



Know Your Common Prefixes and Suffixes

Knowing the meaning of common prefixes and suffixes will help you figure out the definition of many familiar and unfamiliar words on the ACT exam.

What Exactly Are Prefixes and Suffixes?

Prefixes and suffixes are attached to base words to add information and meaning. A **prefix** is an attachment that comes *before* a base word or stem. A **suffix** is an attachment that comes *after* the existing base word or stem. A **stem** is the main part of a word—the part that prefixes or suffixes are attached to—but might not actually be a full word by itself.

The word *repayment*, for example, is made up of the prefix *re-* (which means *again*), the stem *pay*, and the suffix *-ment* (which means *action* or *process*). So with an understanding of suffix, prefix, and stems, you could figure out that the meaning of *repayment* is *the process of paying money back*.

Common Prefixes

The following are some examples of prefixes you might encounter when studying ACT vocabulary words, along with their meanings.

a-, *ab-*, *an-* (apart or without)

ad- (toward or near)

ante- (before)

anti- (against)

auto- (self)

bi- (two)

bio- (life)

circum- (around)

co-, *com-*, *con-* (with or together)

de- (away or off)

di-, *dis-* (not or apart)

dys- (bad or problematic)

em-, *en-* (restrict or cause)

equi- (equal)

ex- (former)

extra-, *exo-* (outside of)

fore- (in front of or before)

hyper- (over)

hypo- (under)

geo- (earth)

im-, *in-* (not)

inter- (between)

micro- (tiny)

mis- (wrong)

mono- (one)

multi- (many)

neo- (new)

non- (not)

ob-, *oc-*, *of-*, *op-* (against, on, over, or toward)

omni- (all)

pan- (all)

para- (beyond)

peri- (around or about)

poly- (many)

post- (after)

pre- (before)

pro- (favoring or for)

re- (again)

retro- (backward)

semi- (half)

sub- (under or below)

super- (exceeding or above)

therm-, *thermo-* (heat)

trans- (across)

tri- (three)

un- (not)

Common Suffixes

-able, *-ible* (capable or worthy of)

-acy (state or quality)

-age (condition)

-al (act or process of, or pertaining to)

-ance, *-ence* (state or quality)

-ary (related to)

-ate (become)

-dom (place or state of being)

-en (make or become)

-er, *-or* (one who)

-esque (like or reminiscent of)

-gram, *-graph* (written or drawn)

-hood (class)

- <i>ic, -ical</i> (pertaining to)	- <i>oid</i> (resembles)
- <i>iou, -ous</i> (characterized by)	- <i>ory, -tory</i> (relating to)
- <i>ish</i> (having the quality of)	- <i>ous</i> (possessing)
- <i>ive</i> (having the nature of)	- <i>phile</i> (strong love for)
- <i>less</i> (without)	- <i>phobe, -phobia</i> (fear of)
- <i>log, -logue</i> (speech)	- <i>ship</i> (position held)
- <i>logy</i> (the study of)	- <i>y</i> (characterized by)

WORD DETECTIVE

Knowing these prefixes and suffixes can help you deduce the meaning of many vocabulary words instantly, so familiarize yourself with the ones you don't already know for an instant vocab power-up!

Derivational Suffixes

There are suffixes that change the meaning of the base word or stem. These are called **derivational suffixes** (don't worry, you don't need to remember that), and some common examples are:

- <i>able, -ible</i> (capable of being)	- <i>ise, -ize</i> (become)
- <i>ation, -sion, -tion</i> (state of being)	- <i>ism</i> (belief or doctrine)
- <i>ful</i> (notable for)	- <i>ist</i> (one who)
- <i>fy</i> (make or become)	- <i>ity, -ty</i> (having the quality of)
- <i>ify</i> (make or become)	- <i>ment</i> (condition or result of)
- <i>ily</i>	- <i>ness</i> (state of being)

Derivational suffixes can combine with each other, too, but the spelling may change (as in *predictability*, which is *predict* combined with *-able* and *-ity*).

Okay, now that you've reviewed some prefixes and suffixes and how they work, let's put that knowledge into action!