

Vocabulary

Grade 4 Unit 4: American Revolution: Building a Nation

Common Prefixes

Introduction: Common Prefixes

A **prefix** is a syllable or syllables placed at the beginning of a *root word* to change the word's meaning.

Let's identify the meaning of two common prefixes often found in front of words:

im- and in-

The prefixes **im**– and **in**– both mean *not*.

Knowing that the prefixes **im-** and **in-** both mean *not* helps us figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Let's try it together. When **in-** is added before the root word *correct*, the word becomes:

incorrect

Knowing that the prefix **in-** means *not*, and correct means *right*, what does **in**correct mean?

It means not true or not accurate.

Let's Try It Together!

The following words appear in the *American Revolution* unit: imperfect

impractical

Turn to a partner and whisper which prefix is being used.

These words use the prefix **im-**. **im**perfect

*im*practical

Now let's identify the root word in each of these.

Work with a partner to read both words out loud and determine the root word of each.

Remember: Take off the prefix to find the root word.

Removing **im-** from **im**perfect makes the word *perfect*.

Removing **im-** from **im**practical makes the word *practical*.

Identify the meaning of the root words.

perfect: having no mistakes or flaws practical: easy and reasonable to do or use

Using the meaning of the prefix and the root words, determine the meaning of the two words.

imperfect: having mistakes or flaws, *not perfect*

impractical: not easy or reasonable to do or use, not practical

There are four steps to follow when determining the meaning of a word with a prefix.

1. Identify the prefix.

impatient

2. Determine the meaning of the prefix.

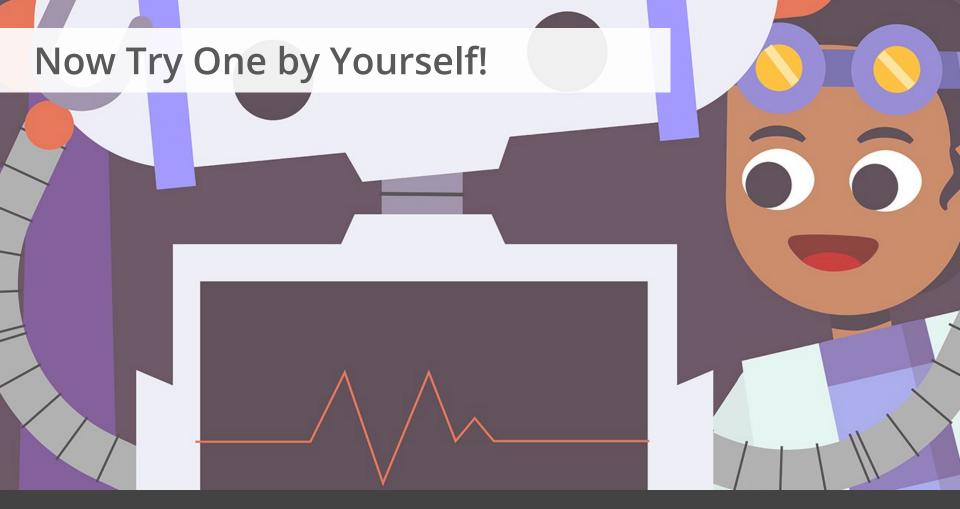
im- = not

3. Identify the meaning of the root word.

patient: able to be calm while waiting

4. Combine the meaning of the prefix and the meaning of the root word.

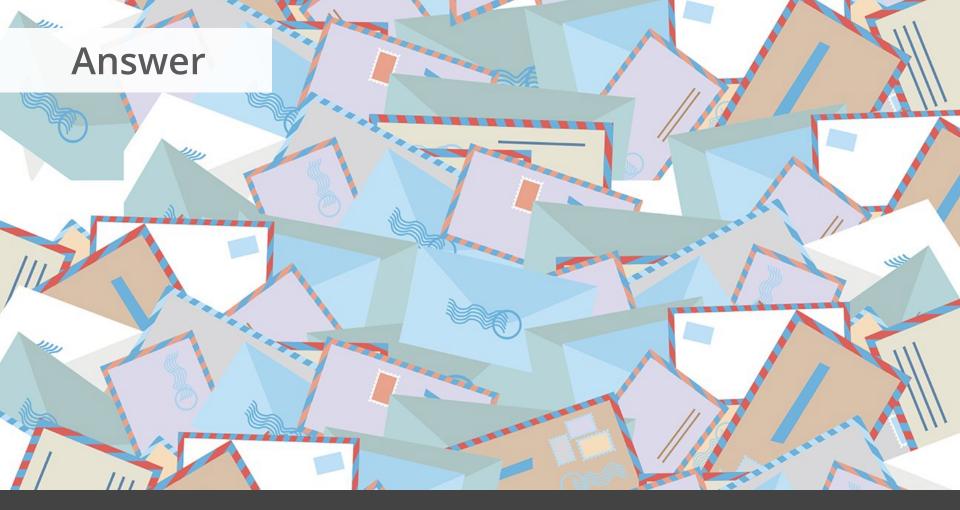
impatient: not able to be calm while waiting



Identify the prefix and meaning of the following words: inactive incomplete impolite

Write down the three words and underline the prefixes used.

After underlining the prefixes, write down the meaning of the three words.



Answer

inactive incomplete impolite

The two prefixes are **in-** and **im-**.

The meaning of **in**active is not doing things that require physical movement or activity; not active. **In**complete means not having all necessary parts; not complete.

Impolite means not having or showing good manners or respect for others; not polite.