

Appendix A

Prefixes and Suffixes

Certain beginnings and endings can be affixed to some words or stems of words that change their meanings. These beginnings and endings fall into two categories: Prefixes are tacked onto the beginning of a word, while suffixes are stuck onto the end. Together, these affixed word pieces are called *-fixes*. A *-fix* can change the meaning of a word altogether, like *un-* undoes something, or it can add a little nuance of meaning, as *-ac* turns a mania (a fad) into a maniac. Watch out!

It is not within the scope of this book to comprehensively examine suffixes and prefixes, but in the following table some of the most common ones are listed, along with a brief sketch of what they do to the words to which they're affixed; many also include examples. I leave it to you to determine whether the *-fix* is a prefix or suffix from where the hyphen (-) is placed: *fix-(word)* or *(word)-fix*. I'm sure you'll recognize many, if not all, of them.

Prefix/Suffix	Meaning/Usage
a-	same as <i>ab-</i> before <i>m</i> , <i>p</i> , or <i>v</i>
ab-	away; from; off; down (<i>abhor</i> , <i>abjure</i>)
abs-	same as <i>ab-</i> before <i>c</i> or <i>t</i>
ac-	same as <i>ad-</i> before <i>p</i> or <i>q</i>
-ac	of, relating to (<i>maniac</i>)
ad-	motion toward, nearness to
-ad	forms adverbs, meaning toward, like <i>cephelad</i>
af-	same as <i>ad-</i> before <i>f</i>
al-	means <i>the</i> before words of Arabic origin (<i>algebra</i>)
-al	forms adjectives meaning like (<i>personal</i>) or nouns meaning the act of (<i>rehearsal</i>)
-an	belonging to or related to (<i>Mexican</i>)

(continued)

Prefix/Suffix	Meaning/Usage
-ance	the act or process of doing (<i>continuance</i>), something done (<i>utterance</i>)
ap-	same as <i>ad-</i> before a vowel
-ar, -ary	forms adjectives meaning relating to (<i>singular, polar, urinary</i>)
as-	same as <i>ad-</i> before <i>s</i>
be-	forms verbs meaning around, thoroughly, excessively, treated as (<i>beset, bemoan, befriend</i>)
bi-	two, twice (<i>biplane, bilateral</i>)
bio-	life (<i>biography, biology</i>)
by-	close by; on the side (<i>bystander, bypass</i>)
co-	same as <i>com-</i> before <i>h</i> or a vowel
col-	same as <i>com-</i> before <i>l</i>
com-	next to, with, together (<i>compassion</i>)
con-	same as <i>com-</i> before <i>c, d, g, j, n, q, s, t, v</i> , and sometimes <i>f</i>
cor-	same as <i>com-</i> before <i>r</i>
-cy	quality, state, or condition (<i>lunacy</i>)
de-	away from; off (<i>derail</i>); down (<i>decline</i>); reverse action; undo (<i>decode</i>)
di-	twice, doubled (<i>diatomic, dihybrid</i>)
di-	same as <i>dis-</i> before <i>b, d, g, l, m, n, r</i> , or <i>v</i>
dia-	through; between (<i>diagonal, diameter</i>)
dif-	same as <i>dis-</i> before <i>f</i>
dis-	1. away; apart (<i>disperse, dismiss</i>); 2. not or un- (<i>dishonest</i>); 3. lack of; opposite (<i>disunion, disease</i>)
-dom	1. rank; dominion of (<i>kingdom</i>); 2. state of being (<i>officialdom, martyrdom</i>)
-drome	1. arena (<i>velodrome</i>); 2. large field or arena (<i>airdrome</i>)
dyn-, dyna-	power (<i>dynamo, dynameter</i>)
dys-	bad, impaired, abnormal (<i>dysfunctional</i>)

Prefix/Suffix	Meaning/Usage
-eer	a person who makes or does things (<i>engineer, pamphleteer</i>)
ef-	same as <i>ex-</i> before <i>f</i>
em-	same as <i>en-</i> before <i>b, m, or p</i> (<i>emboss, empower</i>)
en-	1. to cover or wrap (<i>enrobe</i>); 2. to cause to be or to make into (<i>endanger</i>); in or into (<i>encase</i>)
end-	same as <i>endo-</i> before a vowel
endo-	within (<i>endosperm, endocrine</i>)
epi-	on the outside (<i>epidermis</i>)
equi-	equally (<i>equiangular</i>)
-er	1. a person having to do with or from somewhere (<i>hatter, writer, New Yorker</i>); 2. forming the comparative (<i>bigger</i>)
-ery	1. a place for, or a place to be (<i>eatery, winery</i>); 2. the act of (<i>robbery</i>)
-est	forming the superlative (<i>greatest, smallest</i>)
ex-	former (<i>exwife</i>)
exo-	outside (<i>exoskeleton</i>)
-fy	make; cause to become (<i>liquefy, putrefy</i>)
-gamy	marriage (<i>polygamy</i>)
geo-	of the earth (<i>geology</i>)
-gon	having a certain number of angles (<i>octagon</i>)
-gram	to write (<i>diagram</i>)
-graph	something that writes, or is written (<i>telegraph</i>)
helio-	relating to the sun (<i>heliotropism</i>)
hex-	same as <i>hexa-</i> before a vowel
hexa-	six (<i>hexagon</i>)
holo-	entire, whole (<i>holograph</i>)
hom-	same as <i>homo-</i> before a vowel
homo-	same, equal, alike (<i>homonym</i>)

(continued)

Prefix/Suffix	Meaning/Usage
hydro-	1. water (<i>hydrometer</i>); 2. containing hydrogen (<i>hydrochloric</i>)
-iatry	treatment (<i>psychiatry</i>)
-ic	having to do with (<i>volcanic</i>)
-ide	the end of the second name in a compound whose molecule contains exactly two atoms (<i>sodium chloride</i>)
idio-	one's own, personal (<i>idiosyncrasy</i>)
il-	same as <i>in-</i> used before <i>l</i>
im-	same as <i>in-</i> used before <i>b, m, or p</i>
in-	in, into, within, (<i>inside</i>); toward (<i>inward</i>); also used to intensify some words of Latin origin (<i>inbreed, induct, infer</i>)
-ine	having the nature of; like (<i>crystalline</i>)
inter-	between or among (<i>interval</i>); 2. together (<i>interact</i>)
intra-	within, inward (<i>intramural</i>)
intro-	same as <i>intra-</i> (<i>introvert</i>)
ir-	same as <i>in-</i> used before <i>r</i>
-ism	1. condition of being (<i>pauperism</i>); 2. devotion to (<i>nationalism</i>)
iso-	equal, similar, alike (<i>isobar</i>)
-ist	1. one who does or participates in an <i>-ism</i> (<i>satirist</i>); 2. an expert at something (<i>scientist</i>); 3. a believer or adherent to (<i>atheist</i>)
-istic, -istical	the former of adjectives relating to an action (<i>artistic, egotistical</i>)
-ite	1. inhabitant or native of (<i>Brooklynite</i>); 2. a salt of (<i>halite</i>); 3. a certain rock (<i>lignite</i>); 4. a descendant of (<i>Israelite</i>)
-itis	an inflammatory disease (<i>tonsilitis</i>)
-lepsy	a fit or attack (<i>epilepsy</i>)
-let	1. small, diminutive (<i>starlet</i>); 2. small object worn as a band on the body (<i>anklet</i>)
lipo-	fatty (<i>liposuction</i>)
-lith, -lithic	stone (<i>batholith, neolithic</i>)
-logy	study of (<i>biology</i>)

Prefix/Suffix	Meaning/Usage
-lysis	destruction; dissolving; loosening; dissolution (<i>analysis</i>)
macro-	large or enlarged (<i>macrobiotic</i>)
-mania	a mental disorder or a wild enthusiasm for something (<i>pyromania, hulamania</i>)
-maniac	a person affected by a mania (<i>cleptomaniac</i>)
maxi-	maximum; of larger scope than usual (<i>maxi-power</i>), often hyphenated as an attachment to a word
micro-	very small; a millionth of a unit (<i>microscope, micrometer</i>)
milli-	one one-thousandth of a unit (<i>milliliter</i>)
mini-	miniature (<i>miniskirt</i>)
mis-	wrong; wrongly; bad; poorly (<i>miscue, misfire</i>)
mult-	same as <i>multi-</i> before a vowel
multi-	much; many; more than two (<i>multichanneled</i>)
narco-	1. sleep (<i>narcolepsy</i>); 2. narcotic (<i>narcotism</i>)
neur-	same as <i>neuro-</i> before a vowel
neuro-	of the nerves or nervous system (<i>neurology, neuritis</i>)
non-	not; the opposite of (<i>nonaggressive</i>)
nona-	nine (<i>nonagon, nonet</i>)
-nym	name (<i>pseudonym</i>)
o-	same as <i>ob-</i> before <i>m</i>
ob-	1. to; for; in front of (<i>obtrude</i>); 2. opposed to; against; opposite (<i>obverse</i>); 3. upon; over (<i>obscure</i>)
oc-	same as <i>ob-</i> before <i>c</i>
oct(a/o)-	eight (<i>octagon, octopus</i>)
of-	same as <i>ob-</i> before <i>f</i>
-oid	like; resembling (<i>ovoid</i>)
op-	same as <i>ob-</i> before <i>p</i>
-or	1. a person or thing that does something specific (<i>addressor, incisor</i>); 2. a quality or condition (<i>error, savor</i>)

(continued)

Prefix/Suffix	Meaning/Usage
-otic	1. of or affected with (<i>neurotic</i>); 2. producing (<i>hypnotic</i>)
oto-	of the ear (<i>ototic</i>)
-ous	full of (<i>beauteous, capacious</i>)
over-	excessive (<i>overact, overindulge</i>)
paleo-	ancient (<i>paleontology, paleolithic</i>)
pan-	embracing all (<i>pantheistic</i>)
para-	by the side of; subordinate to (<i>paralegal, paraprofessional</i>)
-ped	foot (<i>biped</i>)
penta-	five (<i>pentagon</i>)
peri-	1. beyond; around (<i>periscope</i>); 2. near (<i>perinatal</i>)
phleb-	same as <i>phlebo-</i> before a vowel
phlebo-	vein (<i>phlebotomy</i>)
photo-	of or produced by light (<i>photocopy</i>)
phyto-	floral; of a plant; vegetation (<i>phytoplankton</i>)
plano-	having one side flat (<i>planoconvex</i>)
pneumo-	of breathing; the lungs; respiration (<i>pneumococcal</i>)
poly-	many (<i>polygon</i>)
pre-	before (<i>prefix</i>)
pro-	for (<i>proactive</i>)
proto-	first in time or importance (<i>protoplasm</i>)
pseudo-	false (<i>pseudonym</i>)
psych-	same as <i>psycho-</i> before a vowel
psycho-	of the mind (<i>psychotic</i>)
quadri-	four (<i>quadrilateral, quadriped</i>)
re-	again (<i>rethink</i>)
retro-	backward (<i>retrofit</i>)
rheo-	a flow; current (<i>rheostat</i>)
rhino-	nose (<i>rhinoplasty</i>)

Prefix/Suffix	Meaning/Usage
self-	of oneself; automatic (<i>self-interest</i> , <i>self-loading</i>)
semi-	half; twice in a specified period (<i>semicircle</i> , <i>semiannually</i>)
sub-	1. under; beneath; below (<i>subhuman</i>); 2. of lower rank than; inferior (<i>subordinate</i>); 3. to a lesser degree (<i>subpar</i>); 4. near; almost (<i>substitute</i>)
suf-	same as <i>sub-</i> before <i>f</i>
sym-	same as <i>syn-</i> before <i>b</i> , <i>m</i> , or <i>p</i>
syn-	together; at the same time (<i>synchronize</i>)
sys-	same as <i>syn-</i> before <i>s</i> , <i>h</i> , and other aspirate sounds
tele-	at a distance (<i>telecommute</i>); of, in, or by (<i>televise</i>)
tran-	same as <i>trans-</i> before <i>s</i>
trans-	across; on the other side of; above and beyond (<i>transcend</i> , <i>transcontinental</i>)
tri-	three (<i>triangle</i>)
un-	not (<i>unused</i> , <i>unsupervised</i>)
vice-	one who acts in place of; second in command (<i>viceroys</i> , <i>vice president</i>)