



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 **incorrect** 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-**.

imperfect

impractical

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

Now Try One by Yourself!



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 **inactive** is not doing things that require physical movement or activity; not active. **Incomplete** means not having all necessary parts; not complete.

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