

TIPS FOR TEACHERS



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AFFIXES & ROOTS

SKILL OVERVIEW: Affixes and roots

The English language has been strongly influenced by other languages over the centuries, particularly by Latin and Greek. Understanding the structure of these two western classical languages affords many insights into the formation and meaning of English vocabulary words. Greek and Latin are inflecting languages in which words and usage are modified by the addition of prefixes and suffixes. Familiarity with prefix meaning, suffix usage, and the most common Latin roots can provide clues for figuring out tens of thousands of words.

Step 1 – Teach common prefixes and their meanings

Prefixes are placed at the beginning of words to change meaning. Learning approximately 20 high-utility prefixes can significantly enhance one's ability to analyze word meaning.

For example, the following prefixes all mean *not* or *opposite*:

dis – disappear, distraction, dismiss, dispute

im – immature, imperfect, improbable, impudent

in – inequity, ineffective, incredible, insecure, inaccessible

ir – irresponsible, irreverent, irregular, irresistible

un – unobstructed, unrealistic, unbeaten, uncivilized

Step 2 – Show how suffixes modify parts of speech

Suffixes added to the end of words affect usage rather than meaning. Most commonly, suffixes denote verb tense, noun plurals, or adjective degree. Understanding these uses improves grammar, but does not build vocabulary. However, recognizing how suffixes are utilized to modify parts of speech can be a worthwhile meaning-analysis strategy. Identifying the usage might help a reader to get the gist of what is being said.

The following show suffixes modifying parts of speech:

-ant, -ent (verb to adjective) – observe to observant, differ to different, defy to defiant

-ty (adjective to noun) – active to activity, safe to safety, cruel to cruelty

-ion (verb to noun) – collect to collection, act to action, appreciate to appreciation

Step 3 – Study the most frequently used Latin roots

Frequently occurring Latin roots and their variant forms are potent vocabulary builders. Just learning the top 25 would offer insight into innumerable English words. Some that are more straightforward, such as *port* or *scribe*, may be learned with little instruction. However, structured lessons would unlock many others and may be needed for some students.

The following are examples of the Latin root **mit, miss**, which means to send or let go. The word meanings in parentheses couple both the root and prefix meanings.

commit/commission (send together); transmit/transmission (send across);

admit/admission (let go toward); remit/remission/remittance/remiss (send back);

intermission/intermittent (let go between); emit/emission/emissary (send out of)

PREFIX MEANINGS & EXAMPLES

a- (before consonants)	on, in, to, of, not	aboard, ashore, apart, asymmetric
an- (before vowels)		anesthetic, another, anarchy
ab-	from, away	abnormal, abstain, abstract
ac-, ad-, af-,	to, toward	accent, acquire, admit, adapt,
ag-, as-, at-		affair, aggressive, assign, attune
ambi-	both	ambidextrous, ambiguous
amphi-	around	amphitheater, amphibian
ante-	before	antecedent, anteroom
anti-	against, oppose	antifreeze, antitrust, antidote
arch-	chief	archangel, archrival
auto-	of/by self	automobile, autograph, automatic
be-	by, away	beside, behave, befriend, beneath
bi-	two, twice	bipartisan, bicycle, bifocal, biweekly
by-	near, aside	bypass, bystander, bylaw
circum-	around	circumstance, circumspect
co-, com-	with, together	cooperate, coincide, combat,
con-, col-		combine, conflict, conduct, collect,
cor-		collaborate, correct, correspond
contra-, counter-	against, opposite	contradict, counterproposal
de-	away, down, opposite	depart, decay, deplete, deactivate
dis-	opposite, from, away	dishonest, disobey, disgust, discount
en-, em-	put into, on, make	endanger, enforce, emphasis
epi-	upon, around	epidermis, epilogue, epidemic
e-, ex-	out of, from	emit, evict, exhale, export, exclaim
en-	make, in	enlarge, entrust, enfold
for-, fore-	away, in front of	forget, foretell, foreground
in-, im-	in, into	inject, intense, impress, impact
in-, im-	not	indefinite, impatient, impossible,
il-, ir-		illiterate, illegal, irresponsible
inter-	between, mutual	interact, international, interrupt
intra-, intro-	within, into	intramural, intravenous, introduce
mis-	wrong	mismanage, misinterpret, mistake
mono-	one	monolateral, monotone
multi-	several	multifaceted, multicolored
non-	not	nonviolent, nonsense, nonfiction
ob-, of-, op-	in way of, toward	obstacle, obscure, offense, oppose
per-	throughout, completely	permit, perplex, pertain
pre-	before	prehistoric, prepaid, preschool
post-	after	postpone, posttest, postscript
pro-	support, before, forward	pronoun, proponent, profess
re-	back, again	repeat, retract, return, reconstruct
semi-	partly, half	semicircle, semiannual, semiskilled
sub-, suc-, suf-	under, lower, next	submarine, succeed, suffer,
sug-, sup-, sus-		suggest, suppose, suspend, suspect
super-	over, above	supernatural, supervise
tele-	from a distance	telephone, telepathy, television
trans-	across, beyond, change	transport, transform, transcript
ultra-	beyond	ultraviolet, ultrasonic
un-	not, opposite	unpleasant, unlikely, untie, unfair

SUFFIX USAGE & EXAMPLES

-able, -ible	adjective	laughable, portable, visible
-ability, -ibility	noun	marketability, credibility
-acy	noun	diplomacy, accuracy, literacy
-age	noun	percentage, courage, package
-al	adjective	comical, annual, familial
-an, -ian	noun	American, magician, optician
-ance, -ence, -ancy, -ency	noun	acceptance, conference, constancy, emergency
-ant, -ent	adjective	observant, different, indulgent
	noun	assistant, president
-ar, -er	adjective	singular, sweeter (comparative)
	noun	beggar, liar, teacher, southerner
-arian	noun	disciplinarian, humanitarian
-ed	verb (past tense)	walked, hummed, played
	adjective	feathered, treasured, striped
-en	verb	loosen, harden, weaken
	adjective	earthen, swollen, wooden
-es	noun (plural)	boxes, dishes, ladies, kisses
	verb (present indicative)	teaches, brushes, fixes
-est	adjective (superlative)	prettiest, kindest, snowiest
-ful	adjective	colorful, beautiful, wonderful
-fy, -ify	verb	petrify, magnify, intensify, satisfy,
-ic, -ical	adjective	heroic, dramatic, terrific, historical, technical
-ing	verb (participle)	throwing, plowing, fighting
	noun	blessing, paneling
-ion, -sion	noun	fashion, champion, division, vision, inversion
-tion	noun	motion, suggestion, contribution
-ish	adjective	childish, yellowish, English
-ism	noun	criticism, autism, fanaticism
-ist	noun	lyricist, motorist, biologist
-istic	adjective	legalistic, ritualistic
-ity	noun	density, curiosity, brevity
-ive	adjective	disruptive, evasive, lucrative
-ize	verb	alphabetize, equalize, emphasize
-less	adjective	hopeless, thoughtless, colorless
-ly	adverb	meanly, roughly, thoughtlessly
	adjective	elderly, daily, womanly
-ment	noun	development, accomplishment
-ness	noun	loudness, meanness, kindness
-ory	adjective	auditory, discriminatory
	noun	directory, observatory
-ous	adjective	joyous, serious, courteous, gracious
-osity	noun	curiosity, monstrosity
-th	noun	growth, health, width
	adjective (numeric)	fifth, sixteenth
-ty	noun	activity, certainty, safety, property
	adjective (numeric)	twenty, sixty
-ure	noun	architecture, legislature
-ward(s)	adverb	homeward, backwards, forward
-y	adjective	curly, windy, messy, fruity
	noun	jealousy, blasphemy

READING MANIPULATIVES PRODUCTS: Suffixes, Prefixes & Latin Roots Match

inter <small>BETWEEN</small>	mission	When we went to the theater, there was an _____ before the final act.
un <small>OPPOSITE</small>	fasten	Bob could not _____ the boat from the dock because the knot was too tight.
micro <small>SMALL</small>	biology	_____ is the study of minute organisms that live on our planet.
en <small>PUT INTO</small>	title	Often age will _____ you to more privileges than your younger siblings.
pre <small>BEFORE</small>	paid	The last month of his rent was _____, so John had some extra cash.

RM PRODUCTS: 340, 345 PREFIXES A & B MATCH

friend <small>NOUN - ADJECTIVE</small>	ly	One reason that Mary usually gets invited to go places is that she is _____ and thoughtful.
natur <small>NOUN - ADJECTIVE</small>	al	If we do not preserve our _____ resources, future generations will not be able to enjoy them.
suburb <small>NOUN - ADJECTIVE</small>	an	A major change in cities in the 20th century was that people moved to _____ communities.
moment <small>NOUN - ADJECTIVE</small>	ary	Even a _____ lapse of concentration when driving can lead to a terrible accident.
baby <small>NOUN - ADJECTIVE</small>	ish	It is so _____ to pout just because you did not get your way.

RM PRODUCT: 330 SUFFIXES MATCH

ad <small>TOWARD</small>	vert <small>T-, VERS-, TURN</small>	ise <small>VERB</small>	Cigarette companies are not allowed to _____ on television.
re <small>BACK</small>	vert <small>VERS-, TURN</small>	ed <small>VERB</small>	He _____ to his old ways every time he was around his family.
vert <small>VERT-, VERS-, TURN</small>	igo <small>NOUN</small>		She has attacks of dizziness, called _____, when she gets up too fast.
tra <small>ACROSS</small>	vers <small>VERT-, VERS-, TURN</small>	ing <small>VERB</small>	Mountain goats are good at _____ steep hills.
con <small>WITH</small>	vert <small>T-, VERS-, TURN</small>	ible <small>VERB TO ADJECTIVE</small>	We get to put the roof down on our _____ when the weather is nice.

RM PRODUCT: 335 LATIN ROOTS MATCH

This holistic approach to studying affixes builds genuine understanding of the function of prefixes and suffixes.

In the 12 suffix sets, students learn that suffixes added to the end of root words change English words from one part of speech to another (words in each set follow the same pattern, such as verb to noun). Root word cards show spelling changes.

Prefixes carry meaning and are added before root words to change the meaning of the new word. Prefix meaning is noted under the prefix. Level B has suffixes added to root words (root noted).

Latin root sets have 5 roots each for 3 Latin words. The root and prefix meanings, as well as suffix part of speech, are noted on the cards. Using these is a superb way to build vocabulary.

For each of the 15 combinations in sets, there is a cloze sentence to tie usage and comprehension to the new words formed. Sentences often help students to figure out combinations.

SUFFIXES MATCH	Download PDF	\$10
PREFIXES A MATCH	Download PDF	\$10
PREFIXES B MATCH	Download PDF	\$10
LATIN ROOTS MATCH	Download PDF	\$12

INSTRUCTION: Build foundation with lessons

Latin root and affix meaning provide insights into the meaning of advanced vocabulary words. Due to the steps involved in analyzing meaning, work with these concepts before using manipulatives. The following is a sample word-study group:

vert, vers – Latin root meaning to turn

advertise – verb, turn toward

adversity – noun, turn against

avert – verb, turn aside or from

convertible – adjective, turn into

divert – verb, turn away

extrovert – noun, turn outward

introvert – noun, turn within

reverse – verb, turn back

revert – verb, turn back

subversive – adjective, turn under

traverse – verb, turn across

vertical – adjective, turn up

vertigo – noun, turn around