

25 Prefixes

Prefixes (at the beginning of words) can help you to understand what a new word means. Here are some common prefixes.

<i>prefix</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
ex (+noun)	was but not now	ex-wife, ex-president
half (+noun or adjective)	50% of something	half-price, half-hour
in, im (+adjective)	not	informal, impossible
non (+adjective or noun)	not	non-smoking
pre	before	pre-school
re (+verb)	again	redo, rewrite
un (+adjective or noun)	not	unhappy, unsafe

An **ex-wife** is a wife who is now divorced.

President Gorbachev is an **ex-President** of Russia.

A **half-hour** journey is a journey of 30 minutes.

Something that cost £10 yesterday and costs £5 today is **half-price**.

Informal clothes are clothes like jeans and trainers. Formal clothes are things like a suit.

If something is **impossible**, you can't do it. It is impossible to read with your eyes closed.

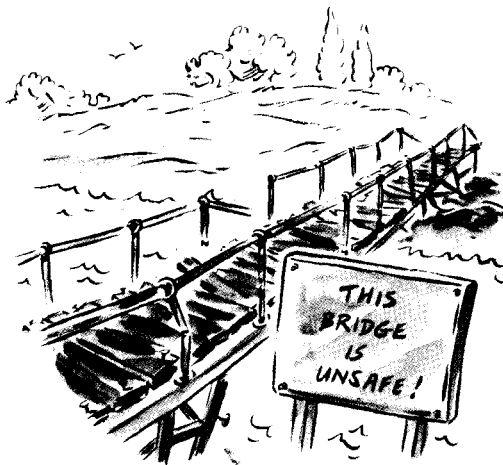
A **non-smoking** room is a room where people may not smoke.

Pre-school children are children who are still too young to go to school.

To redo something is to do it a second time and to rewrite something is to write it a second time.

Unhappy means sad, the opposite of happy.

Unsafe means dangerous, the opposite of safe.



Tip: Sometimes words with prefixes have a hyphen (-), e.g. a half-hour programme, and sometimes they don't, e.g. an impossible question. Use a dictionary when you are not sure if there is a hyphen or not.

Exercises

25.1 Choose one of the words from the prefix table to fit in these sentences.

- 1 This part of the restaurant is ~~non-smoking~~.
- 2 I can't read this. Please your homework.
- 3 In English we often say 'Hi'.
- 4 I liked school but my sister was very there.
- 5 I bought two T-shirts because they were in the sale.
- 6 Don't walk on that wall – the notice says it is

25.2 Write your own sentences to show what these words mean.

ex-wife ex-president redo impossible pre-school

25.3 What do you think these words and phrases mean? Look at the table on the opposite page to help you.

- 1 an ex-husband *a husband who is now divorced from his wife*
- 2 pre-exam nerves
- 3 an incorrect answer
- 4 an unread book
- 5 to retell a story
- 6 a half-brother
- 7 an unfinished letter
- 8 a non-alcoholic drink
- 9 to reread a book
- 10 to readdress a letter

25.4 Find one more example of a word using the prefixes in the table. Use a dictionary to help you. Write a phrase or sentence using your word.

ex: *My ex-boss lives near me.*

half: *You stop at half-time in a football match.*

25.5 Write a paragraph with at least eight of the example words from the table.

25.6 Find the negative forms of these words. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1 possible *impossible*
- 2 comfortable
- 3 safe
- 4 formal
- 5 smoking
- 6 happy
- 7 polite
- 8 correct