

Some elements of the language that aren't ordinarily called affixes are nevertheless used in word building in a particular manner, according to specific rules. The word building is almost always done according to the ordinary rules of [compound words](#) and [phrases as words](#), but with some special detail. These elements may be referred to as affixes, or affix-like elements. Other elements can also be used in compound words, used like affixes, although they follow the full set of rules normally used for word building. These elements can also be referred to as affixes, or affix-like elements.

Affix-like roots and compounds

Here are several examples of ordinary roots that are often used like affixes.

FIN

FIN is often used as a prefix, instead of [prefix-like use of el](#) to show the completion of an action: [finkanti](#), [finfari](#), [finmanĝi](#).

HAV, PLEN, RIĈ

The roots HAV (have), PLEN (full), and RIĈ (rich) can be used as suffixes to add precision to the meaning of an adjective: [barba](#) → [barbhava](#), [trua](#) → [truhava](#), [manka](#) → [mankohava](#), [ama](#) → [amoplena](#), [brua](#) → [bruoplena](#), [flora](#) → [florplena](#), [fuma](#) → [fumoplena](#), [ora](#) → [ororiĉa](#), [herba](#) → [herbriĉa](#), [senta](#) → [sentiĉa](#).

KELK

KELK as a prefix shows multiplication by an undefined but small number (greater than one): [kelkdek](#) = "some tens", [kelkcent](#) = "some hundreds", [kelkmil](#) = "some thousands". Pay attention to the accent: [kElkcent](#), [kElkmil](#). KELK is not a particle, but a root. Therefore these words cannot be written separately. Do not write [kelk-dek](#), [kelk-mil](#), but [kelkdek](#), [kelkmil](#). It is always possible to instead say and write: [kelkaj dekoj](#), [kelkaj miloj](#) etc.

KELK, when used as a suffix, shows the addition of an undefined number (more than one): [dekelke](#) = "ten and some", [tridekelk-jara](#) = "having thirty and a few years", "thirty-something".

Sometime a prefix usage of KELK is used with the meaning of "about": [kelkmil](#) = "around a thousand". This collides with the previously shown usage by Zamenhof, and this usage is not recommended.

KELK is used as a prefix also among table words ending in *l* to emphasize the indefiniteness: [kelkiuj](#) = "some, some ones", [kelkiom](#) = "a few, some". The occasionally used form [kelkiu](#) (without *j*) is self-contradictory. [lu](#) shows precisely one individual, while KELK shows more than one.

ON- words

Compound words with the suffix [ON](#) are often used as prefixes: [duonhoro](#) = "half an hour", [kvaronlitro](#) = "a quarter of a litre", [milonmilimetro](#) = "a thousandth of a millimetre", [trionparto](#) = "a third of a part". It is possible to create ordinary combinations instead, for example: [horkvarono](#) (= "a quarter hour"): [Pasis certe horkvarono](#), [antaŭ ol la floreto povis denove rekonsciiĝi](#). Forms like [horkvarono](#) are, however, extremely uncommon.

DUON sometimes has a special meaning when used as a prefix: "about halfway, incomplete, almost": [duonnuda](#) = "almost nude", [duonkuirita](#) = "not completely cooked".

With words for relatives, DUON has two special meanings. There, it shows a familial relationship between only one of the parents, and also a relationship created by remarriage: [duonfrato](#) (half brother) = 1. a brother with whom one has only one common parent, 2. the son of a half mother or father; [duonfilo](#) (stepson) = a son of one's husband or wife; [duonpatro](#) (stepfather) = the new husband of a mother; [duonpatrino](#) (stepmother) = the new wife of a father.

VIC

- 12 VIC is used as a prefix to show a thing or a person that replaces or can replace something or someone: **vicprezidanto** = "substitute president", vice president; **vicdirektoro** = "substitute director", vice director; **vicrado** = "spare tire".
- 13 The root VIC can also be used as a prefix to show a family relationship caused by remarriage, akin to the English use of "step": **vicpatro**, **vicfilo**, **vicfrato**. In these DUON-words, which can have both meanings of a familial DUON (half), VIC should preferably be used for a relationship resulting from a remarriage, and DUON only for a true half relationship.

VIR

- 14 VIR is used as a prefix to show male sex. It can be compared with the suffix **IN**. VIR can therefore only be used with a root that can have a gender, and only with words that are not inherently male.
- 15 VIR is used as a prefix mainly for animal words: **virĉevalo**, **virkato**, **virbovo**, **virhundido**, **virbesto**.
- 16 VIR can also be used like a prefix on words for people: **virhomo**, **virprezidanto**, **virsekretario**. But VIR is normally used as an adjective for indicating people: **vira homo**, **vira prezidanto**, **vira sekretario**.
- 17 The root VIR, however, is sometimes left out even when a male animal or human is being referred to.
- 18 Note that the word **viro** (man), used independently, always means "adult male person", while VIR used as a prefix only shows the male sex (not a person being human, nor adult). The word **vira** (manly, related to men) sometimes only shows male sex and sometimes indicates that something is human or adult, depending on context.

Use of prepositions as affixes

- 19 Words using a **preposition** as a prefix are most often **words based on phrases**. The preposition is used as a prefix on the word that it would relate to in a phrase:

20

sen fino (without an end) → **senfina** (endless) = such that something is without end

pri amo (about love) → **priama** (love-related) = having to do with love

inter nacioj (among nations) → **internacia** (international)

ĝis la fino (until the end) → **ĝisfine** (until the end)

tra nokto (through night) → **tranokti** = to spend a night, to be a guest through the night

per laboro (by means of work) → **perlabori** = to earn through work

en teron (into ground) → **enterigi** (to bury) = to put into the earth

en amon (into love) → **enamiĝi (al iu)** (to fall in love [with someone]) = to begin loving (someone). The love is directed to the one being loved; this is why it is preferred to say **mi enamiĝis al vi** ("I fell in love 'to' you"), not **mi-enamiĝis-en-vi(n)** ("I fell in love into you"). The use of **en** as a prefix doesn't relate to the one being loved. You can also use **enamiĝi je iu**.

ekster la lando(outside of the country) → **eksterlando** (abroad) = the whole world, other than your own country

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ekster la lando (outside of the country) → **eksterlandano** (foreigner) = a member of another country

21 A preposition used as a prefix can also be a clarifying element to begin a **combination**. In these words, the preposition is not a role marker for the following element; instead, it relates to something else:

22 **paroli** (to speak) → **alparoli** (to address) = to direct oneself to someone by speaking

pagi → **antaŭpago** = to pay before the usual or required time

radikiĝi → **enradikiĝi** = to become rooted in something

rompi → **interrompi** = to interrupt, to break between two points

rimedo → **kontraŭrimedo** = a solution to work against something

sidi → **kunsidi** = to sit together, to have a meeting

aĉeti → **subaĉeti** = to corrupt through a hidden gift of money or similar (figurative usage)

jupo → **subjupo** = a slip, a skirt worn under another skirt

signo → **supersigno** = an additional symbol above a letter, a diacritic mark

23 When this sort of word is used in a sentence, the preposition used as a prefix is often repeated before the expression to which it actually relates to: **Li eliris el la dormoĉambro kaj eniris en la manĝoĉambron**. But often, we do not repeat the preposition before the word it relates to; instead, we use another preposition: **Ĝi parolas nur pri tiaj instruoj, kiuj ne kontraŭparolas al la scienco**. **Al** instead of a repetition of **kontraŭ**. What the prefix preposition actually relates to can often appear as an object of this kind of verb: **La belan Saran li jam kelkfoje ĉirkaŭiris**. = **Ĉirkaŭ la bela Sara li jam kelkfoje (ĉirkaŭ)iris**. But very frequently, the object of this verb is something else entirely, without a direct relationship to the preposition used as a prefix: **Alportu al mi metron da nigra drapo**.

EI

24 **EI** can be a completely normal preposition used as a prefix, in combinations and phrase words, for example: **eliri** (combination) = "to go out of something", **elbati** (combinaton) = "to hit something out of something", **el (la) lito** → **ellitiĝi** (phrase word) = "to get up out of bed".

25 But **el** used as a prefix in combinations is also used with the special meaning of "completely, totally, until ready, until a result, until breakage, until disappearing":

26 **trinki** → **eltrinki** = to drink all of something

lerni → **ellerni** = to learn completely

uzi → **eluzi** = to use until something is broken, to use up

27 Some of these **el** words receive a special (figurative) meaning:

28 **teni** → **elteni** = to resist, not to be defeated, to tolerate patiently, to hold out

pensi → **elpensi** = to create through thinking, to think up

29 If there is a risk of confusion between the usual meaning of **el** and its special meaning of ending or completion, some other prefix should be used for the meaning of "to the end". In that case, roots such as, for example, **tra**, **for**, **SAT**, and **FIN** may be used. The root or particle being used should always be used in a context that makes sense; for example: **trabori**, **trakuri**, **forkaŝi**, **satmanĝi**, **finkanti**, **finfari**, **finmanĝi** etc. An expression with several words can also be used to convey the correct meaning; this is often the best solution: **legi ĝisfine**, **kuri tra la tuta urbo**, **manĝi ĝis sateco**, **kanti ĝis la fino**, **kanti la tutan kanton** etc.

Pri

30 In phrase words (with an A-ending or E-ending), **pri** is used as a prefix in an ordinary way, for example: **pri amo** → **priama** = "having to do with love", **pri nutro** → **prinutra** = "relating to nutrition".

31 In combinations, a prefix-like use of **pri** makes transitive verbs. It is used to make an intransitive verb transitive, or to make a new transitive verb out of a verb that is already transitive. Normally, this sort of **pri** verb has an original **pri** adject as an object:

32 **Li pensis pri la afero.** → **Li pripensis la aferon.** - He thought about the matter. → He considered the matter.

Pensi is a transitive verb, whose object is the thoughts themselves **Pripensi** is a transitive verb, whose object is the thing being thought about or considered.

33 In some situations, this kind of **pri** verb has an object, which is originally a **de** adject or an **al** adject, rather than a **pri** adject. In these verbs, **pri** loses its own meaning, and is used only to change the role of the word in the sentence. **Pri** is used in this manner mainly in a few traditional verbs:

34 **rabi** → **prirabi**

- **Ili rabis monon de la homoj.** - They robbed money from the people.
- **Ili prirabis la homojn (je/por mono).** - They robbed the people (of money).

semi → **prisemi**

- **Mi semis tritikon sur la kampon.** - I sowed wheat in the field.
- **Mi prisemis la kampon (per tritiko).** - I sowed the field (with wheat).

serĉi → **priserĉi**

- **Ili serĉis armilojn ĉe li.** - They were looking for weapons at his place.
- **Ili priserĉis lin (por armiloj).** - They searched him (for weapons).

lumi → **prilumi** = "to shed light somewhere" (lit. to throw one's light into a direction)

- **La luno lumis en la ĉambron.** - The moon shone into the room.
- **La luno prilumis la ĉambron.** - The moon lit up the room.

Only something that is itself light can 'prilumi' (shed light)

Only something, that is itself light, can 'prilumi' (shed light).
Lumigi = "to make something shine, to provide with light"

35 Use of **pri** as a prefix can be used in some situations to give the verb a new meaning that relates somehow to the original meaning:

36 **juĝi** → **prijuĝi** = to express approval or disapproval about something

ĵuri → **priĵuri** = to give or to dedicate as an offering to God

37 In this usage, **pri** (about) is similar to the suffix **UM**.

Other affix-like particles

38 Aside from prepositions, many other particles are used like prefixes in various ways. Some of the most important examples of this usage are discussed below.

Ĉi

39 The word **ĉi**, showing location or proximity, is frequently used as a prefix in phrase words with an A-ending or an E-ending. Normally, a hyphen is used after **ĉi** for clarity:

40 **en tiu ĉi jaro** → **ĉi-jare** - in this year → this year

post tio ĉi → **ĉi-poste** - after this → hereinafter

41 Note that **ĉi** is an independent word in **tiu ĉi**, **ĉi tiu**, **tie ĉi**, **ĉi tie** etc. Don't use a hyphen in those cases.

Fi

42 The interjection **fi** is often used as a prefix with the meaning "unlikable, abominable". The prefix usage of **fi** shows subjective indignation or moral condemnation of the word to which **fi** is attached:

43 **homo** → **fihomo** = a nauseating, immoral, dislikeable person

ŝerco → **fiŝerco** = a shameless joke

insekto → **fiinsekto** = a disagreeable or parasitic insect

fama → **fifama** = infamous, famous for negative reasons

44 The prefix **fi** and the suffix **AĈ** are similar. **Fi** is more subjective. It shows indignation or dislike. **AĈ** is more objective. It shows unsuitability and poor quality.

For

45 The particle **for**, used to show location and movement, is often used as a prefix with action words: **foriri**, **foriro**, **forkuri**, **forkurado**, **forfali**, **forĵeti**, **forŝiri**, **forpermesi**, **fortimigi**, **forargumenti**, **forbuĉi**, **fordormi**, **foresti**, **foresto**. These combinations are frequently used in normal speech. **De** is also often used in these words: **forŝiri** ≈ **deŝiri**, **forpreni** ≈ **depreni**, **fortranĉi** ≈ **detranĉi**. But **for** gives a stronger meaning.

Mem

46 **Mem** used as a prefix has two different meanings: 1. "without the help of another": **memvole**, **memlerninto**, **memdisciplino**, **memstara**, **memkompreneble**. 2. "to oneself, about oneself, oneself": **memestimo**, **memamo**, **memdefendo**, **memmortigo**, **mempotreto**, **memofero**. If the meaning is "oneself", **sin** can also be used as a prefix.

Ne

47 The use of **ne** as a prefix shows absence, lack of something (for example, of a quality): **neĝentila** (impolite), **nelonge** (not long), **nefermita** (not closed), **nematura** (immature), **nelerta** (unskilled), **nekomprenebla** (incomprehensible), **nelegeble** (illegible), **nekredebla** (unbelievable), **nejudo** (non-Jew) = "a person who isn't a Jew", **ne-Kopenhagano** = "a person who doesn't live in Copenhagen".

Sin

48 The pronoun **si** (oneself) with the N-ending is often used as a prefix instead of **mem** (self) for the meaning of "oneself": **sinfido**, **sindefendo**, **singarda**, **sindona**.

49 **Sin** as an independent word can only be used in the third person. But **sin** can be used as a prefix also for the first and second persons: **Kontraŭ s-ro K. mi estos singarda.** = **Mi gardos min kontraŭ s-ro K.**

50 **Sin** words are words that behave as short phrases, deriving from a short infinitive expression: **sin defendi** → [to defend oneself]-(action)-O → **sindefendo** (self defense) = "the action of defending oneself"

51 This sort of **sin**-word can take any kind of ending except a verb ending: **sinfido**, **sinfida**, **sinfide**. In order to use a verb ending, it's necessary to return to the original phrase, in which **sin** was a separate word. If **sin** doesn't refer to the third person, the words **min** (myself), **nin** (ourselves) or **vin** (yourself) are used instead, as appropriate.

52 **ŝia sindefendo** → **Ŝi defendas sin.** - her self defense → She defends herself.

ilia sindefendo → **Ili defendas sin.** - their self defense → They defend themselves.

mia sindefendo → **Mi defendas min.** - my self defense → I defend myself.

nia sindefendo → **Ni defendas nin.** - our self defense → We defend ourselves.

via sindefendo → **Vi defendas vin.** - your self defense → You defend yourself.

53 In these words, the N-ending of **sin** is retained. Normally, however, the N-ending (like the J-endings) is omitted from the middle of compound words.