PREFIXES

1. Ad: to, toward

Examples: Adhesive, admissible, advocate

A substance such as tape that sticks to other things is adhesive.

To speak in favor of a measure is to advocate.

1. Ante: before

Example: Antebellum, antedate, anterior

Antebellum days came before the Civil War.

The Civil War antedated the first World War.

1. Bi: two

Examples: bicameral, bifocal, bipartisan

A bicameral legislature has two chambers.

Glasses with two different focal lengths are called bifocal.

A committee which represents two parties is bipartisan.

1. Circum: around

Examples: circa, circumferences, circumvent

The line around a circle is the circumference.

To circumvent the villain is to get around him and outwit him.

1. Co: together

Examples: coagulate, coeducation, coexistence, coincidence

When blood or any other fluid coagulates, it clumps together.

Coeducation refers to the teaching of male and female students together.

My birthday and my best friend’s are on the same day. What a coincidence.

1. Contra, contro, counter: against

Examples: Contraband, controvert, countercharge

A countercharge is a charge by the accused against his accuser.

To argue against a certain idea is to controvert it.

Contraband means illegal goods.

1. De: away; down

Examples: degradation, delusion, derision

Those who live in degradation are usually far away on the socio-economic ladder.

The lunatic was lured away from reality by delusions of grandeur.

1. Inter: between

Examples: intercultural, interlinear, interregnum

An interlinear translation has the meaning inserted between the lines.

The interregnum is the period between the rule of kings.

Relations between cultural groups are said to be intercultural.

1. Intra, Intro: within

Examples: Intramuscular, intrastate, intravenous

Intramuscular pains are within the muscles.

That which is within the veins is intravenous.

1. Mis: wrong, bad

Examples: misadventure, misdemeanor, misnomer

We enjoyed the picnic at the lake, except for the misadventure involving the rattle snake.

Overtime parking is wrong behavior of a minor sort. It is therefore classified as a misdemeanor.

1. Multi: Many

Example: multimillionaire, multiped, multitude

A multiped insect has many feet.

If your possessions are worth $3,512.89 you are not a multimillionaire.

1. Post: After

Examples: posterior, posterity, posthumous

Mark Twain’s *The Mysterious Stranger* was published posthumously, that is after his death.

Those generations which come after us are our posterity.

1. Pre: Before

Examples: Preamble, precedence, prejudice

That which has precedence comes before the rest.

The word prejudice implies that a judgment is made before the facts are studied.

1. Pro: forward, favoring

Examples: Progeny, prognosis, prolabor

The doctor noted gloomily that I had contracted leprosy and gave me his prognosis.

Those interested in their progeny tend to look forward.

1. Quadr: four

Examples: quadrangle, quadrant, quadruplets.

The pie graph was equally divided into four quadrants

After taking a fertility drug of the woman gave birth to quadruplets.

1. Quasi: seemingly, but not actually

Examples: quasi-antique, quasi-poetry, quasi-scientific

At Gettysburg, Lincoln’s words=noble and rhythmical- were quasi-poetry.

Sandstorms battered our new desert home, quickly turning it into a quasi-antique.

1. Quint: five

Examples: quintessence, quintet, quintuplets

Their first kiss was quintessence- that is, the ultimate or fifth essence-of happiness.

“I’m exhausted,” said the stork. “I just brought Mrs. Shlep a set of quintuplets.”

1. Retro: back

Examples: retroactive, retrogress, retrorocket

If civilization is retrogressing, it is going back to worst a condition.

A law or ruling which affects an earlier period is retroactive.

1. Semi: half

Examples: semi-centennial, semi-diameter, semi-lunar

A semi-lunar shape is like that of the half moon.

The semi-diameter of a circle is equal to its radius.

1. Sub: under

Examples: subconscious, subcutaneous, subtrahend

The subconscious operates under the conscious mind.

A subcutaneous infection is under the skin.

1. Super: above, beyond

Examples: supersensory, supersonic, superstructure

Supersensory impressions are beyond the normal limits of the senses.

The superstructure of a warship is above the main deck.

Speeds beyond the speed of sound are supersonic.

1. Trans: across

Examples: transgress, transpolar, transversal

A transpolar flight goes across the pole.

In geometry a line that cuts across two other lines is called a transversal.

To transgress is to step across the rules or violate them.

1. Tri: three

Examples: tricuspid, trilingual, triplicate

Two copies weren’t enough for my boss. No, everything had to in triplicate.

Dr. Pullem, my dentist, triumphantly held up a bloody, three pointed tooth known as tricuspid.

My Swiss friend speaks French, German, and English. He’s trilingual.

1. Ultra: very, beyond

Examples: ultraconservative, ultramodern, ultraviolet.

Ultraviolet rays are invisible because they lie beyond the violet end of the visible spectrum.

Mr. Skraggs bitterly fought equal pay for women, social security, “and all them other radical notions.” Skraggs was an ultraconservative.

1. Uni: one

Examples: unicameral, unicorn, unicycle

A legislature with one chamber is unicameral.

The horns on a unicorn reach the grand total of one.

A tricycle has three wheels; a bicycle has two wheels; a unicycle has one wheel.