
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Vocabulary

Prefixes: Re- Pre- and Pro-



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Catherine

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. I'm Catherine...

Neil

And I'm Neil. You know, Catherine, 6 Minute Vocabulary is great because you can listen to each programme again and again...

Catherine

You can, Neil. You can **reuse** them...

Neil

You can! And the word **reuse** is a clue to today's topic...

Catherine

It is, we're talking about prefixes – those are the two or three letters we can add to the beginning of words to change their meaning ...

Neil

...like **re**, in **reuse**.

Catherine

We'll tell you more about **re** later and we'll also tell you about the prefixes **pre** and **pro**.

Neil

We'll explain what all three prefixes mean and give you lots of examples.

Catherine

There'll be a quiz at the end ...

Neil

... and a top tip for learning vocabulary.

Catherine

But first, let's hear from Katie. She's an environmental campaigner. While you listen, try to answer this question: What do teachers do with cereal boxes? Here's Katie.

INSERT

Katie

Most food in supermarkets nowadays is **prepacked** in plastic and cardboard. This creates so much waste. Takeaways and **precooked** meals also use a lot of packaging. We have to **re-educate** people to cook for themselves so they don't just **reheat** meals ... and people really need to become more **proactive** in **recycling** materials. Teachers in **preschool** are great at this – they **reuse** cereal boxes to make fantastic models of robots and spaceships with the kids.

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Catherine

So we asked you: What do teachers do with cereal boxes?

Neil

And the answer is: They **reuse** them to make models of robots and spaceships.

Catherine

That's right. They make something new with the boxes. But instead of saying 'they use the boxes again', Katie said the word **reuse**. Now, the prefix **re-**, spelt **r-e**, in front of a word means **again**.

Neil

So **re-** plus **use** means **use again**. We also had **re-** plus **cycling**, which also means **to use again**. Listen out for more words with **re-** in this clip.

INSERT CLIP 1

We have to **re-educate** people to cook for themselves so they don't just **reheat** meals.

Catherine

Katie used the word **re-educate**. That's **re-**, which means **again**, plus **educate**, so **re-educate** means **educate again**. And in this case, **re-educate** means teach people to behave in a different way so they start to cook for themselves.

Neil

Another other word with **re-** was **reheat**. That's **re-** plus **heat**, making **reheat**, which means **heat again**.

Catherine

Let's have another clip. See if you can spot a different prefix.

INSERT CLIP 2

Most food in supermarkets nowadays is **prepacked** in plastic and cardboard. Takeaways and **precooked** meals also use a lot of packaging.

Catherine

We heard **prepacked** and **precooked**. Both start with **pre-**, spelt **p-r-e**, which means **before** or **already**. So a lot of the food in supermarkets is already packed in cardboard and plastic – it's **prepacked**.

Neil

And you can buy meals that have been made and cooked before you buy them. **Pre-** plus **cooked** means **already cooked** ...

Catherine

And the children Katie talked about were in **preschool**.

Neil

That's **pre-** plus **school**, that's **preschool**. It's a place children go before they go to proper school.

Catherine

So that's **re-** and **pre-**. Now let's talk about **pro-**, spelt **p-r-o**.

Neil

Katie said people need to be more **proactive** in recycling. **Pro-** means **in support of** or **in favour of** something.

Catherine

So being **proactive**: **pro-** plus **active** - in **recycling** means making more effort to **recycle** things. Neil, are you a **proactive recycler**?

Neil

Yeah. Well, we've got two bins. One for **recycling** and one for all the food. So, I suppose I am.

Catherine

Very good.

Neil

Now, another word with the prefix **pro-** that is used a lot when talking about food is **probiotic**. **Probiotics** are good bacteria that help to keep you healthy.

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You're listening to BBC Learning English.

Neil

And we're talking about the prefixes **re-**, **pre-** and **pro-**.

Catherine

And now for a quiz. Number one: Which prefix goes before the word **school** to make the word for a place for very young children. Is it a) **re-** b) **pre-** or c) **pro-**?

Neil

And the answer is b) **pre-**: it's **preschool**.

Catherine

Good. Number two: What would you do with a ready-made meal? Would you a) **preheat** it b) **reheat** it or c) **proheat** it?

Neil

And the answer is b) **re-**: that's **reheat** it.

Catherine

Great. And, number three: If you want to improve your English, should you be a) **reactive**, b) **preactive** or c) **proactive** when you're learning new words?

Neil

And the answer is c) it's **pro-**: that's **proactive**.

Catherine

And that's the end of the quiz – well done if you got them right.

Neil

And now, here's today's top tip for learning vocabulary: try to group new words by their prefixes. This will help you to remember their meaning.

Catherine

There's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Both

Bye!

Vocabulary points to take away

precooked: already cooked or partly cooked

Precooked meals are a quick and easy option for busy people. You just have to heat them up in the oven or microwave.

prepacked: wrapped, often with plastic or in a box, before being sold

Prepacked fruit and vegetables use lots of paper and plastic packaging that is just thrown away.

preschool: nursery school

My daughter Rebecca is almost three. She'll be in preschool three mornings a week from September, so I can go back to work.

proactive: taking action in support of something

I'm trying to be more proactive in helping the environment. I cycle to work now instead of driving.

probiotic: containing good bacteria that keeps you healthy

I used to get stomach ache quite a lot, but my doctor told me to eat probiotic yoghurt and I feel so much better now.

recycle: to collect and change rubbish so that it can be used again; to use something again for a different purpose

We've got three different recycling bins – one for paper and glass, one for food and one for garden waste.

re-educate: to teach someone to think or behave in a different way

The government is trying to re-educate people to eat a healthier diet with more fruit and vegetables and less fat.

reheat: heat again

To save time, make the sauce the day before and then when you need it, just reheat it gently for a few minutes.

reuse: to use again

There are so many ways you can reuse a plastic bottle – as a bird feeder, as a musical instrument, even to make jewellery.