

Meanings of affixes

Try to guess the meanings of the following affixes.

mono-	uni-	pan-
bi-	di-	duo-
tri-	quad-	
multi-	poly-	
semi-	demi-	
quasi-	pseudo-	
mini-	micro-	mega-
non-	im-	ir-
il-	mis-	mal-
over-	sub-	under-
post-	pre-	ante-
ex-	neo-	re-
tele-	inter-	intra-
extra-		
co-	con-	com-
anti-	pro-	
auto-		
vice-		
-able	-ible	
-er	-or	-ist
-proof		
-ess	-ette	
-ology		
-graph	-phone	

Hint: Affixes near each other often have similar or opposite meanings.

Find examples of any that you couldn't think of in the dictionary and work out the meaning from the examples.

Think of or find at least two (more) examples for each.

Suggested answers

Meanings

mono-/ uni- = one
pan- = all/ universal
bi-/ di-/ duo- = two
tri- = three
quad- = four
multi-/ poly- = many/ many kinds
semi-/ demi- = half
quasi- = half/ kind of/ fake/ not fully
pseudo- = kind of/ fake/ not real
mini-/ micro- = very small
mega- = very big
non-/ im-/ ir-/ il- = not
mis-/ mal- = badly
over- = too much
sub-/ under- = under/ too little
post- = after
pre-/ ante- = before
ex- = outside/ previous
neo- = new
re- = again
tele- = distant
inter- = between
intra- = inside
extra- = added
co-/ con-/com- = together
anti- = against
pro- = for/ in favour of
auto- = itself/ yourself
vice- = deputy
- able/ -ible = can/ be able to
-er/ -or/ -ist = person/ professional
-proof = protected from/ not affected by
-ess = female
-ette = small/ female
-ology = science of/ study of
-graph = writing/ drawing
-phone = sound

Examples

Most of the words are easy to find examples of, with the exception of these three:

di- diameter/ diode/ carbon dioxide/ diphthong
demi- demiquaver/ demi-god/ demitasse/ demimonde/ demijohn
-ette – pipette/ cigarette/ diskette/ drum majorette