

Adjective, Noun, and Diminutive Suffixes

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This table lists adjective, noun, and diminutive suffixes along with their meanings and word analyses.

Suffix	Meaning	Word Analysis
Adjective		
-ac	pertaining to	(KA [˘] R-de ⁻ -a [˘] k): pertaining to the cardi/ac e heart cardi: heart
-al		neur/al (NU ⁻ -ra [˘] l): pertaining to a nerve neur: nerve

-ar		muscul/ar (MU˘ S-ku˘ -la˘r): pertaining to muscle muscul: muscle
-ary		pulmon/ary (PU˘ L-mo˘ -ne˘r-e˘): pertaining to the lungs pulmon: lung
eal		esophag/eal (e˘ -so˘ f-a˘ -JE-a˘ ˘l): pertaining to the esophagus esophag: esophagus
-ic		thorac/ic (tho˘ -RA˘ S-˘ik): pertaining to the chest thorac: chest

-ical		<p>path/o/log/ical (paˈth-oː-LOˈj-i-kaˈl): pertaining to the study of disease</p> <p>path/o: disease</p> <p>log: study of</p>
-ile		<p>pen/ile (PEˈ-n-il): pertaining to the penis</p> <p>pen: penis</p>
-ior		<p>poster/ior (pooˈs-TEˈ-ri-or): pertaining to the back of the body</p> <p>poster: back (of body), behind, posterior</p>

ous		- cutane/ous (ku ⁻ -TA ⁻ -ne ⁻ -u [˘] s): pertaining to the skin cutane: skin
-tic		acous/tic (a [˘] -KOOS-t [˘] ik): pertaining to hearing acous: hearing

Suffix	Meaning	Word Analysis
Noun		
-esis	condition	di/ur/esis (dī-ŭ-ŕĕ-sĭs): abnormal secretion of large amounts of urine di-: double ur: urine
-ia		pneumon/ia (nū-mō-nĕ-ā): infection of the lung usually caused by bacteria, viruses, or diseases pneumon: air; lung

-ism		<p>hyper/thyroid/ism (hi- -peŕ-THI-royd-izm): condition characterized by overactivity of the thyroid gland hyper-: excessive, above normal thyroid: thyroid gland</p>
-iatry	<p>medicine; treatment</p>	<p>pod/iatry (po- -DI-aŕ-tre-): specialty concerned with treatment and prevention of conditions of the feet pod: foot</p>
-ician	<p>specialist</p>	<p>obstetr/ician (oŕ b-steŕ-TRISH-aŕn): physician who specializes in the branch of medicine concerned with pregnancy and childbirth obstetr: midwife</p>

-ist		<p>hemat/o/log/ist (hee⁻ -ma[˘]-TO[˘] L-o⁻ -j[˘]ist): physician who specializes in the treatment of disorders of blood and blood- forming tissues hemat/o: blood log: study of</p>
-y	condition; process	<p>neur/o/path/y (nu⁻ -RO[˘] P-a[˘]-the⁻): disease condition of the nerves neur/o: nerve path: disease</p>

Diminutive		
e		
-icle	small, minute	ventr/icle (VE˘N-tr˘ı-kl): small cavity, as of the brain or heart ventr: belly, belly side
-ole		arteri/ole (a˘r-TE˘-re˘-o˘l): the smallest of the arteries; minute artery arteri: artery Arteries narrow to form arterioles (small arteries), which branch into capillaries (the smallest blood vessels).
-ule		ven/ule (VE˘N-u˘l): small vein continuous with a capillary ven: vein

Prefix

- A prefix is a word element located at the beginning of a word.
- Substituting one prefix for another alters the meaning of the word. For example, in the term macro/cyte, macro- is a prefix meaning large; -cyte is a suffix meaning cell. A macrocyte is a large cell.
- By changing the prefix macro- to micro- (small), the meaning of the word changes. A microcyte is a small cell.

Prefix Types

- Learning the major types of prefixes, such as
 - **1. Prefixes of position.**
 - **2. Number and measurement,**
 - **3. Direction**

Other Common Prefixes

Many other common prefixes may also be used to change the meaning of a word.

Prefix	Word Root	Suffix	Medical Word	Meaning
pre- before	nat birth	al	prenatal pr ⁻ e-NA- t ⁻ al	pertaining to (the period) (before) before birth
Peri Around	Nat Birth	al Pertaining to	Perinatal	pertaining to (the period) around the birth
Post	Nat Birth	al Pertaining to	Postnatal	pertaining to (the period) after the birth

Prefix	Meaning	Word analysis
epi-	above, upon	epi/gastr/ic (ˈep-ɪ-GAS-trɪk): pertaining to above the stomach gastr: stomach -ic: pertaining to
hypo-	under, below, deficient	hypo/derm/ic (hɪ-p ɒ-DER-mɪk): pertaining to under the skin derm: skin -ic: pertaining to Hypodermic injections are given under the skin.
infra-	under, below	infra/cost/al (ˈɪn-frʌ-KOS-təl): below the ribs cost: ribs -al: pertaining to
sub-		sub/nas/al (sʊb-NA-səl): under the nose

inter-	between	inter/cost/al (ˈɪn-t ˈer-KOS-tʃ əl): between the ribs cost: ribs -al: pertaining to
post-	after, behind	post/nat/al (p ɒst-NA-tʃ əl): pertaining to (the period) after birth nat: birth -al: pertaining to
pre-	before, in front of	pre/nat/al (pr e-NA-tʃ əl): pertaining to (the period) before birth nat: birth -al: pertaining to

pro-	before, in front of	<p>pro/gnosis (prɔ̃g-NO-sɪz): knowing before</p> <p>-gnosis: knowing</p> <p>Prognosis is the prediction of the course and end of a disease and the estimated chance of recovery.</p>
retro-	backward, behind	<p>retro/version (rɛt-rɔ-VER-shən): turning backwards</p> <p>-version: turning</p> <p>Retroversion refers to tipping backward of an organ (such as the uterus) from its normal position.</p>

Prefixes of Number and Measurement

Prefix	Meaning	Word Analysis
bi-	Two	bi/later/al (bī-LAT-er-al): pertaining to two sides later: side -al: pertaining to
dipl-	Double	dipl/opia (dīp-LO-pē-a): double vision -opia: vision
Diplo-		diplo/bacteri/al (dīp-lō-bak-TER-e-al): bacteria linked together in pairs bacteri: bacteria -al: pertaining to Diplobacteria reproduce in such a manner that they are joined together in pairs.

hemi-	one half hemi/	Hemi/plegia (h [˘] em- ⁻ e-PLĒ-j ⁻ e- ^{˘˘} a): paralysis of one half of the body -plegia: paralysis
hyper-	excessive, above normal	hyper/calc/emia (h ⁻ i-p [˘] er-k [˘] al-SE-m ⁻ e- ^{˘˘} a): excessive calcium in the blood calc: calcium -emia: blood condition
macro-	large	macro/cyte (MAK-r ⁻ o-s ⁻ it): large cell -cyte: cell

micro-	small	<p>micro/scope (MĪ-krō-skōp): instrument for examining small (objects)</p> <p>-scope: instrument for examining</p> <p>The microscope is an optical instrument that greatly magnifies minute objects</p>
mono-	one	<p>mono/therapy (MON-ō-thēr-a-pē): one treatment</p> <p>-therapy: treatment</p> <p>An example of monotherapy is treatment using only a single drug or a single treatment modality.</p>
uni-		<p>uni/nucle/ar (ū-nī-N Ū-klē-ār): pertaining to one nucleus</p> <p>nucle: nucleus</p> <p>-ar: pertaining to</p>

multi-	many, much	multi/gravida (mŭl-tŭI-GRAY-ŭŭ I-dŭa): woman who has been pregnant more than once -gravida: pregnant woman
poly-		poly/phobia (pŭl-e-FO-b-e-ŭŭ a): fear of many things -phobia: fear
primi-	first	primi/gravida (prI-mŭI-GRAY-ŭŭ I-dŭa): woman during her first pregnancy -gravida: pregnant woman
quadri-	four	quadri/plegia (kwŭod-rŭI-PLĒ-j-e-ŭŭ a): paralysis of four limbs -plegia: paralysis
tri-	three	tri/ceps (TRĪ-cŭeps): three heads -ceps: head

Prefixes of Direction

Prefix	Meaning	Word analysis
ab-	from, away from	ab/duction (ˈab-DUK-shən): movement of a limb away from (an axis of) the body
ad-	toward	ad/duction (ˈa-DUK-shən): movement of a limb toward (an axis of) the body -duction: act of leading, bringing, conducting
circum-	around	circum/ren/al (sɪr-kʊm-RE-nəl): pertaining to around the kidney ren: kidney -al: pertaining to

peri-	Around	peri/odont/al (p [˘] er- ^ˉ e- ^ˉ o-DON-t [˘] al): pertaining to around a tooth odont: teeth -al: pertaining to
dia-	through, across	dia/rrhea (d ^ˉ i- [˘] a-RE- [˘] a): flow through -rrhea: discharge, flow Diarrhea is a condition of abnormally frequent discharge or flow of fluid fecal matter from the bowel
Sialorrhea	????	????

ecto-	outside, outward	ecto/gen/ous (ˈek-TŌJ-ˈe-n̩ us): forming outside the body or structure gen: forming, producing, origin -ous: pertaining to, An ectogenous infection is one that originates outside of the body.
exo-		exo/tropia (ˈeks-ˈo-TRO-p̩e-ˈa): turning outward (of one or both eyes) -tropia: turning
extra-		extra/crani/al (ˈeks-tr̩a-KRA-n̩e-ˈal): outside the skull crani: cranium (skull) -al: pertaining to

endo-	in, within	endo/crine (EN-dō-krīn): secrete within -crine: secrete Endocrine describes a gland that secretes directly into the bloodstream
super-	upper, above	super/ior (soo-PE-rē-ē-or): pertaining to the upper part of a structure -ior: pertaining to
supra-	above; excessive; superior	supra/ren/al (soo-prā-RE-nāl): pertaining to above the kidney ren: kidney -al: pertaining to
ultra-	excess, beyond	ultra/son/ic (ul-trā-SŌN-īk): pertaining to sound beyond (that which can be heard by the human ear) son: sound -ic: pertaining to

Prefix	Meaning	Analysis of words
a-	without, not	a/mast/ia (ˈa-MAS-t̩ e-ˈa): without a breast mast: breast -ia: condition Amastia may be the result of a congenital defect, an endocrine disorder, or mastectomy
an-		an/esthesia (ˈan-ˈes-THE-z̩ e-ˈa): without feeling -esthesia: feeling Anesthesia may be a partial or complete loss of sensation with or without loss of consciousness.
Anti-	Against	anti/bacteri/al (ˈan-t̩ i-b̩ ak-TER-ˈe-ˈal): against bacteria bacteri: bacteria -al: pertaining to Antibacterials are substances that kill bacteria or inhibit their growth or condition

contra	Against	<p>contra/ception (k' on-tr'a-SEP-sh'' un): against conception or impregnation</p> <p>-ception: conceiving</p> <p>Contraceptive techniques prevent pregnancy by means of medication, a device, or a method that blocks or alters one or more of the processes of reproduction.</p>
brady-	Slow	<p>brady/cardia (br' ad-' e-KAR-d' e-' a): slow heart rate</p> <p>-cardia: heart</p>
dys	bad; painful; difficult	<p>dys/tocia (d' is-TO-s'' e-' a): difficult childbirth</p> <p>-tocia: childbirth, labor</p>
eu-	good, normal	<p>eu/pnea (' up-NE-' a): normal breathing</p> <p>-pnea: breathing</p>
hetero-	different	<p>hetero/graft (HET-' e-r' o-gr'' aft): different transplant</p> <p>-graft: transplantation</p>

homo-	same	<p>homo/graft (HO-m ˌo-graft): same transplant</p> <p>-graft: transplantation</p> <p>A homograft, also called an allograft, is a transplant of tissue obtained from a member of the patient's own species. Commonly transplanted organs include bone, kidney, lung, and heart. Recipients take immunosuppressive drugs to prevent tissue rejection.</p>
homeo-		<p>homeo/plasia (h ˌo-m ˌe ˌo-PLA-z ˌe- ˌa): formation of new tissue similar to that already existing in a part</p> <p>-plasia: formation, growth</p>
mal-	Bad	<p>mal/nutrition (m ˌal-n ˌu-TR ˌI-sh ˌun): bad nutrition</p> <p>Malnutrition refers to any disorder resulting from an inadequate or excessive intake of food.</p>

pan-	all	pan/arthr/itis (pʰan-˘ar-THR̄l-tʰis): inflammation of all (or many) joints arthr: joint -itis: inflammation
pseudo-	false	pseudo/cyesis (soo-d̄o-s̄ı-E-sʰ̄ is): false pregnancy -cyesis: pregnancy Pseudocyesis is a condition in which a woman believes she is pregnant when she is not and begins to develop all the physical characteristics associated with pregnancy.

syn-	union, together, joined	syn/dactyl/ism (sín-DAK-tíl-ízm): condition of joined fingers or toes dactyl: fingers; toes -ism: condition Syndactylism varies in degree of severity from incomplete webbing of the skin of two digits to complete union of digits and fusion of the bones and nails.
tachy-	rapid	tachy/pnea (táK-íp-NE-á): rapid breathing -pnea: breathing
Tachi-		Tachycardia = rapid heartbeat

This table lists other commonly used prefixes along with their meanings and word analyses.

- **Prefix Meaning Word Analysis**

a-* without, not **a/mast/ia** (˘ a-MAS-t˘ ˘ e-˘ a): without a breast
mast: breast

-ia: condition

Amastia may be the result of a congenital defect, an endocrine disorder, or mastectomy.

an- an/esthesia** (˘ an-˘ es-THE-z˘ e-˘ ˘ a): without feeling
-esthesia: feeling

Anesthesia may be a partial or complete loss of sensation with or without loss of consciousness.

- **anti-** against **anti/bacteri/al** (ˈ an-ti-bˈ ak-TER-e-ˈ al): against bacteria
bacteri: bacteria
-al: pertaining to
Antibacterials are substances that kill bacteria or inhibit their growth or replication.
- **brady-** slow **brady/cardia** (brˈ ad-e-KAR-dˈ e-ˈ a): slow heart rate
-cardia: heart

- **contra- contra/ception** (kɔ̃ on-trɔ̃ a-SEP-shɔ̃ un): against conception or impregnation
-ception: conceiving
Contraceptive techniques prevent pregnancy by means of medication, a device, or a method that blocks or alters one or more of the processes of reproduction.

- dys-** bad; painful; difficult **dys/tocia** (d'is-TO-s' - e- ' a): difficult childbirth
-tocia: childbirth, labor

eu- good, normal **eu/pnea** (' up-NE- ' - a): normal breathing
-pnea: breathing

hetero- different **hetero/graft** (HET- ' e-r' o-gr' ' aft): different transplant
-graft: transplantation

A heterograft, also called a xenograft, is a transplant of tissue from another species that is used as a temporary graft in certain cases, as in treating a severely burned patient when tissue from the patient or from a tissue bank is not available

Prefix Meaning Word Analysis

homo- same **homo/graft** (HO-m̄o-gr̄aft): same transplant
-graft: transplantation

A homograft, also called an allograft, is a transplant of tissue obtained from a member of the patient's own species. Commonly transplanted organs include bone, kidney, lung, and heart. Recipients take immunosuppressive drugs to prevent tissue rejection.

homeo- **homeo/plasia** (h̄o-m̄ēo-PLA-z̄ē-a): formation of new tissue similar to
that already existing in a part
-plasia: formation, growth

- **mal-** bad **mal/nutrition** (m˘ al-n˘u-TR˘l-sh˘ un): bad nutrition
Malnutrition refers to any disorder resulting from an inadequate or excessive intake of food.
- **pan-** all **pan/arthr/itis** (p˘ an-˘ar-THR˘l-t˘is): inflammation of all (or many) joints
arthr: joint
-itis: inflammation
- **pseudo-** false **pseudo/cyesis** (soo-d ˘ o-s˘l-E-s˘ ˘ is): false pregnancy
-cyesis: pregnancy
Pseudocyesis is a condition in which a woman believes she is pregnant when she is not and begins to develop all the physical characteristics associated with pregnancy.

- **syn-** union, together, joined **syn/dactyl/ism** (sĭn-DAK-tĭl-ĭzm): condition of joined fingers or toes

dactyl: fingers; toes

-ism: condition

Syndactylism varies in degree of severity from incomplete webbing of the skin of two digits to complete union of digits and fusion of the bones and nails.

tachy- rapid **tachy/pnea** (tĭ ak-ĭp-NE-ĭ a): rapid breathing

-pnea: breathing

- Thank you for listening