

Negative prefixes

We add a prefix such as **in-** or **un-** or **dis-**, **im-**, **il-**, **non-**, **ir-** etc. to the beginning of adjectives, adverbs and verbs to give them the opposite meaning.

For example,

- Before "r" one has to use "ir" irreparable;
- Before "l", use "il" illogical;
- Before "t", use "dis" distrust; distasteful
- Before "c, b or s" use "un or in" uncomfortable/unbelievable and incomplete/incredible/insanity;
- Before "p", use "im" impossible
- Before "m", use "im" immature, immortal
- Before "h or f", use "un" unhappy/unfettered;
- Before a noun, use "non" non-smoker, etc.

Exercise 1

Write the negative form of these words by adding a negative prefix: "un-", "dis-", "ir-", "il-", "in-", or "im-".

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|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 ___ comfortable | 2 ___ patient | 3 ___ honest | 4 ___ lucky |
| 5 ___ formal | 6 ___ possible | 7 ___ popular | 8 ___ lock |
| 9 ___ appear | 10 ___ agree | 11 ___ legal | 12 ___ polite |
| 13 ___ like | 14 ___ logical | 15 ___ convenient | |

Exercise 2: Write the negative form of these words by adding a negative prefix:

"un-", "dis-", "ir-", "il-", "in-", or "im-".

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|----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 ___ frequent | 6 ___ believable | 11 ___ relevant |
| 2 ___ mature | 7 ___ approve | 12 ___ dependent |
| 3 ___ legible | 8 ___ curable | 13 ___ responsible |
| 4 ___ moral | 9 ___ familiar | 14 ___ accurate |
| 5 ___ regular | 10 ___ grateful | 15 ___ resistible |

Exercise 3: Fill in negative prefixes to form the OPPOSITE of each of the adjectives below. In some cases, more than one pre-fix is possible.

___acceptable	___accurate	___adequate	___agreeable	___approachable
___appropriate	___bearable	___compatible	___complete	___conscious
___contented	___convenient	___credible	___decisive	___desirable
___discreet	___excusable	___experienced	___faithful	___flexible
___frequent	___grateful	___healthy	___helpful	___hospitable
___legal	___legible	___legitimate	___literate	___logical
___mature	___moral	___mortal	___obedient	___organised
___passive	___patient	___perfect	___personal	___polite
___probable	___readable	___regular	___resolute	___responsible
___respectful	___sane	___satisfactory	___satisfied	___sociable
___sufficient	___variable	___visible	___willing	

Exercise 4: Complete the sentences by adding the correct pre-fix for each word.

- 1 It's rather ___polite if you don't say 'Please' a lot in English.
- 2 My parents are extremely generous with their time and money. They are very ___selfish.
- 3 If the traffic is bad, it'll be ___possible to get to the match on time.
- 4 It's ___legal to drive along that street; it's for pedestrians only.
- 5 My mum thought a burglar had been in my bedroom, but it's always really ___tidy.
- 6 It was completely ___responsible of you to go away for the weekend without telling us.
- 7 Mike's pretty ___happy about going on holiday with his girlfriend's parents.
- 8 I never know when to expect the post. It's so ___regular.
- 9 Taking a large suitcase on a waling holiday is a bit ___practical

ANSWERS:

Ex. 1

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| 1. uncomfortable | 2. impatient | 3. dishonest | 4. unlucky |
| 5. informal | 6. impossible | 7. unpopular | 8. unlock |
| 9. disappear | 10. disagree | 11. illegal | 12. impolite |
| 13. dislike | 14. Illogical | 15. inconvenient | |

Ex. 2

infrequent	immature	illegible	immoral	irregular	unbelievable	disapprove
incurable	unfamiliar	ungrateful	independent	irresponsible	inaccurate	irresistible

Ex. 3

unacceptable	inaccurate	inadequate	disagreeable	unapproachable
inappropriate	unbearable	incompatible	incomplete	unconscious
discontented	inconvenient	incredible	indecisive	undesirable
indiscreet	inexcusable	inexperienced	unfaithful	inflexible
infrequent	ungrateful	unhealthy	unhelpful	inhospitable
illegal	illegible	illegitimate	illiterate	illogical
immature	immoral	immortal	disobedient	disorganised/un-
impassive	impatient	imperfect	impersonal	impolite
improbable	unreadable	irregular	irresolute	irresponsible
disrespectful	insane	unsatisfactory	dissatisfied/un-	unsociable
insufficient	invariable	invisible	unwilling	

Ex. 4

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|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. impolite | 2. unselfish | 3. impossible | 4. illegal | 5. untidy |
| 6. irresponsible | 7. unhappy | 8. irregular | 9. impractical | |