

Latin Roots: Prefixes

This information sheet shows the most important prefixes which English has inherited from Latin. The basic form is shown first, with alternative forms in brackets. These alternative forms depend on the first letter of the root word. Meanings, explanations and examples are given on the right. While these meanings generally apply to most of their uses, sometimes the original meaning has changed significantly, or has even been lost. When you complete the exercises, see how many words keep the original meaning of the prefix.

ab- (a-, abs-)	from, away, off
ad- (a-, ac-, etc.)	to, at, towards; the -d- usually changes to the first letter of the root word: accept, apply
circum-	around, about
con- (col-, com-, etc.)	with, together, alongside; the -m- usually changes to the first letter of the root word: compose, collect
de-	sown, off, back, away
dis- (dif-)	apart, separately
ex- (e-)	out, out of, away
in- (il-, im-, etc.)	in, on, into, onto
inter-	between
intro-	inside
ob- (obs-, of-)	against, in the way, up against
per-	through, by, across
post-	after, behind
pre-	before, in front of, ahead
pro-	for, instead of, forward
re- (red-)	back, again, backwards
se-	apart, away
sub- (suc-, suf-, etc.)	under, up to, up against, below, lower
super-	over, above, higher, better
trans-	across, beyond