

## 10. USING PREFIXES, SUFFIXES AND ROOTS TO FIND THE MEANING OF A WORD

To understand the meaning of a long word, you can often divide the word into parts.

Look at the word *unjustifiable*.

To better understand its meaning, you can divide the word into three parts:

<u>un</u> = not	→	<i>unjustifiable</i> = (adjective) not having the ability to give a good reason. <i>Killing innocent people is <u>unjustifiable</u>.</i>
<u>justify</u> = (verb) to give a good reason for		
<u>able</u> = can; have the ability to		

The word *unjustifiable* is created out of three parts:

un is a **prefix**. (It comes before the main part of the word.)

justify is the **root**. (It is the main part of the word.)

able is a **suffix**. (It comes after the main part of the word; like many suffixes, it changes the part of speech; e.g., verb → adjective.)

Here are some common prefixes, roots, and suffixes.

Becoming familiar with these will help you guess the meaning of many words.

Prefixes	Meaning	Roots	Meaning	Suffixes	Meaning
<i>a-/an-/ab-</i>	not	<i>chron(o)</i>	time	<b>adjective suffixes</b>	
<i>anti-</i>	against	<i>dic(t)</i>	tell, say	<i>-able/-ible,</i> <i>-ic, -ous, -y</i>	having a quality
<i>de-/di-</i>	away from	<i>duc</i>	lead, bring, take	<i>-al</i>	referring to
<i>contra-/contro-</i>	against	<i>form</i>	make/shape	<i>-ful</i>	having a lot of a quality
<i>ex-/extra-</i>	from, out of, former	<i>path</i>	feeling, disease	<b>noun suffixes</b>	
<i>in-/im-</i>	into <b>or</b> not	<i>morph</i>	form	<i>-ion, -ness,</i> <i>-ty/-y</i>	a state/condition
<i>inter-</i>	between	<i>port</i>	carry	<i>-er/-or, -ist</i>	one who
<i>re-</i>	back, again	<i>spic/spec(t)</i>	look, see	<i>-ship,</i> <i>-hood</i>	referring to
<i>super-</i>	above, extra	<i>terr(e)</i>	land, earth	<i>-ology</i>	the study of
<i>sym-</i>	with, together	<i>vert</i>	turn	<b>verb suffixes</b>	
<i>trans-</i>	across, over	<i>vis/vid</i>	see	<i>-ate, -fy</i>	to make
<i>un-</i>	not			<i>-ize</i>	

**EXERCISE 1** (Have a tutor help you.)

1. Divide the words below into their parts (roots, prefixes, and suffixes).
2. Combine the meanings of each part to find the meaning of the word.
3. Use the suffix to identify the part of speech of the word (e.g., noun, adjective).

Word	Meaning	Part of Speech
<i>a/morph/ous</i>	having no fixed form or shape	adjective
<i>contradiction</i>		
<i>pathology</i>		
<i>terrestrial</i>		
<i>transformation</i>		

**EXERCISE 2** (Have a tutor help you.)

Match the correct prefixes and/or suffixes with the roots below to create English words. Then, in the table below, write the words you have created, what part of speech they are, and what they mean.

**prefixes:** trans- in/im- contra- inter- re- un-  
**roots:** vis spect chrono form port path dict  
**suffixes:** -ion -or/-er -ible/-able -ology -ic -al -ful -ize

Word	Part of Speech	Meaning
<i>Trans/port/able</i>	adjective	can be shipped or sent across distances

**EXERCISE 3** (You can do this on your own.)

Create cards to help you learn prefixes, roots, and suffixes. Follow the example below. Review the cards many times until you can remember the meaning of the prefix, suffix, or root.

**-Front of card-**  
(part of word)

*spic/spec(t)*

**-Back of card-**  
(words containing the part)

*inspect*  
*spectator*