeconomics megabyte

Prefixes of Location

This prefix type is used to aggregate the meaning of a stem with a location concept.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
inter-	between, among	interface, interactive
intra-	within, inside of	intranet
super-	over	supersonic
trans-	across	transmit, transfer
ex-	out	exclude, extrinsic
in-	inside	include, intrinsic
extra-	beyond	extraordinary
sub-	under	subschemata
infra-	below	infra-red, infrastructure
peri-	around	peripheral

Prefixes of Time and Order

This prefix type is used to aggregate the meaning of a stem with a time or an order concept.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
ante- pre-	before	antecedent prefix
prime-	first	primary, primitive
post-	after	postdated
retro-	backward	retroactive

Prefixes of Numbers

This prefix type is used to aggregate the meaning of a stem with a number or count concept.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
semi-	half	semicircle
mono-	one	monochromatic
bi-	two	binary
tri-	three	triangle
quad-	four	quadruple
penta-	five	pentagon
hex	six	hexadecimal
sept(em)-	seven	September
oct-	eight	octal
dec-	ten	decimal
multi-	many	multiplexor, multidimensional

Other Prefixes

This prefix type includes the prefixes which cannot be categorized into any of the aforementioned categories.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
pro-	before, in advance forward	program progress
auto-	self	automatic autobiography autograph
co- con-	together, with	coordinate connect

Suffixes

11

- Suffixes can be categorized as below
 - Noun-forming
 - Verb-forming
 - Adverb-forming
 - Adjective-forming

Noun-forming Suffixes

This suffix type creates nouns from the stems (usually verbs).

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
-ance	state	performance
-ence	quality of	independence
-er, -or	a person who a thing which	programmer, operator compiler, accumulator
-ist, -yst	a person who	analyst, typist
-ian	pertaining to	electrician
-tion, -ation	the act of	compilation
-ness	condition of	readiness
-ion	action/state	conversion
-ing	activity	multiplexing
-ment	state, action	measurement
-ity	state, quality	electricity
-ism	condition/state	magnetism
-dom	domain/condition	kingdom, freedom
-ship	condition/state	relationship, partnership

Verb-forming Suffixes

This suffix type creates verbs from the stems.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
-ize/-ise	to make	computerize
-ate		automate, activate, calculate
-ify		simplify
-en		harden, widen

Adverb-forming Suffixes

This suffix type creates adverbs from the stems.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
-ly	in the manner of	electronically, logically, comparably, helpfully

Adjective-forming Suffixes

This suffix type creates adjectives from the stems.

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
-al -ar -ic -ical	having the quality of	computational, logical circular magnetic, automatic electrical
-able -ible	capable of being	comparable divisible
-ous	like, full of	dangerous
-ful	characterized by	helpful
-less	without	careless
-ish	like	yellowish
-ed -ive	having the quality of	computed interactive

References

16

- K. Boeckner, P. Charles Brown. Oxford English for Computing, Oxford University Press, 1996
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition